

Toshio Hosokawa, Composer

Biography

"I am searching for a new form of Japanese spiritual culture and music, one through which I can remain true to myself as well as to my origins. We need to examine the Western world again, more carefully, in order to see ourselves objectively and to truly get to know ourselves."

Toshio Hosokawa, Japan's pre-eminent living composer, creates his distinctive musical language from the fascinating relationship between Western avant-garde art and traditional Japanese culture. His music is strongly connected to the aesthetic and spiritual roots of the Japanese arts (such as calligraphy), as well as to those of Japanese court music (such as Gagaku). He gives musical expression to notions of beauty rooted in transience: "We hear the individual notes and appreciate, at the same time, the process of how the notes are born and then die: a sound landscape of continual 'becoming' that is animated in itself."

*Born in Hiroshima in 1955, Toshio Hosokawa came to Germany in 1976, where he studied composition with Isang Yun, Brian Ferneyhough, and later, Klaus Huber. Although his initial compositions drew inspiration from the Western avant-garde, he gradually built a new musical world between East and West. He first gained widespread recognition with the 2001 world premiere of his oratorio *Voiceless Voice in Hiroshima*.*

*Toshio Hosokawa has written numerous orchestral works in recent years, including *After the Storm* for two sopranos and orchestra on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and *Woven Dreams*, commissioned as part of the Roche Commissions (Cleveland Orchestra, Franz Welser-Möst, Lucerne Festival 2010). *Circulating Ocean*, premiered by the Vienna Philharmonic at the Salzburg Festival in 2005, has also become part of the repertoire of many orchestras. The organ concerto *Umarmung*, premiered in 2017 by Christian Schmitt and the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra under Jakub Hrůša, was performed by the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna at the Vienna Konzerthaus in 2018 and again at Suntory Hall in 2019. The orchestral work *Uzu*, premiered in 2019 by the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, received the Otaka Prize for the best Japanese composition of the year.*

*The focus of the past season was the ensemble work *The Flood*, premiered by the Ensemble intercontemporain at the Philharmonie de Paris, as well as the world premiere of the violin concerto *Genesis* for soloist Veronika Eberle, a commission from the Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the NHK Symphony Orchestra, the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra (SOČR), and the Grafenegg Festival. Toshio Hosokawa started the 2021/22 season as composer-in-residence at the Grafenegg Festival, where his violin concerto and the world premiere of a wind fanfare were on the programme. In December, the musical fairy tale *Deine Freunde aus der Ferne* will be launched at the Philharmonie Luxembourg, in which Toshio Hosokawa and the writer Yoko Tawada take the young audience on a dream journey to distant worlds. The work will be performed by the ensemble United Instruments of Lucilin and the narrator Salome Kammer, directed by Nelly Danker.*

*Many of Toshio Hosokawa's earlier music theatre works are now part of the repertoire of major opera houses. His first opera *Vision of Lear*, which was received with great praise at the 1998 Munich Biennale, was followed in 2004 by *Hanjo*, a work staged by the choreographer Anna Teresa de Keersmaecker and co-commissioned by the Brussels opera house La Monnaie and the Aix-en-Provence Festival, which has since been performed on numerous stages. The opera *Matsukaze*, which like *Hanjo* is based on Japanese Noh theatre, was first performed in 2011 in choreographer Sasha Waltz's production at the La Monnaie opera house in Brussels and has been revived many times. The monodrama *The Raven* for mezzo-soprano and ensemble, premiered in Brussels in 2012, has also been staged in the meantime. In quick succession, Toshio Hosokawa has presented three more operas: *Stilles Meer* debuted at the Hamburg State Opera in 2016, the one-act melodrama *Futari Shizuka (The Maiden from the Sea)* premiered in Paris in 2017, and was followed in 2018 by *Erdbeben. Träume* at Stuttgart Opera, based on a libretto by Büchner Prize winner Marcel Bayer. In 2020, the musical material from the opera was also used to create the four-movement orchestral suite *Erdbeben. Träume*.*

*Toshio Hosokawa continues to compose works that focus on nature themes, such as the horn concerto *Moment of Blossoming* for Stefan Dohr and the Berlin Philharmonic (2011). Since 2003 he has been composing a loose sequence*

entitled Voyages for solo instrument and ensemble. In some of these works he combines Japanese and European instruments, as in Voyages X Nozarashi for shakuhachi and ensemble. Traditional Japanese instruments such as the shō or koto also feature elsewhere in his oeuvre, which comprises some 140 compositions.

Toshio Hosokawa has received numerous awards and prizes. He has been a member of the Academy of Fine Arts Berlin since 2001 and was a fellow of Berlin's Institute for Advanced Study in 2006/7 and 2008/9. In 2013/14 he was composer in residence at the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra as well as at the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra from 2019 till 2021. In 2018 he received the Japan Foundation award and recently he was awarded the Goethe Medal for his services to cultural exchange between Japan and Germany. He is artistic director of the Takefu International Music Festival and artistic director of the Suntory Hall International Program for Music Composition.

Season 2021/22

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