

YAMANAKA pianist, composer, producer

Chihiro Yamanaka, born in Japan and resident in NYC has studied at the [Berklee College of Music](#) on Boston and is an alumna of the [Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead](#) residency program. She has played and recorded with the New York-based DIVA Jazz Orchestra, led by [Sherrie Maricle](#), but is best known for her small group recordings, which are typically trios and have featured bassists such as [Larry Grenadier](#) and [Robert Hurst](#), and drummers such as [Jeff Ballard](#) and [Jeff "Tain" Watts](#).

Yamanaka has toured in Europe, the United States and Japan, and has played at several festivals, including the [Umbria Jazz Festival](#) in 2012 Main Stage in front of 6.000 pax (a performance described by the Jazz Times' reviewer as "The biggest surprise of the night [...] Right and left, jaws were dropping", and the Bologna Jazz Festival, Auditorium Parco della Musica Roma Ronnie Scott London many times, New Morning Paris, Blue Note Tokyo, [Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival](#) the following year. In 2015 Yamanaka played [Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue](#) with symphony orchestras in Japan.

Yamanaka has more than a dozen recordings released under her own name, principally on the [Verve](#) label, most of which have been released internationally, and which include a DVD of her playing at the [Iridium Jazz Club](#) in New York. Two of her recent releases, *Forever Begins* (2010) and *Reminiscence* (2011), were given four-star ratings by AllMusic reviewers, the review of the latter concluding with, "Yamanaka is a fierce talent with robust chops, plenty of soul, and a seemingly endless imagination for the musical possibilities of the piano trio". **From 2012 has signed with blue Note Records** in Japan where has been released others 9 albums including the last **[Guilty pleasure](#)** and the amazing **[MONK STUDIES](#)**, top album in Japan out now on Spotify, I Tunes.

From march 2015 she's a piano teacher and masterclass at [Berklee College of Music](#) .

The CHIHIRO YAMANAKA TRIO has featured some of the finest talent in jazz, including bassists Larry Grenadier and Bob Hurst and drummers Jeff "Tain" Watts and Jeff Ballard. In addition to her work as a bandleader, her in-demand status has led to concert appearances with Herbie Hancock, George Benson, Nancy Wilson, Clark Terry, Gary Burton, George Russell, Terry Lynne Carrington, DIVA and many more.

Chihiro's impact on the international jazz scene was uncannily foreshadowed by the successes she had while still in college, first at the Royal Academy of Music in England and then at the Berklee School of Music in Boston, where she won Down Beat's Outstanding Performance Award and was honored by the International Association of Jazz Educators with her victory in the prestigious "Sisters In Jazz" competition in 2000.

Playing style

[John Fordham](#) commented in 2016 that Yamanaka played, in the nature of [Oscar Peterson](#), "straightahead classic jazz with the kind of showboating virtuosity that makes listeners doubt their senses "Like Peterson, Yamanaka favours opening a song at a quiet, lounge-jazz sway and winding it up to a sprint just as listeners are settling back in their chairs."^[14]

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John Fordham review Ronnie's Scott London April 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/apr/13/chihiro-yamanaka-oscar-peterson-mulgrew-miller-ronnie-scotts-jazz-club-london>

[Jazz Times](#)

<https://jazztimes.com/reviews/concerts/umbria-jazz-2011/>

<https://www.discogs.com/it/artist/4496642-Chihiro-Yamanaka>

<http://www.universal-music.co.jp/chihiro-yamanaka/discography/>

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