

YOKO NISHII (pianist) – biography

YOKO NISHII was born in Ise, Japan. She began to play the piano at the age of 4. After graduating from Keio University in Tokyo with a BA in French literature in 1998, she entered the “Ino Mirković” Music Academy situated in Lovran, Croatia as a special full scholarship student. She graduated from the 4-year academic program in only 2 years with excellent grades under Prof. Evgeny Zarafiants in 2000. In July 2001, she earned “Master of Music Art” degree at the same academy, and from 2001 to 2003 she worked as assistant in the piano class of Prof. Zarafiants. Also she often worked as accompanist in “Flute Master Class” held in the same academy by Prof. Pierre-Yves Artaud from Paris. From 2005 to 2007 she did advanced study at the Zagreb Music Academy as the fellowship under the Japanese Government Overseas Program for Artists. She has won numerous awards at international competitions. From 2014 to 2019 she worked as a part-time lecturer at Aichi University of the Arts in Japan. Until now she studied with Prof. Mitsuko Tomio, Prof. Naofumi Kaneshige, Prof. Kyoko Ogawa, Prof. Hitoshi Kobayashi and Prof. Zarafiants.

She has given numerous solo recitals in Japan, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. In Croatia alone she has given over 50 solo recitals in 26 cities. She has also performed with the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Leonid Nikolaev in Zagreb and Opatija, Croatia, and the Cuban National Symphonic Orchestra conducted by Enrique Perez Mesa in Havana, Cuba. In December 2018, the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Croatia, she gave a concert co-organized by the Japanese Embassy in Croatia and Croatian Radio Television (HRT) at the HRT studio Bajsčić in Zagreb, Croatia, which was broadcast live by HRT.

She is extensively involved in the research and dissemination of Croatian composers and music, as well as those from other neighboring countries. In February 2015 she released the world’s first CD (2 CDs) of the complete solo piano works by Croatian female composer Dora Pejačević, commemorating her 130th birth anniversary, under the Japanese CD label “Herb Classics”. In July 2020 she has released her second solo CD album, “Yoko Nishii plays Sergei Rachmaninov”.

She was awarded the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation for FY 2023 for her outstanding contributions as a pianist in promoting mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Croatia, as well as enhancing diplomatic relations between the two countries, through her long-term activities in both nations.

More information can be found at: <https://www.yokonishii.com/>