

**Mayako Kubo** is a composer of Japanese descent.



After graduation as a pianist from Osaka College of Music, she moved to Vienna in 1972 to study composition with Haubenstock-Ramati and Friedrich Cerha, as well as music history and philosophy. In 1980 she moved to Germany where she continued her compositional studies with Helmut Lachenmann in Hanover. In 1985, Kubo finally settled in Berlin, where she became a founding member of the Society for Contemporary Music 'ZeitMusik', organizing concerts, symposia and multimedia events. Between 1990 and 1994 she lived and worked in Marino near Rome.

Kubo's compositional style is rooted in her classical piano training, the early studies in electronic music at the Institute of Electro-acoustic and Experimental Music Vienna, and practical experience with a variety of different media such as dance, drama, and performance art.

In the 1990's, in response to the vibrant musical ambience of Rome, Kubo reviewed her musical beliefs and moved away from an intellectual conception of art. She now embraces traditional 'bourgeois' forms such as the opera, and explores a freer expressive world. Kubo does not share the view that this signifies a turning away from the avant-garde and says: "Thirds and tramway noise – both have been with us, all the time".

The premiere of the opera *Rashomon* 1996 in Graz brought the composer her greatest success to date. Kubo strikes a true balance between two major sources of inspiration: Japanese literature and European music traditions. Less concerned with structuralist principles, Kubo is aiming for expressive immediacy in her works. The social conditions and the structure of violence are the subject of many of Kubo's compositions, as is the *Tristan* theme of the irreconcilability of passion and convention.

Though living and working in Europe, Kubo has never followed any particular European compositional trend but has always preserved her musical independence. She very early developed her own compositional language, an eclectic stylistic palette with great formal variety and versatility in her works. To Kubo, rhythm and harmony are the most important musical parameters.

Kubo says: "My aim is that my music should be transparent, without superfluous sounds. Not 'L'art pour l'art', but plain language. It is not easy to state one's opinion clearly as plain language might be misunderstood. But I would rather cause some misunderstanding of this kind than one caused by vagueness."

The premiere of the musical theater „Hyperion Fragmente“ (2002 in Rheinsberg, 2009 in Tokyo) and the premiere of the revised and Japanese version of the opera „Rashomon“ (2002 in Tokyo) were enormously successful with audience and experts alike. The staged works prove that it is through music that the pieces can best be expressed. This was confirmed by the great success of the world premiere of Kubo's latest opera "Osan" in February 2005 at the New National Theater in Tokyo. On January 2009, there was the debut concert of YACOB, the Young Asian Chamber Orchestra Berlin, which Kubo established in 2008 and where she is the art director. Her third opera "Der Spinnfaden" (Spider's Thread) had its premiere 2010 in Berlin. Mayako Kubo is regularly involving herself in youth projects. She composes children's operas and musical theater, and working together with children has become an important part of her work. One example of that is "Das Meer" (The Sea) from 2014, which she wrote for the youth orchestra Landesjugendensemble Neue Musik, and which was met with great resonance from the young musicians as well as the audience.

2014 Kubo was invited as composer-in-residence at the Mondsee music festival where her first string quartet had its premiere with the Aurn Quartet. In fall 2014 Kubo was invited to Japan for a children's opera project at Kiyoku Elementary School. There she created the opera "Dreams" together with 132 children. For her composition „Sanriku Lieder“ (for victims of Tsunami 2011) got the Kyoto Philharmonic-Chamber Orchestra Sagawa music price 2017. 2019/20 Kubo was invited as composer-in-residence at the Radio-Symphony Orchestra Berlin. 2020 she was a first price winner of the woman composer competition of GEDOK. Also she was nominated as a German Music writer price for 2020.

Kubo has been a fellow of the Japan Foundation (1999), received a scholarship of the National Music Academy Rheinsberg (2000-2001), and is currently fellow of the Hanse Institute for Advanced Study (2002), Bogliasco Foundation (2006). She has been a fellow of 2004 and 2017/18 Paris Artists in Residence by the cultural ministry of Berlin.

Since the mid 1980's, Mayako Kubo has been giving lectures on contemporary music and composition at various universities of music and cultural institutes throughout the world, for example in Fukushima, Kyoto, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, and Tokyo. Her compositions have been performed at major international music festivals, Donaueschinger Musicfestival, Wien Modern, Maerzmusik and have been interpreted by renowned artists: Peter Etvös, Sylvain Cambreling, Bernd Kontalsky, Stefan Lano, Herbert Henck, Martin Mumelter, Eberhard Blum, Konrad Junghänel, South German Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart (Süddeutsches Radiosymphonie Orchester Stuttgart), Southwest Radio Orchestra (Südwestfunk Orchester), Philharmonic Orchestra Graz (Grazer Philharmonie), Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Schola Cantorum Stuttgart, Klangforum, Ensemble Modern, Sonar Quartett, Hagen-Quartett, Auryon Quartett. Kubo's oeuvre, currently more than 160 compositions, has been published by Ariadne Verlag, Breitkopf & Härtel and Verlag Neue Musik.  
[www. Mayakokubo.de](http://www.Mayakokubo.de) contact: [info@mayakokubo.de](mailto:info@mayakokubo.de)