

Japan Jazz Nights : Celebrating 50 Years of Australia–Japan Friendship
— Four Leading Artists from Japan's Contemporary Jazz Scene
to Perform Across Seven Australian Cities —

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Japan and Australia. To commemorate this milestone, The Japan Foundation (JF) will present *Japan Jazz Nights*, a large-scale touring jazz program taking place in seven Australian cities in October 2026: Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney.

The project will feature four artists at the forefront of Japan's contemporary jazz scene who have also attracted growing international attention: BIGYUKI, STEREO CHAMP, Tenors In Chaos and UMEI Misaki.

While Japanese jazz has long been recognized internationally and has recently enjoyed renewed global interest, the current generation of artists remains undiscovered by overseas audiences. Through this extensive touring program, Australians will have the opportunity to experience firsthand the creativity, diversity and vitality of emerging Japanese jazz artists.



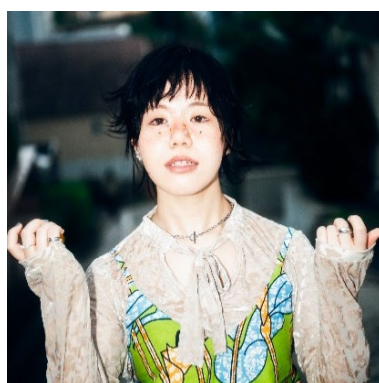
BIGYUKI



STEREO CHAMP



Tenors In Chaos



UMEI Misaki

**AUSTRALIA – JAPAN**
50 years of Friendship and Cooperation
日本オーストラリア友好協力50周年**Press inquiries :**

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Japan Jazz Nights will also include exciting collaborations with local Australian artists at performances throughout the tour. Through musical exchange, this initiative aims to deepen mutual understanding between Japan and Australia and further promote cultural exchange between the two countries.

**Further performance details will be announced in late August.*

■Artist Profiles

【BIGYUKI】



BIGYUKI is a New York-based keyboardist, composer and producer. He began playing the piano at the age of six and started his career as a session musician while studying at Berklee College of Music. After relocating to New York, he has collaborated with artists including Lauryn Hill, Kamasi Washington, Robert Glasper and J. Cole. He also contributed to A Tribe Called Quest's final album as both a performer and songwriter. Acclaimed for his distinctive musical voice that seamlessly bridges jazz, hip-hop and electronic music, BIGYUKI continues to captivate audiences at major festivals and concert stages around the world.

【STEREO CHAMP】



STEREO CHAMP are a band led by guitarist and composer INOUE May. Working from sharp rhythms and improvisation, they make music in which structure and freedom arrive at the same moment. Most of the repertoire is co-written by Inoue and bassist YAMAMOTO Ren. Within these carefully designed structures, each player's choices and responses accumulate, and the music is remade on the spot every time. The line-up is Inoue May (guitar), Yamamoto Ren (bass), RUIKE Shinpei (trumpet), WATANABE Shota (piano, keyboards, synthesiser, kettle), FUKUMORI Yasushi (drums) and James MACAULAY (trombone). Rooted in jazz but

never confined by it, their music is where beat, texture and improvisation intersect — and it comes into its own on stage. STEREO CHAMP play music that can only exist in that one moment.

【Tenors In Chaos】



Tenors In Chaos are a supergroup fronted by three tenor saxophonists working at the forefront of the Japanese jazz scene: KUGA Yu, NISHIGUCHI Akihiro and BABA Tomoaki. Kuga graduated top of his class from Berklee College of Music and has since ranged from Mrs. GREEN APPLE to ONISHI Junko, while leading the twelve-piece orchestra he writes and arranges for. Nishiguchi fronts his own band FOTOS and is among the most trusted players in the scene. Baba, who made his major-label debut on Universal Music, continues to build momentum. Behind these three very different voices are David BRYANT (piano), SUGAWA Takashi (bass) and ODAGIRI Kazu (drums). The band

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formed in Kobe in December 2021 and began in earnest in 2023 under trumpeter KURODA Takuya, who also gave them their name. They released *Chaos* on Kuroda's aTak Records that November, followed by *More Chaos* in 2025. Their Blue Note Tokyo debut sold out immediately, and they have since supported KNOWER in Japan and played festivals around the country.

【UMEI Misaki】



UMEI Misaki was born in Hyogo in 2002. She began piano at four and the Electone at six, starting to compose at the same time, and went on to study composition at Tokyo College of Music. A pianist, electronic producer and singer, she moves freely between acoustic ensembles and electronic production. In 2025 she was named one of 25 artists representing Japan in Rolling Stone Japan's Future of Music. That July she released her first solo album, *Asleep Above Creatures*, on her own label .plum. Buoyant piano trios, finely worked string arrangements and electronica carrying her own voice sit together across the record — a vivid

demonstration of her range. The album was nominated for the APPLE VINEGAR -Music Award- 2026, the prize founded by GOTOH Masafumi of ASIAN KUNG-FU GENERATION.

On stage her reach has been just as wide. In February 2025 she joined Geordie Greep (formerly of black midi) as a member of his Japan tour, and in July she played ROOKIE A GO-GO at FUJI ROCK FESTIVAL '25. In April 2026 she gave her first solo headline show at Shibuya WWW.

■ About The Japan Foundation

The Japan Foundation (JF) is Japan's only institution that promotes "cultural and arts exchange," "Japanese-language education," and "Japanese studies and international dialogue," under the mission of "cultivating friendship and strengthening bonds between Japan and the world."

In the field of performing arts, the JF dispatches Japanese artist overseas to exchange ideas with local experts and observe creative production sites and performances and thereby expand international networks and build a foundation for continuous exchange and collaboration in the future. JF invited artists and festival directors from ASEAN countries to Japan. This provided an opportunity for the participants to deepen mutual understanding with persons involved in Japan's performing arts and to explore new possibilities for creative activities.

The Japan Foundation Website

<https://www.jpff.go.jp/e/>

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