

Yayoi Ikawa

“Yayoi is a wonder, that comes along very rarely in each generation. A big intellect, with a big emotional spectrum, and totally unique sound... She can do anything she thinks or feels” –Gil Goldstein (arranger/pianist)

Born in Tokyo, Japan, but raised musically in New York, Yayoi is an experience in ingenuity and compassion. As a pianist, composer, arranger, and bandleader, Yayoi has worked in many countries. Being exposed to diverse music scene in New York after moving from Japan, Yayoi quickly adopted herself in various styles of music such as Jazz, Gospel, R&B, Soul, Classical and World music. After completing her studies at New School where she received the Henry and Gill Block scholarship, Yayoi was a faculty member at the International Jazz and Dance Academy in Slovenia along with her mentor Reggie Workman in 2003 and 2004.

After recording a straight ahead jazz piano trio on Nippon Crown release “Angel Eyes” in 2004, she self produced “Color of Dreams” in 2005 displaying her original compositions. Yayoi has toured nationally as well as internationally with her groups, and appeared International Jazz festivals in Japan, Italy, Haiti, France, Slovenia, and Costa Rica. In 2008, Yayoi started “The Bridge Project” to create musical dialogue between New York and Tokyo musicians in an experimental environment. In 2009, the project toured in Costa Rica through a sponsorship of U.S. Embassy. In 2018, Yayoi was invited to participate in Piano Kon Sa Ka Ekri, a piano festival in Martinique. She started to collaborate with local musicians immediately, and the project performed at Première Rencontre Autour du Piano in Guadeloupe. In 2019, Yayoi’s bridge project featuring Hatian vocalist Emeline Michel was featured in Sakura Matsuri, a celebration of Japanese culture in Brooklyn Botanical Garden. While working towards her master degree at NYU, Yayoi’s orchestra work for film was premiered at Lincoln Center in 2007. As a composer and arranger, Yayoi received commissions from Modern Music Society of Tokyo, the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and Montreal based sculpture David Baumflek.

Yayoi has worked with such legendary artists as Reggie Workman, Michael Carvin, Howard Johnson, Michal Urbaniak, Butch Morris, Craig Harris, Lenny Pickett, Frank Lacy, Lonnie Plaxico, Fostina Dixon, Salim Washington, Emeline Michel, James Germain, Daniel Bernard Roumain, The Meditations, Kaissa etc. Yayoi is a music director at First Baptist Church in Piscataway NJ, and a jazz piano instructor at City College of New York, Brooklyn College. She also holds a bachelor’s degree in International Studies from International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan. Her musical activities can be seen on her website www.yayoiikawa.net