

# MIKA YOSHIDA

Keyboard Concert  
Thursday, 2:00 p.m.

## The Spirit of John Wyre

BY MIKA YOSHIDA

In 1991, I attended a Nexus performance at Tokyo Suntory Hall and was very impressed. Immediately after the concert, I wrote a letter to Bill Cahn at the address I found in the concert program, asking him for a private lesson. Soon after I received a reply letter, I visited his house in Rochester, New York—my first visit to the United States. I was so excited and moved to see so many percussion instruments in his basement. When I said to him, “You have such a large collection of musical instruments,” he answered, “They are not my collection, they are my children.” These words greatly touched me to the heart.

I soon learned that Nexus would make another tour of Japan, and this time I negotiated with their agent and succeeded in inviting them to where I live—an island called Amakusa—for a concert. On this occasion I became friends with the other members of Nexus, including John Wyre.

I then was invited to John’s house in Norland (Canada), where I had a chance to listen to many of his works. I remember being deeply moved by his great music and humbled when he allowed me to record “Mitsue” for my debut CD. I commissioned him to compose “Island Dream” for the Evergreen Gamelan and marimba. Then, in order to premiere the piece, I invited John and the Evergreen Gamelan group to Japan for a concert.

Since the gamelan players were all wonderful percussionists who studied at Toronto University with Russell Hartenberger, I started thinking about studying at Toronto University myself. It was during this time that John gave me positive guidance for my performance upon my firm decision to be a true marimbist.

At Toronto University, I met so many great teachers including Russell, Robin Engelman, and Beverley Johnston. I learned innumerable things from them, and practiced every day for more than eight hours. In hindsight, I can say this period was the most satisfying and valuable time in my life with fond memories such as the

He was especially interested in Zen Buddhism and would frequently travel to the nearby temple to ring a bell early in the morning. He once stayed on the island for three weeks for the city’s cultural project to make many ceramic bells. Presently the opening bells at the Amakusa Concert Hall are the very ones John created.

I have hundreds of fond memories of John Wyre. It is not too much to say that my musical sense was refined by John, and his spirit remains firmly in my mind. Several highlights stand out in my mind, especially his composition and my premiere of “Moonlight, Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra” with the Kyushu Symphony Orchestra and my first international music festival called Island Magic 2005 where I will never forget his smile at the premiere performance. In the fall of that same year, I performed for the first time at PASIC where John joined me on stage.

I feel that I have learned many important things about music through playing John’s pieces and performing with him. He influenced me a lot mentally, and I will always keep in mind his words, “It is important to communicate with audiences by combining your own colors drawn from marimbas with music,” “Waiting is sometimes needed,” and “Sound is personal.” I remember him always telling me that we should be marimbists who could appeal to people even using simple techniques.

For my concert at PASIC 2007, Eddie Gomez and Peter Stolzman will perform with me. We will mainly perform the pieces we played at a recent concert I held paying tribute to John Wyre entitled “Mika Yoshida & Friends” at Zankel Hall in Carnegie Hall in New York. The tentative program



world premiere and recording of “Tokyo/Vermont Counterpoint” by Steve Reich.

After I finished my studies at Toronto University, John introduced me to many wonderful artists. He visited my island of Amakusa a total of 15 times and made several good friends, including the mayor.

includes "Time Traveler" for marimba and four percussionists by Bill Cahn, "Ringo" for solo marimba by Mami Ishizuka, "Sumba" for marimba, bass, piano, and percussion by Bill Douglas, "Girlfriend Medley" for marimba, bass, and piano arranged by Bob Becker, "Mika Suite" for marimba, bass, piano, and percussion by Eddie Gomez, and "Mitsue" for steel pan, marimba, bass, and piano by John Wyre.

**Mika Yoshida** lives on the island of Amakusa in Kumamoto Prefecture, Kyushu Island, located in the south of Japan. She started piano lessons at age three, began playing drumset at age 12, and at 18 began playing marimba. After graduating from college, Mika taught music at a junior high school and an elementary school and took private marimba lessons with Tatsuo Sasaki and Mutsuko Taneya. Recently, she has worked as a percussion instructor at Kumamoto Music College and has run a private marimba studio for 30 students. Among her recent musical activities she has performed with clarinetist Richard

Stolzman, bassist Eddie Gomez, and pianist Peter John Stoltzman, and she participated in the recording of "Goldberg Variation" for Richard Stoltzman's CD, to be released on the BMG Japan and RCA labels next March. **PN**

## KEYBOARD

**MARTA KLIMASARA**  
Keyboard Showcase Concert . Friday, 12:00 p.m.

**STEFON HARRIS**  
Keyboard Clinic/Performance . Friday, 1:00 p.m.

**ANNE-JULIE CARON**  
Keyboard Clinic/Performance . Friday, 4:00 p.m.

**LUDWIG ALBERT & CHIN CHENG LIN**  
Keyboard Clinic/Performance . Saturday, 4:00 p.m.

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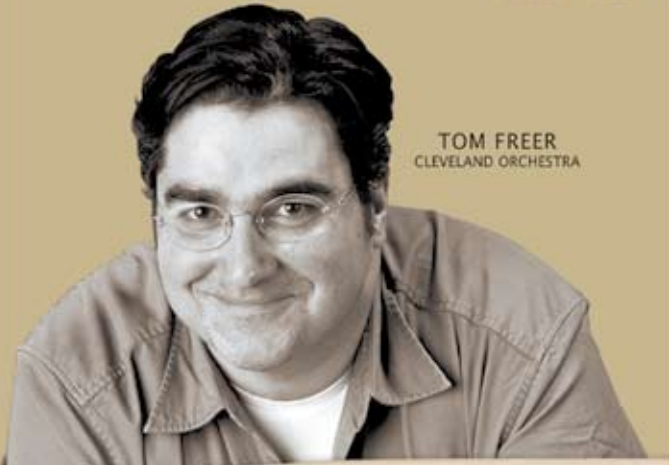
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