



*Yoko Hirota, Pianist*

# *Career Highlights*

## *Education*

- Graduate studies in performance of contemporary music with Louis-Philippe Pelletier at McGill University
- Doctor of Music Degree in piano performance from McGill University
- Studies in contemporary music with Gabor Eckhardt and Gabor Csalog at *The Liszt Academy of Music* and *The Bartok Music Conservatory* in Hungary, Herbert Henck in Germany, and Florent Boffard, former pianist with *L'Ensemble InterContemporain* and professor at *Le Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique* in Paris, France

## *Piano Performance*

- Specialist in performance of 20th and 21st century piano repertoire
- Solo, chamber and concerto performances in North America, Europe and Asia
- In 1996, invited by the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo to perform in recital
- Invited to perform the premieres of numerous compositions including Bruce Mather's Quintet for Piano and Saxophones at the *13th World Saxophone Congress (2000)*, and *Oiseau de givre* (Robert Lemay), a work for piano and orchestra written for her (2006)
- From 1998 through 2003, invited to be staff accompanist in the studio of the prestigious saxophone master, Jean-Marie Londeix, at the *Domaine Forget Summer Academy*
- Invited by Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne to perform the Canadian premiere of the demanding 30 minute composition, *Joy*, for 23 musicians and tape by the Finish composer, Magnus Lindberg
- Numerous performances broadcast on *Société Radio-Canada* including Schoenberg's Opus 23, Takemitsu's *Piano Distance* for solo piano and his chamber work, *Quatrin II*, Denisov's *Sonate pour saxophone et piano*, and Berio's *Due Pezzi* for violin & piano
- Solo piano CD "The Piano Music of Arnold Schoenberg with 17 Fragments" released in 2005 to critical acclaim (*Phoenix Records*)
- Future projects include another CD of contemporary piano music and a tour of Robert Lemay's *Oiseau de givre* for piano and orchestra [For more information contact Michael Dufresne –President, Michael Gerard Management Group [www.mgmg.ca](http://www.mgmg.ca).]
- Currently Professor of Piano at Laurentian University (Ontario, Canada), and co-founder and co-artistic director of 5-Penny New Music concerts ([www.5pennynewmusic.ca](http://www.5pennynewmusic.ca)), a non-profit contemporary music organization

## *Recent Press Acclaim*

**THE GAZETTE**, Montreal

*“In Joy (23 musicians and tape) of 1990, Magnus Lindberg gave prominence to piano and celesta, played distinctively by Yoko Hirota.”*

**THE GLOBE AND MAIL**, Toronto [Essential Tracks]

*“The last of Arnold Schoenberg’s Fragments for Piano is a pensive, expressive miniature that does its work in scarcely a minute.”*

**DAILY PRESS**, Timmins

*“Wonderful composers all, their spirits must have felt delight in Saturday’s well structured recital performed by Canadian pianist Yoko Hirota.”*

**WHOLENOTE MAGAZINE**, Toronto

*“This recording (Schoenberg Piano Music and his 17 Fragments), by the Japanese-Canadian pianist Yoko Hirota, . . .precise and keenly projective performances.”*

**ARGUS OBSERVER**, Oregon

*“Her interpretation of Beethoven and Mendelssohn was sensitive and exhibited the highest level of proficiency.”*

**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSIC LIBRARIES REVIEW**

*“Hiroka’s performance of this music (Schoenberg Piano Music and his 17 Fragments) is bold and thoughtful. Her interest in the composer’s use of timbre and sonority is easily apparent in her playing. There is careful attention to nuance, to articulation, and a wonderful range of sonorous effects in the music.”*

## *Awards and Honours*

- Recipient of several study grants from The Canada Council for the Arts
- Clara Lichtenstein Piano Competition / Special mention prize, Montreal, 1996
- Nutley Symphony Concerto Competition / Semi-finalist, New Jersey, 1992
- Baird Concerto Competition winner, NY, 1988
- Herbert A. Morse Scholarship / McGill University, 1995-1996
- International Student Scholarship / McGill University, 1994
- Aspen Accompanying Scholarship, 1990
- Aspen Music School Scholarship, 1990
- Long Island Summer Chamber Music Festival Fellowship, 1989
- Pi Kappa Lambda / State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, 1989
- Com Laude / State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, 1985
- Baird Competition Scholarship / State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, 1984



## *Yoko Hirota, Pianist*

*Having been praised by the press as “precise and keenly projective” and demonstrating “the highest level of proficiency,” Japanese-Canadian pianist **Yoko Hirota** is considered one of the leading interpreters of contemporary piano repertory of her generation. Her first CD, “The Piano Music of Arnold Schoenberg with 17 Fragments,” was released to critical acclaim and was recently listed as one of Essential Tracks by The Globe and Mail.*

*Ms. Hirota has performed in North America, Europe and Asia and has been invited to give the premieres of a number of contemporary compositions, including the Canadian premiere with the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne of the challenging composition, Joy (for 23 musicians and tape), by the renowned Finnish composer Magnus Lindberg. Most recently she performed the world premiere of “Oiseau de givre (Bird of Frost),” a work for piano and orchestra composed for her by the Canadian composer, Robert Lemay\*.*

*Yoko Hirota has studied contemporary music performance with some of the world’s leading pedagogues and her excellence in the interpretation of contemporary music is reflected in the many awards and honours she has received, and the popularity of her master classes and workshops on “Teaching Contemporary Piano Music”.*

*Ms. Hirota holds a Doctor of Music Degree in piano performance from McGill University and is currently Professor of Piano at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. She is also co-founder and co-artistic director of the non-profit contemporary-music organization, 5-Penny New Music Concerts. (<http://www.5pennynewmusic.ca>). [\*For more information, contact Michael Dufresne –President, Michael Gerard Management Group ([www.mgmg.ca](http://www.mgmg.ca)).]*