

MAKOTO KURIYA

Jazz Pianist / Musical Producer

Being influenced by black community during college years, Kuriya is known for his soulful playing style. The transparency of the subtle tones and yet brisk and razor-sharp rhythm sweep over the audience. As he receives increased recognition in Europe, he has established implicit trust for his genuine musicianship and draws people's attention as an artist as well as a music producer.

Biography



■ College days in the U.S. – starting out as a jazz pianist

Born in Kobe, Japan. Graduated from West Virginia University with a major in linguistics.

While in college, Kuriya began performing at local clubs. After graduation, he seriously started his music career as a jazz pianist and toured in the United States, performing in jazz festivals around the country and TV shows with musicians including Grammy winning Chuck Mangione and Nathan Davis, an authority on ethnomusicology. He also performed with many virtuosos such as Donald Byrd, Toots Thielmans, Janes Moody and Tom Brown, among others.

He was an instructor of jazz at the University of Pittsburgh. And while in the U.S., he released his first leader album "Always Your Friend." Back to Japan in 1990, he joined and went on tour with Terumasa Hino Group. Also with the release of an album with longtime friends such as Marvin Smith, James Genus and Gary Thomas, he started his solo career.

■ Performing and producing music in Japan

To date, Kuriya has released 14 leader albums. In 1998, his performing the ending theme of "Neo Genesis Evangelion" led to the release of a jazz compilation covering theme music for animated works and drew much attention. Kuriya has since been performing the soundtracks of "Evangelion" series to this date. His latest work "Art for Life" commemorates the 20th anniversary of his debut with a total of 27 artists showcasing the diversity of jazz and has received acclaim at home and abroad.

With his high musicality, Kuriya has gained credibility from various quarters to produce music for numerous collaborations, concerts and events. He also writes and produces songs for famous Japanese jazz artists and best-selling pop artists including Takeshi Ito and Ken Hirai as well as many jingles, TV show theme tunes and film scores. Recent years, he's been active in discovering and fostering young talents by, for instance, organizing YouTube based "Ad-Lib Competition."

■ Go abroad – International performances

In 2004, Kuriya participated in International Music Day celebrations at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to represent Asia and played with such world famous artists as Johnny Griffin, Billy Cobham and Jon Faddis. Since then, he has been performing worldwide with his own group. In addition to appearing on various music festivals including Jazzy Colors (Paris), City Of London Festival (London), Jazz Now Festival (Sydney), Cologne Jazz Night (Köln), Tanjazz Festival (Morocco), Cairo Jazz Festival (Egypt), Steinway Festival (London) and London Jazz Festival (London), he is giving many performances, jazz sessions and workshops in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia.

He also has made oversea media appearances including coverage on front page of "Al-Ahram Weekly" the leading English written paper of Egypt, broadcasted on BBC, on Hungary National TV, on Poland National Radio show, and exclusively featured on the online jazz site of America's national public station "Voice of America". As an internationally acclaimed artist (with potential of) being a cultural bridge for foreign artists and listeners, Kuriya is expected to make further steps.

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recent activities

Overseas activities

- Oct. 2004 Performed for International Music Day celebrations at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris representing Asia.



←Playing with such jazz giants as John Faddis (tp) and Johnny Griffin (sax).

→With the late maestro, Johnny Griffin.



- Nov. 2005 European tour at five venues in four cities (Paris, Köln, Rome, Birmingham).
 - The Japan Cultural Institute in Cologne, Germany
 - The Japan Cultural Institute in Rome, Italy
 - Jazzy Colors Festival in Paris, France (2 stages)
 - Conservatoire Birmingham MYJO guest appearance, United Kingdom

- 2006 Produced JAPAN-AUSTRALIA JAZZ ORCHESTRA (JAJO) for the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange.
 - Tokyo Jazz Festival in Tokyo, Japan
 - Power House in Brisbane, Australia
 - Jazz Now Festival in Sydney, Australia
 - Bennetts Lane in Melbourne, Australia



Performed for JAZZ NOW FESTIVAL at Opera House, Sydney.



- Jul. 2006 European tour including five concerts in three cities (Köln, London, Paris).
 - City of London Festival in London, United Kingdom (2 stages)
 - Cologne Jazz Night in Cologne, Germany
 - Franc Pinot in Paris, France (2 nights)
- May 2007 European tour including eight concerts in three cities (Paris, Rome, Tangier).
 - Lecture: at Didier Lockwood CMDL, France
 - Tanjazz Festival in Tangier, Morocco (2 stages)
 - Saint Jean Café / Chez Fernand in Paris, France
 - The Japan Cultural Institute in Rome, Italy (2 nights)

- Oct. 2008 Performed at Taichung Jazz Festival in Taiwan with his own group "RHYTHMATRIX."



→Taichung Jazz Festival. Got an enthusiastic encore and his CDs were immediately sold out.
←Audience.



Overseas activities

- Mar. 2010 Performed at Cairo Jazz Festival, Egypt, with his own group "TOKYO FREEDOM SOUL."
 - Cairo Jazz Festival in Cairo, Egypt (2 stages)
 - Lecture: at Conservatory in Cairo, Egypt

- Mar. 2010 European tour including eight concerts in six cities (Budapest, Brussels, Wales, London, Köln, Paris).
 - Lecture: at Liszt Music Academy and Kodolanyi John College
 - Take 5 in Budapest, Hungary
 - Sounds Jazz Club in Belgium, Brussels
 - Chez Papa in Paris, France
 - Lecture: and Live for Torfaen Jazz Society in Wales, United Kingdom
 - Pizza Express JAZZ CLUB in London, United Kingdom
 - The Japan Cultural Institute in Cologne, Germany

- Apr. 2011 European tour including six concerts in three cities (Paris, London, Budapest).
 - Budapest Jazz Club in Budapest, Hungary
 - Bekescsaba in Cegled, Hungary
 - Steinway Festival in London, United Kingdom
 - Posk Jazz Café in London, United Kingdom

- 2011 Played live on BBC radio broadcast (UK). Featured on the jazz site of the US national public broadcasting station "Voice of America."

<http://blogs.voanews.com/jazz-beat/2011/06/24/>

- Oct. 2012 European tour including eight concerts in five cities (Roma, Szczecin, Budapest, Paris, London).
 - The Japan Cultural Institute in Rome, Italy
 - Lecture: at Conservatory in Szczecin, Poland
 - Szczecin Philharmonic Hall in Szczecin, Poland
 - Espace Olivier Messiaen in Paris, France
 - L'Improviste, Le Canape in Paris, France
 - A38 in Budapest, Hungary
 - Lecture: at FUGA in Budapest, Hungary
 - London Jazz Festival in London, United Kingdom

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↑ Received an enthusiastic response at Cairo Jazz Festival.
 ←Photos and an interview of Kuriya are on the full front page of "Al-Ahram," the largest-circulation paper in Egypt.

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recent activities

- Mar. 2013 European tour including three concerts in two cities (Paris, London).
- incl. Japan Cultural Institute in Paris and 2 days at Pizza Express Jazz Club in London.
- Apr. & Nov. 2013 Makoto Kuriya – Sylwester Ostrowski Tour in 4 cities of Poland.
- incl. "European Music Fair" at "the Palace of Culture and Science" in Warsaw.
- Apr. & Sep. 2014 Makoto Kuriya – Sylwester Ostrowski Tour in 3 cities of Poland.
- incl. performance at King's Palace in Warsaw as part of celebrating 25th year of democracy of Poland, preceded by the president Komorowski's speech.
- Opening performance at Szczecin Philharmonic Hall.
- Oct. 2014 Concert at the United Nations in NYC and 12 performances in 6 cities
- incl. London, Milan, Rome, Szczecin and Charlotte NC.

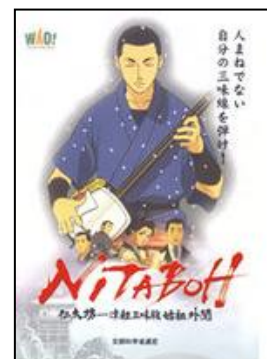
■ As a concert producer

- 2005 Produced the concert series "The Songs" sponsored by Nikkei Times at Tokyo Kioi Hall.
- 2004–2005 Produced the concert "Kohsaku Yamada New Collaboration"
sponsored by Japan Music-Drama Society at Tokyo Kioi Hall.
- 2007 Produced Nikkei "WAGAMAGA" Jazz Live at Tokyo Suntory Hall Blue Rose.
- 2007 Produced "Seasonal Concert – Autumn" at Tokyo Quest Hall.
- 2008~ Produced the concert series "JAZZ ON CINEMA" at Kobe Matsukata Hall for four years.
- 2008~ Produced the concert series "Sankei Living Special Live" at Osaka Resona Hall
for three years.
- 2009 Produced "The Carpenters Memorial Concert" at Tokyo Suginami Koukaido.
- 2010–2011 Produced the live concert series "Soul Switch" at Tokyo Yamaha Ginza Studio.
- 2011 Produced the concert "HEART BEAT JAZZ" at Tokyo Ginza Yamaha Hall.
- 2012 Produced the concert "A Relationship between Cinema and Jazz" at Tokyo U-Port Hall.
- 2013–14 Produced the concert "Jazz meets Soul" at Inagi i-Plaza Hall.
- Others Many domestic tours with his own group and guest appearances.



■ As a film music composer/arranger

- "Nitaboh, the Shamisen Master" (Hiromitsu Agatsuma performing, 2004)
Awards include: The 1st Prize of Public Award for Best Animated Film at the 11th, Lyon Asian Film Festival (France), The Grand Prize of Feature Films category at SICAF 2006 (Korea), the biggest animated film festival in Asia, The Best Picture Youth Jury Award at REEL 2 Real International, Film Festival for Youth (Canada)
- "Furusato Japan" (2007)
Awards include: The 1st Prize of Public Award for Best Animated Film at the 12th Lyon Asian Film Festival
- "August Symphony" (Ai Kawashima performing, 2009)
Awards include: The 2nd Prize of Public Award for Best Animated Film and the 3rd Prize of Junior Jury Award at the 15th Lyon Asian Film Festival



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recent activities

■As a commercial music composer/arranger/producer

- 2005-7 Produced music for the special contents of Nissan Murano website for three years.
- 2006 Directed music for the film “Fugaku Hyakkei – Haruka Naru Basho”.
- 2012 Composed and recorded the opening theme music for BS Nihon TV show “TOUGE.”
- 2013 Composed and recorded the opening theme music for BS TBS TV show “Sore Ga Shiritai – Nippon Omoshiroi Ne.”
- Others: Commercial songs for Mizuho Securities Co. Ltd and Honda Internavi, theme music for NHK Radio Broadcasting Station and NHK FM radio programs, music for NHK ETV show and the movie “Fucha – Senritsu No Kanata He”, soundtracks for the movie “Ippen” and TBS TV show “ZONE,” among others.



■As a record producer for artists

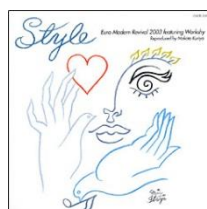
- Produced albums for various artists including, among others, Ken Hirai, Aki Yashiro, Marlene, Shanti, Takeshi Ito, Asako Toki, Misato Watanabe, MAYA, Junko Makiyama and Hiromitsu Agatsuma.

■As a recording musician

- Played in the soundtrack for the TV and theatrical version of “Neo Genesis Evangelion” and “Bleach”.
- Played in albums of various artists including NAOTO, Tomotaka Okamoto, Taro Hakase, KANKAWA, Isao Suzuki, Jim O’ Rourke, Asako Toki, Karen Aoki, SHANTI and more.

■Appearance on TV, Radio and Internet programs

- Hosting Kyoto KBS radio show “BEAT ON JAZZ with Makoto Kuriya.”
- Writes regular columns at Jazz information sites “You Play Jazz?” and “KOB Ejazz.jp.”
- 2010-12 Appeared on NHK Kobe TV program “JAZZ LIVE in KOBE.”
- 2011 Appeared on Kyoto KBS TV show “Gozan No Okuri-Bi.”
- 2011 Appeared on BBC Radio Channel 3.
- 2011 Featured on “JAZZ BEAT,” the jazz site of the U.S. national public broadcast station “Voice of America.”
- 2011 Appeared on NHK BS1 TV show “Chikyū-TV El Mundo.”
- 2012 Appeared on TV asahi ch. CS-TV show “Gen-ryu JAZZ.”
- 2012 Appeared on Kyoto KBS TV show “Tendai Sho-myō No Yube.”
- 2013 Appeared on Hungary National Broadcast TV show “Jazz Live”
- 2014 Appeared on Poland National Broadcast Radio show “Makoto Kuriya – Sylwester Ostrowski Quintet Live.”



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recent activities

■Charity works

- 2010: Produced CDs and gave charity live concerts at the hospitals for people fighting illness in collaboration with Mimei Sakamoto, a cartoonist and commentator, who revealed that she was suffering from an intractable disease.
- 2011: Gave charity live concerts in Hungary to raise relief money for the Great East Japan Earthquake.
- 2011: Gave charity live concerts in Okayama and Tokyo to raise relief money for the Great East Japan Earthquake.
- 2011: Wrote a song for the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction Support website.
- 2011: Took part in the Tap Project, which supports UNICEF activities to provide access to clean and safe water to all people of the world.
- 2012: Performed in the charity concert "Tokyo-Manila Jazz & Arts Festival 2012" aimed at providing musical instruments to children in Philippines.
- 2012-14: Conducts charity activities to deliver live concerts to people in areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.



■Endorcement: YAMAHA corporation

Makoto Kuriya performed with....

Chuck Mangione, Nathan Davis, Jon Faddis, Johnny Griffin, Billy Cobham, Donald Byrd, James Moody, Toots Thielmans, Curtis Fuller, Chico Freeman, Arthur Blythe, Billy Drummond, Mark Whitfield, Bennie Maupin, John B. Williams, Wallace Roney, Paul Jackson, Bill Watrous, Tom Brown, Michael O'Neill, Eric Marienthal, Maurice Brown, Stanley Jordan, Abraham Laboriel, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Dennis Chambers, Carroll Thompson, Ron Brown, Daniel Humair, Stephane Huchard, Philippe Chayeb, Pierre Boussagnet, Gianluca Renzi, Tchavolo Schmitt, Costel Nitescu, Youn SunNah, Zakir Hussain, Michael Paulo, Gary Thomas, Rick Margitza, Toninho Horta, Shiela Jordan, Mike Metheny, James Genus, Jack Walrath, Steve Wilson, Santi Debriano, Winard Harper, Pascal Schumacher, David Linx, Marc Godfroid, Nelson Veras, Jim Pugh, Tommy Campbell, Tony Lakatos, Peter Sarik, Terumasa Hino, Tiger Ohkoshi, Kazumi Watanabe, Hiromitsu Agatsuma, Eitetsu Hayashi, Masataka Hirano, Takeshi Ito (T-SQUARE), New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, etc.



■Official Site: <http://members.jcom.home.ne.jp/tothemax/>

■FACEBOOK: <http://www.facebook.com/makoto.kuriya.9>

■Contact: Music Seraph (Kishida) : E-mail=info@music-seraph.com

■Jazz Festival:

“A fabulous pianist integrating all genres of music into the world of Jazz, expressing all aspects of music that TOKYO can give. The most important artist that anybody in the world should listen to.”
— Atsuko Yashima (Producer of “Tokyo Jazz”, NHK Enterprises, Inc.)

■FM theme music:

“Makoto Kuriya is really good at translating invisible things, atmosphere or mood, into music. The theme music of the FM radio program that I am in charge of, which I asked Makoto to compose, represents the concept of the show brilliantly.” -- Yasuhisa Matsudaira (broadcast program producer)

■Music for theatrical animated movies:

“So far, I have had Mr. Kuriya as the music director for three animated films. I chose him because in each of the film, the music has a major role to play. As a result, the movies were well-received in film festivals abroad and won many awards in Czech, France and Korea among others. The music, in particular, was highly praised.” -- Masahiro Murakami (general producer) “

■Nissan Murano website contents:

“At Nissan Murano, we focus on enhancing website marketing and have produced contents on the theme of “Session” since 2005. We had Mr. Kuriya take charge of the music for the contents and perform serious jazz sessions, each of which we made recordings of. In the commercial music business, it’s not very often that you offer a single artist to write music for three consecutive years. Nevertheless, Murano website kept using Mr. Kuriya for three years and it eventually led to making of a CD.” -- a Hakuodo DY representative “

■Makoto Kuriya Live (voices of the audience)

“When I listen to the live performance of Makoto Kuriya, I can relax and face my real self. It made me feel like I can work hard again from tomorrow.”

“It was just fun! The layer of the sound and the musical arrangement were so good that I couldn’t help smiling.”

“It was the best live performance that went far beyond Tokyo, New York or New Orleans but on the cosmic scale.”

“I had the ‘overwhelmed by the piano virtuosity’ experience after so long...! It’s too great! I felt excitement

through not the five but all my senses! I am dazed! I’ve never imagined this musical instrument could make such a sound. It was amazing as new discovery, sensation and emotion were shared!”

“Listening to his masterpiece “The Voyager,” I could see the image of the earth from the space. I could almost get addicted. Thank you so much for a wonderful time.”

“I’ve got goose bumps. My soul was shaken. It’s indescribable. It’s cosmic. BRAVO!!”

“It was a night to remember in my life. I’m really happy and glad to be alive to spend time like this. Thank you so much!!”

■Overseas

“The performance of Makoto was acclaimed very successful and impressive with a strong musical opening that showcased the technical excellence of the musicians! Audience of CJF reacted highly to that performance as the show went in an ascending energetic flow!!
----- Cairo Jazz Festival producer

“The performance will undoubtedly be a show to remember, as it will be a colossal of two extraordinary pianists coming together expressing their musical minds and inspirations!”
-----Musical producer

