

## FULL BIO

**Motoko Honda (Japan/U.S.)** <https://www.motokohonda.com>

"Imagine Radiohead teaching Franz List how to rock a Kaoss Pad; or John Cage facing off with Bud Powell over prepared piano"

-Matthew Duersten, [stompbeast.com](http://stompbeast.com)

"Motoko Honda is a truly gifted and versatile artist. Her solo performance last year at the South Pasadena Music Center was truly one of the most stirring, beautiful, and eloquent things I have heard in years"

-Nels Cline (Wilco, The Nels Cline Singers)



**Motoko Honda is a critically acclaimed Japanese concert pianist, composer, and sound artist who has created a distinctive sound through her holistic approach to music, and her exceptional sensitivity in relating to other art forms and technologies.** Employing a "virtuoso technique paired with her intensely imaginative mind" (Susan Dirende, L.A. Splash Magazine), and **with stylistic influences ranging from jazz, world music to contemporary prepared piano with electronics, Motoko's compositions and structured improvisations are intended to affect the skin, organs and minds of the listener** rather than simple recitations of rhythmic and harmonic themes. Portrayed as a "keyboard alchemist" (Chris Barton, L.A. Times), and an "embodiment of a muse" (Greg Burk, Metaljazz), **Motoko's performances transport audiences on sonic adventures that transcend the boundaries and conventions of contemporary music.**

**Since 1997, Motoko has been featured at various national and international venues and festivals** such as the Angel City Jazz Festival, Spark International Electronic Music Festival, the 19th San Quirico Estate Festival, the Music for Karlheinz Stockhausen Festival, and S.F Music Day, performing classical, contemporary, jazz and experimental music. **Through her Sound Escape Project, founded in 2003, she has performed and recorded with many acclaimed improvisers and artists** such as Wadada Leo Smith, Elliott Sharp, Nels Cline, Alex Cline, Mike Watt, Ben Wendel, Petra Haden, Lucas Ligeti, Jeff Gauthier, Maggie Parkins, William Winant, Larry Ochs, Pheeroan Aklaiff, Vinny Golia, Theresa Wong, Van-Anh Vo, Brad Dutz, Wayne Peet, Kris Tiner, Emily Hay, and Joe Berardi, dancer OGURI. Roxanne Steinberg, Maureen Whiting, and visual artist Carole Kim and Ian Winters. **A notable ongoing interdisciplinary collaboration is a research project with Jesse Gilbert's sound-visual program Spectral GL, integrating music and visual information into one cohesive experience in concerts and installation settings.**

**At home in classical, contemporary, improvised, or electronic music, Motoko is a musical force of nature, bringing a unique and creative approach to her wide-ranging concerts and collaborations.** Her appearances include major theaters, museums and jazz venues such as the Ford Amphitheater, Hammer Museum, REDCAT/MOCA, SCI-ARC (Southern California Institute of Architecture), the Barnsdall Gallery Theater, the Jazz Bakery, Bluewhale in Los Angeles, Moody Center for the Arts in Houston, Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga, the Herbst Theater, the Taube Atrium Theater, the Lab, Center for New Music in San Francisco,

University of California in Santa Cruz, Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, The Stone in N.Y, Hotel Lone in Rovinji, Croatia, and Cattedrale di Siena in Italy.

As a **specialist in structured improvisation, composition, extended piano techniques, interdisciplinary projects and electro-acoustic music strategy**, Motoko also has been invited to give numerous lecture/performances by national and international universities and institutions such as UC Santa Cruz, Rice University in Houston TX, University of Illinois, California State University Fullerton, CA, Idyllwild Arts Academy, CA, Tokyo Zohkei University, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan, and Chukyo University, Nagoya, Japan.

**For her dedication and contribution to the world of new and creative music**, Motoko Honda has earned the permanent residency as an Alien of Extraordinary Ability in Music in the U.S., and currently splits her time between U.S., Europe and Japan.

### **Artist Statement**

**I believe Music is like life itself, inherently unpredictable and often surprising, and at its best when breathing freely and carving its own path.** The communal experience of perceiving sounds as Music can create universal and timeless connections and allows us to transcend our human nature. Music reveals our true nature, and the act of creating music is the most humbling experience, sharing indiscriminately our flaws, wonders, torments, and joys. And the process of creating and experiencing **Music can bring us together regardless of cultural, linguistic, and artistic differences and correlates to universal Life.**

**My artistic sense began developing early in my childhood as I was constantly making up songs about anything I saw and experienced.** When I began my piano studies, the song making explorations transferred over to my instrument playing and I started improvising deeply personal and emotional piano music. Despite my early enthusiasm, the road to master my instrument has been long and hard (and still ongoing). Learning to control the piano and express your emotions with precision requires endless effort and practice. Still, my early creative experimentations and life experiences helped shape my musical identity.

**Throughout my life, music has allowed me to break through the walls of my surroundings and envision previously unattainable perspectives.** I embrace my instrument and challenge its limitations by using nontraditional techniques, not just for experimentation's sake but to better express my feelings and emotions.

My music is not meant to be grandiose nor dazzling but rather a simple reflection of what I am experiencing each moment in my unpredictable life. **I see myself as a translator of the world surrounding us, creating bridges between cultural and individual differences, and hopefully giving all of us hope for a better life and the courage to search and accept our true nature.**