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SATOKO, a Japanese Pianist Who is Soaring High with Global Success

SATOKO is a NY based pianist that performs internationally. She was asked by the United Nations to compose a theme for an event. We interviewed this young pianist who is also committed to serve as a composer.

Q1 You have been concertizing around the world with NY being the base of your activities. Could you elaborate on your activities?

I first came here right after I turned six, and performed in this city for the very first time when I was seven (the following year). NY is the capital of the world, I would say, and by giving performances in this city since I was a little girl gave me a lot of confidence. It made me feel, "If I could make it here, I could make it anywhere."

It was in the mid 90's that I started performing internationally in a full-fledged manner. Besides the United States, I played in France, Russia, England and Spain. Music is a universal language and I always tried to communicate with the audience regardless of the country I am in.

Q2 We heard that you were chosen by the United Nations as a composer of an event. Tell us more about it.

In 2006 per request by the United Nations I had a privilege of offering my music to its project called Public Service Announcement. This was a video message to the youth around the world to show the value and importance of public service. This experience became a turning point for my career, and led me to a full-fledged start as a composer. The message of then Secretary-General Kofi Annan as well as that of the current SG Ban Kimoon is being conveyed to those who aspire to devote themselves to public service.

On top of that UN radio programs, such as UN calling Asia which 15 million people around the world listen to, or UN Poverty Day Feature have broadcasted my pieces to accompany the news. My work, being chosen for the use by an worldly-known organization on peace, security and development, was able to touch the hearts of various people regardless of their nationalities. I am truly grateful to those who made all of this a reality.

Q3 I heard that renowned musicians in the world also have critically acclaimed your music. Could you give me some names of those who have commented on your work?

A professor at the Juilliard School of Music and well-known composer, Dr. Kendall D. Briggs, for example, kindly gave me such words as, “SATOKO has a very solid foundation of composition, as exemplified in her use of counterpoint. At the same time she is tremendously talented. SATOKO is a breath of fresh air in the music world.” I feel greatly honored by these words.

A professional koto player Ms. Miho Yamaji took it upon herself to listen to one of my new pieces that I am currently working on, and offered such encouraging words as, “SATOKO’s music sometimes sounds like film music, but there are moments that I hear melodic lines that remind me of heart-shaking sounds of Shostakovich’s. I sense ample flavor of Japanese music as well. My strong wish is that SATOKO write pieces for koto and piano, and we perform together.”

Q4 Could you please share with us your future plans of activities?

Most recently I released a single album “Anthem” on iTunes. In February “New York City (Instrumental Version)” and “Secret Rose Garden (Instrumental Version)” were released. Right now, I am working on a Requiem, which is composed/designed to include the family members and friends of the deceased to participate in the performance. Therefore I am doing my best to express their rollercoaster of complicated, painful emotions. My wish to release this piece before summer.

SATOKO

Born in Tokyo. Satoko taking piano lessons at the age of four. She moved to the US at the age of six and gave her first public performance in New York City in the following year. After returning to Japan she appeared in renowned venues numerous times. Graduated from SUNY Purchase (MFA Piano) and at Manhattan School of Music (MM Piano). Currently she is New York based and actively performing and composing.