

Yu KUWABARA

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Profile

Yu Kuwabara (b.1984, Chiba, Japan) is a Japanese composer, a researcher of Japanese traditional arts, living in Tokyo. She makes music to ask herself who she really is. For several years, she has been researching and studying traditional Japanese music and arts to extend as far back as possible to her origins, in order to confirm her own standing. She has collaborated with numerous artists and instrumentalists of Japanese art forms including a Rakugo performer Kokontei Shinsuke (Japanese traditional verbal entertainment), Koto performers' groups Tsugukaji-Koto and 4plus (Japanese zither), Japanese Buddhist chant group Shomyo no Kai - Voice of a Thousand Years to have investigated her own musical form between the past and the present, and also between Japan and the world.



Yu Kuwabara's works have been performed at numerous important international festivals (Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Ultraschall Berlin, CRESC... Biennale für Aktuelle Musik Frankfurt Rhein-Main, Festival 20/21 Transit, Mostra Sonora Sueca, EXPO Milano 2015, Music From Japan, Tongyeong International Music Festival, Takefu International Music Festival, and others) and in many other concerts around the world with various ensembles and performers (Ensemble Modern, Trio Accanto, soloists from Ensemble Intercontemporain, Talea Ensemble, Enno Poppe and Klangforum Wien, mdi ensemble, Ensemble Proton Bern, Divertimento Ensemble, Mike Svoboda and neuerBand, loadbang, AsianArt Ensemble, Sentieri selvaggi, Ensemble Mise-en, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Nicolas Hodges, William Lang, Claire Chase, Rebekah Heller, Stefan Hussong, Camilla Hoitenga, Toshiya Suzuki, Kosei Murata, Hidejiro Honjoh, and others). Her music is published by Edition Wunn, Germany. She is a composer of Awai-Za, a chamber ensemble mixed with new music and Japanese Edo culture. Her first portrait concert "Shadowless - Yu Kuwabara Portrait [Awai-Za Recital Series Vol.1]" (→concert report in Japanese) held at Tokyo Opera City Recital Hall on July 19, 2019, was highly acclaimed.

Academic Background

2007-2009

Master's degree in composition at the Tokyo University of the Arts (TUA) (Tokyo, Japan) with Shin Sato and Toshihiko Hisayuki

2003-2007

Majored in composition at the Tokyo University of the Arts (TUA) (Tokyo, Japan) with Shin Sato

Workshops

2019-20

the 9th International Composition Seminar of International Ensemble Modern Academy (Frankfurt, Germany)

2018

Delian Academy For New Music 2018 (Mykonos, Greece) with Michael Finnissy and Dimitri Papageorgiou

2017

Composer Seminar of the Lucerne Festival Academy (Luzern, Switzerland) with Wolfgang Rihm and Dieter Ammann
Divertimento Ensemble International Workshop for Young Composers (Bobbio, Italy) with Stefano Gervasoni and Franck Bedrossian

2016

Academy Voix Nouvelles Foundation Royaumont (Paris, France) with Frédéric Durieux, Pierluigi Billone, Raphaël Cendo and Jean-Philippe Wurtz

2014

International Summer Course for New Music Darmstadt (Darmstadt, Germany) with Lucas Fels, Brian Ferneyhough, Gunnhildur Einarsdóttir, Misato Mochizuki and Clemens Gadenstätter

2013

IMPLUS Academy (Graz, Austria) with Chaya Chernowin and Pierluigi Billone

2010

International Ensemble Modern Academy at Tokyo Wonder Site (Tokyo, Japan) with Toshi Ichianagi and Tristan Murial

2007

Schloss Solitude Summer Academy (Stuttgart, Germany), with Chaya Chernowin, Steven Kazuo Takasugi and Ole Lützow-Holm

2005

International Ensemble Modern Academy at Tokyo Wonder Site (Tokyo, Japan), with Hanspeter Kyburz

Competitions and Residencies

2020

Selected for 2020 resident composers of Mizzou International Composers Festival (Missouri, U.S.)

2019

Selection for the 9th International Composition Seminar by Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt, Germany)

Winner of the international composition contest 'Breaking Music' by Syntax Ensemble for *5 Images-In Nomine* (the jury: Ivan Fedele, Gabriele Manca, Mauro Lanza, Alessandro Solbiati, Gabriele Bonomo, Gianluigi Mattiotti and Ralph Fassey) (Milano, Italy)

Selected for the Call for Scores 2018-2019 season by the 113 composers collective Society for *In Between* (U.S.)

2018

Selected for the Call for Scores 2017-2018 (featured artist: William Lang, trombone) by the Boston Microtonal Society for *Rattling Darkness* (Cambridge, MA, U.S.)

Winner of the 5th edition of Divertimento Ensemble's 'Franco Donatoni' International Meeting for Young Composers for *Shadowless* (the jury: Franck Bedrossian, Sandro Gorli, Mauro Lanza, Fabien Lévy and Gabriele Manca) (Milano, Italy)

Winner of the 2017-18 edition of neuerBand's Construct-Radiate International Composition Competition for *Shadowless*, and awarded a commission to compose a new work for neuerBand (the jury: Liza Lim, Erik Oña, Marcus Weiss, Uroš Rojko and Paul Clift) (Basel, Switzerland)

Selection for the Delian Academy for New Music 2018 (Mykonos, Greece)

Finalist of the Asian Composers Showcase 2018 at the Tongyeong International Music Festival for her work *Six Voices* (the jury: Alexander Liebreich, Cord Meijering, Younggi Pagh-Paan and Johannes Schöllhorn) (Tongyeong, Korea)

Winner of the protonwerk no.8, the commissioning program of the ensemble proton bern (Bern, Switzerland)

2017

Winner of the Follow My Score fall 2017 call for works by the Score Follower channel for her works *Three Voices* and *Spiral Mandala -Wind Chant and Night Chant-*

Won a Honorable mention at the International Call For Scores & Commission 2017 by ensemble Suono Giallo and iSUONO Contemporary Music Week (Milano, Italy)

Winner of the mdi ensemble call for scores for her work *Three Voices* (Milano, Italy)

Selection for the Composer Seminar of the Lucerne Festival Academy (Luzern, Switzerland)

Selection for the Divertimento Ensemble International Workshop for young composers and her work *Ten Voices* written for the workshop has been selected for their Rondò 2018 concert season (Bobbio and Milano, Italy)

2016

Selection for the Academy Voix Nouvelles at the Fondation Royaumont (Paris, France)

Selected for the Mise-en Festival 2016 to compose a new piece for ensemble mise-en (New York, NY, U.S.)

2015

Finalist of the Feeding Music International Composition Competition to compose a new piece for Sentieri selvaggi at the EXPO Milano 2015 (Milano, Italy)

2013

Selection for the Reading Session by Enno Poppe and Klangforum Wien at IMPULS Academy (Graz, Austria)

2009-2010

Awarded the Research Residence Program 2009 at Tokyo Arts and Space (TOKAS, former Tokyo Wonder Site) Aoyama Creator-in-Residence (Tokyo, Japan)

2009

Finalist of the 78th Music Competitions of Japan (Tokyo, Japan)

2007

Winner of the Acanthus Music Prize at Tokyo University of Arts (TUA) (Tokyo, Japan)

Selection for the Schloss Solitude Summer Academy (Stuttgart, Germany)

2006

Prize-winning work at the Stefan Hussong Accordion Workshop Concert (Tokyo, Japan)

Finalist of the 75th Music Competitions of Japan (Tokyo, Japan)

2005

Finalist of the 74th Music Competitions of Japan (Tokyo, Japan)

2004

Winning prize at the 9th Tokyo International Chamber Music Composition Competitions (Tokyo, Japan)

Teaching and Lectures

FROM 2020 APRIL

Teaching position (composition) at the Senzoku Gakuen College of Music (Kanagawa, Japan)

SINCE 2015

Teaching position at junior composition courses for Yamaha Music Foundation (Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama and Tochigi, Japan)

2017 FEBRUARY 9

Lecture about her music at the Japan inter-design forum - JIDF Lab "Jyoshiryoku Lab" - Yu Kuwabara "New Music and Literatures" (Tokyo, Japan)

2016 NOVEMBER 25

Lecture about her music at the Japan inter-design forum - JIDF Lab "Kotoba Lab" - Yu Kuwabara "Language of New Music" (Tokyo, Japan)

2013 JUNE 4

Lecture about her music at the Kunitachi University of Music (Tokyo, Japan)

2012-2015

Teaching position (harmony) at the Toho Gakuen University Music Department (Tokyo, Japan)

2009 OCTOBER 24

Workshop for children "Words = Playing and Greeting with Sounds" at the United Nations University Courtyard (Tokyo, Japan)

2009-2014

Teaching position for composition at the Master Class Electone Seminar for Yamaha Music Foundation (Tokyo, Japan)

Commissions

2020

New Work, commissioned by Japan Arts Council (Japan National Theatre) (Tokyo, Japan)

New Work, for solo koto (Osaka, Japan)

New Work, commissioned by Shizuoka AOI (Concert Hall Shizuoka) (Shizuoka, Japan)

New Work, commissioned by Mizzou International Composers Festival; as one of the 2020 resident composers (Missouri, U.S.)

New Work, commissioned by Marco Fusi; performed at Brukt (Oslo, Norway), Levante Musik (Gothenburg, Sweden), SMOG (Brussels, Belgium), and others

New Work, commissioned by Go Mochizuki; performed by Music KART (Tokyo, Japan)

Time Abyss, for 17 musicians divided in 2 groups; commissioned by Ensemble Modern; premiered at CRESC... Biennale für Aktuelle Musik (Frankfurt, Germany)

2019

Naming Chant, for vocal ensemble; commissioned by Yokohama Minato-Mirai Hall; premiered at Just Composed 2020 Spring In Yokohama; performed by vox humana (Kanagawa, Japan)

Nokorigaku (Remaining Music), for solo piano; commissioned by Festival 20/21 Transit; performed by Nicholas Hodges (Leuven, Belgium)

A song about a dead person, for baritone, bass clarinet, trumpet and trombone; for and commissioned by loadbang (New York, NY, U.S.)

Four Games, for recorder duo; for and commissioned by Daniele Bragetti and Seiko Tanaka (Tokyo, Japan)

Music for 'Gauche the Cellist, for picture-story show, narrator, and cello; commissioned by Seiko Morohashi (Tokyo, Japan)

Yume no Ukiyo no, Ukiyo no Yume no (of the world under a dream, or of a dream under the world...), for shamisen, kyogen-utai, jiuta, tenor, and baritone; commissioned by Japan Arts Council (Japan National Theatre) (Tokyo, Japan)

Ukiyo Shinobi Kudoki Uta, for baritone and tuba; for and commissioned by Teion Duo (Tokyo, Japan)

5 Images-In Nomine; commissioned by Syntax Ensemble (Milan, Italy)

2018

Mirror in the Mirror, for and commissioned by ensemble proton bern; as the winner of the protonwerk no. 8 (Bern, Switzerland)

A world under the world, for and commissioned by Divertimento Ensemble; as the winner of the fifth edition of the competition 'Franco Donatoni' International Meeting for Young Composers (Milano, Italy)

Thirty-three Moons, commissioned by Daniele Bragetti and Seiko Tanaka; performed by La Rubertina (Tokyo, Japan)

figure and ground, image and margin, obverse and reverse, for and commissioned by Ensemble Modern and Hidejiro Honjoh (Frankfurt, Germany)

incense, efflorescence, for and commissioned by neuerBand; as the winner of the 2017-18 edition of CONSTRUCT/RADIATE INTERNATIONAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION (Basel, Switzerland)

There was already water there, commissioned by Hidejiro Honjoh; performed by Rebekah Heller and Hidejiro Honjoh (New York, NY, U.S.)

Three Different Time Fields and the Voiceless Chant, for and commissioned by Mamiko Someda (Tokyo, Japan)

Striking a match momentarily I see the foggy ocean, commissioned by Asian Art Ensemble; performed by Akihito Obama, Hidejiro Honjoh, and AsianArt Ensemble, (Berlin, Germany)

2 and 32 [In Between b], for and commissioned by Kiyonori Sokabe and Mizuki Aita (Tokyo, Japan)

Dandara no Dharani (Layered Dharani), commissioned by Hidejiro Honjoh; performed by the soloists from the Ensemble Intercontemporain and Hidejiro Honjoh, (Paris, France)

Echigojishi Fantasy b, commissioned by Hidejiro Honjoh; performed by Akihito Obama, Yoko Reikano Kimura, and Hidejiro Honjoh, (New York, NY, U.S.)

2017

Kinshi no Dharani (Dharani of Gold Strings), for Nobuaki Fukukawa and Hidejiro Honjoh, commissioned by Hidejiro Honjoh (Saitama, Japan)

Deconstructing Winter, for and commissioned by Go Mochizuki (Tokyo, Japan)
Moon Spell, for and commissioned by Ensemble Muromachi (Tokyo, Japan)
Momijitsutsu (While turning red), for Mayumi Miyata and Hidejiro Honjoh, commissioned by Hidejiro Honjoh (Tokyo, Japan)
Mystische Miniature, for and commissioned by Christopher Adler (CA, U.S.)
Tsuki no Kougon (Mantra of Moonlight), for Shomyo no Kai - Voice of a Thousand Years, commissioned by Kanagawa Kenritsu Ongakudo (Kanagawa Prefectural Music Hall) (Kanagawa, Japan)
Music for the short movie 'My important people,' commissioned by Minako Miyake (Tokyo, Japan)
Madara no Dharani (Patched Dharani), for and commissioned by Thomas Piercy (Tokyo, Japan)
Dharani of Strings, for Shungo Mise and Hidejiro Honjoh, commissioned by Shungo Mise (Tokyo, Japan)

2016

Dance à vivre, for Shungo Mise and Kaori Osuga, commissioned by Shungo Mise (Tokyo, Japan)
Dharani of Wind, for Claire Chase and Hidejiro Honjoh, commissioned by Hidejiro Honjoh (New York, NY, U.S.)
Three Voices, commissioned by Foundation Royaumont, written as part of Academy Voix Nouvelles 2016 at Foundation Royaumont (Paris, France)
24 Preludes on the name of Michiko Suzuki, for Nocturne #22 In C Sharp Minor, Op. Posth. 2016-17 F/W COLLECTION RUNWAY SHOW, commissioned by Nocturne #22 In C Sharp Minor, Op. Posth. (Tokyo, Japan)
Dharani no Manimani, for and commissioned by ensemble mise-en (New York, NY, U.S.)

2015

Spiral Mandala -Wind Chant and Night Chant-, for and commissioned by Shomyo no Kai - Voice of a Thousand Years (Tokyo, Japan)
Music for Radio Drama "At The Fishing Hole," commissioned by NHK Radio Center (Tokyo, Japan)
Pops in Mandolin Orchestra - The Beatles I "Michelle," for and commissioned by Liberté Mandolin Orchestra (Kagoshima and Tokyo, Japan)
Dance of Death b from The Night Music, and Fragment from "Wind Chant and Night Chant," for Sai Ailing, Chiaki Isa, Setsujyo Saito, and Hiromi Shinoda; commissioned by Setsujyo Saito (Gunma, Japan)
The Night Music, for Nocturne #22 In C Sharp Minor, Op. Posth. 2015 Full Collection Runway Show, commissioned by Nocturne #22 In C Sharp Minor, Op. Posth. (Tokyo, Japan)
Song of "Wakamurasaki" b, for and commissioned by Sho Sato and Hidejiro Honjoh (Tokyo, Japan)

2014

Moon Sliding, for and commissioned by Yukino Ichikawa (Tokyo, Japan)
Flowers of Fading, for Kazuo Furuyama and Hanako Nakamura, commissioned by Kazuo Furuyama (Tokyo, Japan)
Tou no Kyoku (Music of a Tower), for Sai Ailing and Hanako Nakamura, commissioned by Setsujyo Saito (Gunma, Japan)

2013

Etudes IV, for and commissioned by 4plus (Tokyo, Japan)
Gamelan from Wind and Stars, for and commissioned by Kiyonori Sokabe and Gaku Yamada (Tokyo, Japan)
Mizukage (Water Shadows), for and commissioned by Esprit Mandolin Orchestra (Tokyo, Japan)
Teri-Mukuri, for and commissioned by Denis Patkovic (Helsinki, Finland)
Transfiguration on The Theme of Morin Khuur, for YMO YNOT 2013 Autumn/Winter Collection Runway Show, commissioned by YMO YNOT (China)
Ruri no Uta, Hoshi no Uta (Song of Stars), for Setsujyo Saito and Hiromi Shinoda, commissioned by Setsujyo Saito (Gunma, Japan)

2012-2016

Music for "Shinkei-Kasanegafuchi," for Kokontei Shinsuke and Awai-Za, commissioned by Studio Iwato, Toyota-city Noh Theater and Kokontei Shinsuke (Tokyo and Aichi, Japan)

2012

Etudes III, for and commissioned by 4plus (Tokyo, Japan)

Song of "Imawa" (Song of The Edge In-between The World and The Next World), for and commissioned by mmm... (Tokyo, Japan)

Yume-Koi-Kaidan (The Ghost Story of Dream Love), for and commissioned by Tsugukaji-KOTO (Tokyo and Kagoshima, Japan)

Matataki no Awai (In-between Time of Flickering of Lights), for and commissioned by Ensemble Muromachi (Tokyo, Japan)

Arabesque, for and commissioned by Go Mochizuki and Kosuke Hashizume (Tokyo, Japan)

2011

Etudes II, for and commissioned by 4plus (Tokyo, Japan)

passacaglia della notte, for Nocturne #22 In C Sharp Minor, Op. Posth. 2012 Spring/Summer Collection Runway Show, commissioned by Nocturne #22 In C Sharp Minor, Op. Posth. (Tokyo, Japan)

Love song IV, for Julien Siguré, commissioned by Kosuke Hashizume (Bruxelles, Belgium)

2010

Dodoitsu Variations, for and commissioned by Denis Patkovic (Helsinki, Finland)

Etudes, for and commissioned by 4plus (Tokyo, Japan)

2009

Aomori Frog, for Yoko Nishi, commissioned by Tokyo Wonder Site (Tokyo, Japan)

Requiem, for Sakezuka Nirvana Ceremony, commissioned by Nichimen-ji Temple (Shizuoka, Japan)

2008

Variation of "Magic Doll" b, for Ryoko Aoki and Yoshiko Sato, commissioned by Kanagawa Kenmin Hall (Kanagawa Prefectural Hall) (Kanagawa, Japan)

Love song II, for and commissioned by Ensemble Phorminx (Darmstadt and Tübingen, Germany)

Doll-Blind, for Toshiya Suzuki and Stefan Hussong, commissioned by Toshiya Suzuki (Tokyo, Japan)

2007

Love song, for Shintaro Ban, Emiko Tanno and Izumi Fujii, commissioned by company izuru (Tokyo, Japan)

2006

lace-race, for and commissioned by MU Gakudan (Tomoki Tai, Hironori Ueda, and Manabu Nagasawa) (Shiga, Japan)