



## Shane Shanahan's *Kairos Ensemble*

Shane's creativity comes from his ability to draw from the energy of the universe.  
— *Yo-Yo Ma*

Shane Shanahan combines his studies of drumming traditions from around the world with his background in jazz, rock and Western art music to create his own distinct and lauded style. His new project, Kairos Ensemble, celebrates the distinct musical traditions of its diverse members while exploring the power of improvisation and cross-cultural collaboration. It features virtuosic performers who bring a riveting and energetic new sound to the stage, tapping into Indian, Middle Eastern, jazz, rock, and Japanese traditions. The extraordinary talents of each artist are woven together in a cohesive musical mosaic resulting in an innovative connecting of creative worlds.

Shane Shanahan's Kairos Ensemble believes in the power of music as a tool for creating and deepening community, as well as discovering other cultures and new aspects of our own humanity. In addition to concerts, Kairos Ensemble offers a variety of workshops designed for music and dance. Band members have also collaborated with faculty in history, humanities, and religious studies departments. Workshop possibilities include *Rhythm for All*, *Dance Accompaniment*, *Composition*, and *Improvisation*, all rooted in the perspectives, artistry and varied cultural traditions of the group.



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[Eylem Basaldi](#), *Turkish Violin*

[Brad Shepik](#), *Guitar*

[Edward Perez](#), *Bass*

[Shane Shanahan](#), *Percussion, Drums & Composition*

[Roopa Mahadevan](#), *South Indian Vocals*

[Kaoru Watanabe](#), *Japanese Flute & Taiko Drums*

Shane has performed and/or recorded with Yo-Yo Ma, Bobby McFerrin, Alison Kraus, Aretha Franklin, James Taylor, Philip Glass, Jordi Savall, Sonny Fortune, Chaka Khan, Bill Frisell, Deep Purple, Amjad Ali Khan, and Glen Velez, among others. His dynamic performances have brought people to their feet in the greatest halls of the world, including Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, The Blue Note, Suntory Hall, and the Concertgebouw. Shane draws on over 25 years of experience to shape his own unique artistic voice. He is a founding member of the Grammy-winning Silkroad Ensemble, and also served as a Co-Artistic Director for the organization.

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By the time [Shanahan] finished in a virtuosic jester's dance, limbs flying as he whirled back and forth between doumbek, cymbals and body parts, the audience roared with delight.  
— *The New York Times*



### Workshop Descriptions

Shane and the members of the Kairos Ensemble have worked in a number of university and conservatory settings, such as The Hartt School, Harvard University, and the College of the Holy Cross. Workshop topics include rhythmic studies, composition techniques, and perspectives on improvisation. He has extensive experience working with students with varying degrees of musical skills, from absolute beginners to music majors and professionals. Shane values collaborating with institutions to create workshops customized for their communities. Possibilities include:

#### I. **Rhythm for All**

Through hands-on, experiential learning, participants of all levels and ages begin to unlock the powerful, sacred secrets of rhythm. We use our whole bodies to internalize the pulse by utilizing simple movement, breathing, vocalizations, and body percussion. Incorporating call and response, musical cues, and improvisation, together we develop a compelling means of musical and spiritual expression.

#### II. **Dance Accompaniment**

Shane brings over 30 years of experience accompanying and collaborating with dancers. In this workshop he demonstrates how he developed his own unique sound and how he uses it to support and complement choreography, while simultaneously stimulating creativity in the dancers. Musicians and dancers come away with a wealth of new ideas about how to collaborate in a variety of settings.

#### III. **Take the A Train: A Study in Cross Cultural Dynamics**

In this session, Shane will discuss his approach to arranging this well known jazz standard for the Silkroad Ensemble, which consists of musicians from all over the world with an array of approaches to notation and improvisation. In particular, he will address the questions he needed to ask about the roots of the piece, how to adapt it for these particular musicians, and why the tune was ultimately chosen. The session will delve into the conversations this process opened up for the musicians of Silkroad, the challenges it posed, and how the ensemble was able to bridge cultural divides.

#### IV. **Improvisation**

Every member of the Kairos Ensemble is a master of improvisation. Here, the Kairos Ensemble musicians will share varied perspectives on this art form, from ancient Indian ragas and talas to Japanese modes and rhythms; from Middle Eastern maqams to modern jazz harmony and multi-cultural grooves. This workshop offers something for improvisers of all levels, beginning to advanced, or can be crafted to focus on one particular level.

I am always struck by Shane's ability to make percussionists out of all of us, no matter our skill level or background with arts.

—*Steve Seidel, Harvard University*