

# = YOJO CHRISTEN

As soon as I could take my first steps, I found my way to the black monster that produced so many different sounds - our grand piano. It became my favourite toy. So when I was three, I began to take piano lessons. By the time I was six, I could play a series of sonatas by heart and these inspired me to invent compositions of my own.

When I was eight, I started giving concerts, at first just for friends and relations but word got around and I was soon performing for real concert audiences. I mixed my Romantic and Classical repertoire with my own pieces and these were especially well received.

In a hotel in Füssen (near Neuschwanstein), the Japanese Ambassador Isamu Kurosaki heard me practising and invited me to a concert tour of 7 Japanese towns. This experience made such an impact on me that I decided I wanted to spend my life with music. The newspapers started giving me odd names: wunderkind, fireworker, early starter etc.

At that time, I was also admitted to the GEMA as its youngest composer. Then to crown it all, I won the second prize and the audience prize at the International Diabelli Composition Competition in Munich. Later, I adapted this prize-winning work to form the last movement of Franz Hummel's Piano Concerto "War and Peace" and I gave the premiere performance with conductor Tetsuro Ban and the Regensburg Philharmonic Orchestra.

My success with audiences at the Beethoven Music Festival in Bonn, in Paris, Rome, Vienna, Munich and at the Schleswig Holstein Music Festival reaffirmed my conviction that I belong in the world of music.

My criterion for quality is always the level of my own enthusiasm for the work I am playing; and when the content of the music engulfs me so entirely that I am transported to an unknown realm of strange happiness. This has no longer anything to do with me but becomes something objective, mysterious, maybe art.

Yojo Christen