

Tiger Okoshi

Trumpeter, composer, arranger, producer
*Leader of the **Tiger Okoshi Quartet***
Professor, Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA. U.S.A.
Yamaha Artist

Toru “Tiger” Okoshi was born in the Year of the Tiger on March 21 1950, just outside of Osaka (Ashiya city, Hyogo) As a child he was, in fact, devoted to painting as he loves today. At 13, he had an enlightening experience to see Louis Armstrong Perform live in Osaka, Japan, only 6 months after he begun to play the trumpet. ”He was painting the air with his trumpet” recalls Okoshi. Today, Okoshi often describes the relationship with his horn: “When I play, I want to paint the air with my colorful tone. Choices between long or short strokes, quick or slow, high in the canvas or low, brighter color or darker, with a fat brush or a pen. Paint the air one note at a time.”

In 1972, after graduating from Kwansei Gakuin University with a bachelor of commerce, he married Akemi Usui. They flew to the US to honeymoon, speaking no English. “We took a Greyhound bus across country from Los Angeles, but when we arrived in Boston, somehow we knew that we couldn’t go back.” They decided to sell their return tickets and paid the tuition at Berklee College of Music. Tiger graduated in 1975 receiving the highest honor of summa cum laude. During his 3 years at Berklee, Tiger performed at Carnegie Hall in New York in 1974 with British composer Mike Gibbs sharing the concert with legendary Bill Evans trio. After graduation, he went on the tour with Buddy Rich orchestra.

In 1976, he formed “Tiger’s Baku” the popular Boston fusion group that received many awards: Boston Magazine’s Best Jazz Band (1988), Boston Music Awards’ Best Jazz Band and the Best Horn Player (1988, 1989 and 1990), and Boston Phoenix/WFAX Best Music Poll in 1992. Grammy Award winner guitarist Bill Frisell was an original member in Tiger’s Baku. Baku is a mythical creature that eats people’s nightmares.

In 1977, Tiger received Outstanding Composer & Arranger awards from the Collegiate Jazz Festival at University of Nortre Dame, IN. This award helped him acquire his US Permanent Residence status. Word of his abilities spread in no time. He joined in Gary Burton quartet in ’78 and recorded “Times Square” (ECM, featuring Roy Haynes and Steve Swallow) and toured the world. Keeping Boston as his base, Tiger has been a Berklee faculty member since 1997.

As a Performer: with Tony Bennett, Dave Grusin's LA-NY Dream band (Grammy nominee, 1982), Pat Metheny, Gunther Schuller, Lyle Mays, Bob Mintzer, George Russell's Living Time Orchestra, Dave Liebman, Mike Stern & Dave Weckle Band, Miloslav Vitous, Bela Fleck, Jerry Bergonzi, Dave Holland, Jack Dejonnet, Joe Lovano, Delfeayo Marsalis's Octet with Branford Marsalis. Pop and R&B performances with Michel Franks, Teddy Pendergrass, Aimee Mann's 'Til Tuesday, The O'Jays, The Four Tops, The Stylistics, Little Anthony and The Imperials, Frankie Avalon and Bobby Lydel, legendary rock singer Brad Delp of "Boston"

As producer and instructor: Tiger produced the Japanese female jazz singer Mizuho's CD in 2008. Tiger has operated since 2006 the Hokkaido Groove Camp in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan to teach jazz to young musicians in Japan. He also operates Domaine Forget Jazz Camp in St. Irinee, Quebec, Canada.

Tiger, who loves sports, was invited to perform "The Star Spangled Banner" at the opening game of the 2007 season between Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees at Fenway Park, as well as the playoff games in 2007 and 2008. Tiger's trumpet was surrounded by 20 trumpets, 10 trombones and 7 Japanese Taiko drummers playing his original arrangement. In 1997, Tiger recorded a CD entitled "Hustle Tigers" for Japanese major league baseball team Hanshin Tigers.

Awards received

- John Thayer Award for the contribution to the better relations between US and Japan. Awarded by the Japan Society of Boston on May 28, 2008
- Contribution to the Advancement of International Music, Understanding and Good Will from Berklee College of Music in March 2007
- Outstanding Contribution to Teaching Excellence from Berklee in 2005
- Global Appreciation to individuals who volunteer their time and talent to further and advanced global awareness of contributions made by people with autism in 1997 presented by Boston Higashi School in Randolph, MA.
- Distinguished Alumni Award in 1997 from Berklee College of Music.
- Best Recording of the Month in *Stereophile Magazine*, February 1995 for the CD "Two Sides to Every Story"/JVC
- Top Ten Albums of 1993 in UPI (United Press Release) poll for the CD "Echoes of a Note" tribute to Louis "Pops" Armstrong (JVC)
- Best Local Jazz Act, Boston Phoenix/WFAX Music Poll in 1992
- Best Jazz & Fusion Group 1988 & 1989, Boston Music Awards
- Best Brass & Reed Player 1990, Boston Music Awards

- Best Jazz Band, Boston Magazine 1988
- Hit Record award, Victor Music in Japan, 1982 for the CD “Tiger’s Baku” and for “Face to Face” CD 1990

Master Classes and Clinics

- Tiger directs his own annual jazz camps – one is in Sapporo city, Japan called “Hokkaido Groove Camp” in March, and one in Domaine Forget Jazz Camp in St. Irinee, Quebec, Canada in August.
- Japan Trumpet Association in Tokyo in 2008
- University of Montreal, Canada in 2007
- Hamamatsu Yamaha Center, Japan 2007
- St. Laurent College in Montreal, Canada 2006
- International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) conference in Long Beach, CA in 2002 and in New York, NY in 2007
- Yamaha Trumpet Day in New York, NY in December 2006
- International Trumpet Guild (ITG) conference in Evansville, IN in 2001, in Bangkok, Thailand in 2005, and Harrisburg, PA in 2009
- And many other places such as – Hawaii International Jazz Festival, New York Brass Conference, Hot Summer Jazz Fest in Minneapolis, MS, Halifax Jazz Festival, U of Minnesota, Clayton State College in GA, U of Southern Maine, Topeka Jazz Workshop in KS, and many more.
- Appeared as clinician and guest performer in high schools such as Foxboro High, MA; Wellesley High, MA; Olive Ames High, MA; Westbrook High in Maine, and more.

Author:

“Practice Method” (Berklee Press, 2002)

Columnist:

Arts Magazine of Hamamatsu, Shizuoka in Japan (2005 -)

Articles for *Canadian Musician Magazine*

- “Warm Up to Calm Down” (11/ 97)
- “Concentration, A Bow and an Arrow, an Instrument and a Note” (1/98)
- “Highs from Lows” (2/98)

Lecturer:

- “History of Jazz” at Sapporo Cultural Hall, Japan (2007)

- “Music and Autism” at Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University (2001)
- “The Difference in Music Education in U S and Japan” for the Massachusetts/Hokkaido Association (2000)
- “Musicians on the Road” “Truly, True” for the Ashiya International Exchange Association (1998~2002)
- “Japanese Jazz Man in US” for Showa Women’s Institute (1997~2000)
- Berklee Commencement speech as a Distinguished Alumnus (1992)

Recordings as leader:

- “Tiger Okoshi Plays Standards” (Jeneon A-60 Jazz, 2008)
- “Hustle Tigers” (Victor, 2003) for Japanese major league baseball team Hanshin Tigers
- “Color of Soil” (JVC, 1998) w/ Kenny Barron, Mino Cinelu, Hank Roberts and Jay Anderson
- “Two Sides to Every Story” (JVC, 1995) w/ Jack DeJohnette, Dave Holland, Mike Stern and Gil Goldstein
- ”Echoes of A Note” (JVC, 1993) tribute to Louis “Pops” Armstrong, w/ Bela Fleck, Mike Stern, Peter Erskin, Jay Anderson and Gil Goldstein
- “That Was Then, This Is Now” (JVC, 1990)
- “Face to Face” (JVC, 1989)
- “Mudd Cake” (JVC, 1981)
- “Tiger’s Baku” (JVC, 1980)

Recordings as sideman:

- “Such Sweet Thunder” (Troubadour Jass Label, 2011) Delfeayo Marsalis with Branford Marsalis
- “Orpheus Again”(BAM 2010) Bruce Arnold
- “Stars and A Moon”(House of Jazz 2010) by Mizuhoas producer, arranger and performer
- “Tsubasa” (House of Jazz, 2008) by Mizuho Yahara
- “Portrait” (2008) by Diane Richardson
- “Live Club Soda” (Analekta, 2007) by Lorraine Desmarais
- “Love & Beauty” (Hawklime Records, 2005) by Stan Strickland
- “Chasing Tales” (Invisible Music Records, 2001) by Mark Kleinhaut
- “Call Me Al” (Norac, 2001) by Alain Caron
- “It’s About Time” Living Time Orchestra (Label Bleu, 1996) by George Russell
- “Meditaion” a tribute to John Coltrane, (Arkaidia, 1996) by Dave Liebman

- “Peek a Boo” (Label Bleu, Evidence Music 1995) by Jerry Berganzi
- “Another Season” (JVC, 1993) by Kevyn Lettau
- “Lorraine Desmarais” (Sodec, 1991) by Lorraine Desmarais
- “All The Way To Sendai” (Enja, 1990) by Mordy Farber
- “Everything’s Different Now” (Epic, 1988) by Aimee Mann’s ‘Til Tuesday
- “The Story Of Moses” (Gramavision, 1987) by Bob Moses
- “Lookin’ Up From Below” (GM, 1986)) by George Schuller
- “NY-AL Dreamband” (GRP, 1984) by Dave Grusin
- “Angelica” (Toshiba EM, 1984) by Lew Tabakin
- “Visit With The Great Spirit” (Gramavision,1984) by Bob Moses
- “Times Square” (ECM, 1978) by Gary Burton
- “Transparence” (RCI) by Jean Robitaille
- and more.....

Contact:

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