

SON TENSEI — ARTIST BIO

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SHORT BIO (50 words)

Son Tensei is the vocal project of Christopher R. Kramer, the Chicago producer, composer and singer behind Tensei — Plug Research, Tokyo Dawn, First Word. Composer on the Grammy-winning album **The Poet Who Sat By The Door** by J. Ivy. Bilingual English/Japanese. Two LPs: **Introduction: Son Is Different** and **Virtual Island**.

MEDIUM BIO (150 words)

Son Tensei is Christopher R. Kramer — a Chicago-raised producer, composer and vocal jazz singer who spent fifteen years behind the boards before stepping to the microphone.

As half of ****Tensei****, he released on ****Plug Research**** in Los Angeles (labelmates: Flying Lotus, Bilal, Shafiq Husayn) and ****Tokyo Dawn Records**** in Germany, working with Makaya McCraven, Brandee Younger, Junius Paul, Angel Bat Dawid, Greg Spero, Georgia Anne Muldrow and Black Thought. The **Los Angeles Times** premiered his Bilal remix in 2011. The **Chicago Reader** called Tensei's work "an electronic canvas of astral soul." Okayplayer named **Constellate** a Project of the Year.

He is ****composer on the Grammy-winning album **The Poet Who Sat By The Door** by J. Ivy**** (Best Spoken Word Poetry Album).

A natural baritenor with no formal training, he sings and raps in English and Japanese, improvises daily, and has performed with Bobby McFerrin's Circle Songs in Berkeley.

LONG BIO (400 words)

****Son Tensei is Christopher R. Kramer, and the voice arrived last.****

He grew up in the culture of Chicago's South Side, on the border between the good side of Park Forest and the bad one. He learned MS-DOS in a grade-school computer lab, had a saxophone taken away by a childhood injury, and spent the next seventeen years making music entirely out of other people's records — until, at twenty-eight, he got tired of borrowing and taught himself piano and bass by ear.

In 1998 he met Midas Wells in a dorm at Southern Illinois University. Twelve years later they ran into each other at a friend's gig in Chicago and formed ****Tensei**** — a name Kramer chose from the Japanese 天星, **heaven star**.

Tensei signed to **Plug Research** in Los Angeles alongside Flying Lotus, Bilal and Shafiq Husayn, releasing *Tensei One* and *Tensei Two* on vinyl in 2012. The *Los Angeles Times* premiered their remix of Bilal's "Robots." They did not sample records; they played the parts, or brought in a Chicago collective of jazz musicians – Makaya McCraven, Greg Spero, Junius Paul, Kafele Bandele – and sampled them instead. In 2019 **Tokyo Dawn Records** released *Constellate*, which Okayplayer named a Project of the Year and the *Chicago Reader* described as an electronic canvas of astral soul.

In 2022 he composed and produced "A Mile in His Soul," track six of J. Ivy's ***The Poet Who Sat By The Door***, which won **Best Spoken Word Poetry Album at the 65th Grammy Awards** – the first award ever given in that category.

Offered artist development deals that required him to become a persona, he declined, and became **Son Tensei** instead. He freestyles daily. He is a natural baritenor with no formal training, singing and rapping across two octaves in English and native-pronunciation Japanese, and has performed with Bobby McFerrin's Circle Songs improvisation collective in Berkeley.

Two LPs have followed: ***Introduction: Son Is Different*** (2025, 12 songs) and ***Virtual Island*** (2026, 10 songs) – records about screens and distance, work and dignity, fathers and grandmothers, and what a person owes the people coming after them.

The stated purpose of the work is to inform, to inspire, and to awaken those who are compatible with it and need it – with the choice always left in the listener's hands.

Alongside the music he is the author of ***Love Our Mother, Love The Children: Biophysics Economics & Spiritual Science*** (2026) and the sole inventor of **Harmonic Path Logic**, a deterministic AI governance framework (USPTO 19/574,339) – socially conscious initiatives intended to benefit all children and the Earth itself.

He relocates to Japan in 2026.

ONE-LINE DESCRIPTORS

- Grammy-credited composer turned vocal jazz singer, bilingual in English and Japanese.
- Fifteen years behind the boards, now in front of the microphone.
- Chicago astral soul, sung rap, and Japanese-language songwriting.

KEY FACTS

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| ****Real name**** | Christopher R. Kramer |
| ****Also known as**** | Tensei · Kramer · Simple X (Herma Puma) |
| ****Base**** | Chicago → Bay Area → Japan (2026) |
| ****Labels**** | Plug Research (US) · Tokyo Dawn (DE) · First Word (UK) ·
Bastard Jazz |
| ****Grammy**** | Composer, *The Poet Who Sat By The Door* – J. Ivy, Best
Spoken Word Poetry Album |
| ****Registrations**** | BMI, 159 works · IPI 00643227167 · SoundExchange |
| ****Voice**** | Natural perfect pitch baritenor, untrained. Sings and raps.
English + Japanese. |
| ****Languages**** | English, Japanese (native-level) |

SELECTED PRESS

Los Angeles Times · *Chicago Reader* · Okayplayer (Projects of the Year
2019) · Exclaim! (CA) · Afropunk · UK Vibe · De Morgen (BE) · Culture
Custodian (NG) · Byte FM (DE) · Vocalo 91.1 · Dusty Groove · Hypebeast ·
Fake Shore Drive · EarMilk · SoulBounce · Fusicology · Electro Wow

SELECTED COLLABORATORS

Makaya McCraven · Brandee Younger · Junius Paul · Angel Bat Dawid · Greg
Spero · Georgia Anne Muldrow · Black Thought · Bilal · A. Billi Free ·
Khari Lemuel · Yaw · ADaD · Jimetta Rose · Sam Trump · Liv Warfield ·
Kiara Lanier · Tall Black Guy