

Motoko Honda's Simple Excesses Quartet

Modern Chamber Jazz Beyond Boundaries

Motoko Honda's Simple Excesses Quartet is a modern chamber jazz ensemble dissolving the borders between classical architecture, jazz improvisation, and experimental sound—music of intricate design and fearless flight, where composition and spontaneity breathe as one.

“Following Beethoven’s belief that forms must expand to represent the breadth of human experience... Honda refuses stagnation and continues the tradition of widening our ears with new ideas.” — *Phillip Greenlief, Idol Hands*

Japanese-born pianist and composer **Motoko Honda** brings a rare depth of vision shaped by early classical training in Japan, studies in chamber music and drums at Bethany College, and advanced work at CalArts, where she immersed herself in world music, jazz, and contemporary composition. Now based in Oakland, she has forged a singular voice that blurs the boundary between composer and improviser, leader and collaborator.

“Honda never stands still... her music sounds less like a statement and more like an invitation.” — *Greg Burk, Metal Jazz*

Featuring Northern California’s most versatile improvisers—Cory Wright (woodwinds), Matt Small (bass), and Jordan Glenn (drums)—Simple Excesses Quartet performs dynamic, long-form works where melodies migrate between instruments and leadership shifts organically. Each concert unfolds like a living organism: intricate, surprising, and deeply communicative. Audiences often describe the experience as a “flight in the clouds”—suspended between structure and freedom.

“What is strikingly uncommon is the complexity of the roadmap that unfolds when the players engage with her music.” — *Phillip Greenlief, Art Forum*

The Story

Years ago, after relocating from Japan to the United States, Honda found herself between worlds—between languages, traditions, and expectations. In that in-between space, she realized that music did not need to choose sides. It could hold contradiction. It could stretch form without breaking it. It could create belonging.

That turning point reshaped her artistic mission: to build music where every voice matters, where structure supports risk, and where listeners are invited—not intimidated—into discovery. Simple Excesses Quartet was born from that conviction. The music asks: What if complexity could feel human? What if exploration could feel welcoming?

For audiences, this means more than a concert. It is an experience of attentive listening, shared breath, and collective imagination—an invitation to expand one’s own inner landscape.

Upcoming Projects

The quartet continues developing new long-form works integrating graphic scores, extended improvisational frameworks, and chamber orchestration techniques. Forthcoming performances and recordings will further explore the evolving language of modern chamber jazz—pushing beyond genre while deepening connection with audiences worldwide.