

Jo Kondo, Composer

Born in Tokyo in 1947, Jo Kondo graduated from the composition department of Tokyo University of Arts in 1972. He spent a year in New York on a grant from the John D. Rockefeller III Fund in 1977-78. In 1979, he taught as guest lecturer at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, invited by the Canada Council, and in 1986 resided in London as a British Council Senior Fellow. In 1987, he was a composer in residence at Hartt School of Music, Hartford, USA, and in 1987 and 2000 taught at Dartington International Summer School in England. In 2005 he was invited by Eastman School of Music at Rochester University as Howard Hanson Guest Professor. Kondo has given lectures on his own music in many institutions in Europe and North America, such as Harvard University, New England Conservatory of Music, Edinburgh University, York University, Universität zu Köln, Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg, Conservatorium van Amsterdam. He was a professor at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo, Elisabeth University of Music in Hiroshima and Showa University of Music, Kawasaki, Japan. He taught also at Tokyo University of Arts and Toho Gakuen School of Music for many years. At present, he is a professor emeritus at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo. In 1980 Kondo founded the Musica Practica Ensemble, a chamber orchestra devoted to contemporary music, and was the artistic director of the group until its disbandment in 1991.

He has written more than 180 compositions, ranging from solo pieces to orchestral and electronic works, which have been widely performed in Japan, North America, and Europe. Almost all the works he has written have been published by UYMP (University of York Music Press) in UK, and C. F. Peters, New York. These were recorded on Hat Art, Wergo, ALM, Fontec, Deutsche Grammophon, and other labels.

He has received commissions from numerous organizations, ensembles and musicians. His music has been featured at many international music festivals including Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (UK), Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Italy), Festival d'Automne à Paris (France), Almeida Festival (UK), Tanglewood Festival (USA), etc. Performers associated with his music include Paul Zukofsky, Oliver Knussen, Satoko Inoue, Ives Ensemble and Nieuw Ensembles in the Netherlands, London Sinfonietta, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in UK, Ensemble recherché and Ensemble 'L'ART POUR L'ART in Germany, Quatuor Bozzini in Canada, Ensemble Nomad in Japan and many others.

He was on the jury of the Gaudeamus International Composer's competition, the Music Competition of Japan, the Akutagawa Award for young Japanese composers, Toru Takemitsu Composition Award, the Kyoto Prize and many others. He is also known as a regular host of NHK radio programs on contemporary music for more than 35 years.

He received the Otaka Prize (the best Japanese orchestra work in the year) for his orchestra piece "In the Woods" in 1991, and the Nakajima Kenzo Prize for his achievements in the Japanese contemporary music in 2005. Jo Kondo was elected as a foreign honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2012. In 2018, he was awarded "the 68th Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Art Encouragement Prize". In 2024, the Suntory Foundation for the Arts awarded him the 55th (2023) Suntory Music Award, which is presented to individuals or ensembles for notable contributions to the development of Western-style music in Japan. He was named "Person of Cultural Merit" by the Japanese government in 2024.

He served as chairman of Japan Society for Contemporary Music (the International Society for Contemporary Music – Japanese Section) from 2018 to 2025 and continues to serve on its board.

UYMP (University of York Music Press)

www.uymp.co.uk

Edition Peters

www.edition-peters.com

Ongaku No Tomo Sha

www.ongakunotomo.co.jp

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