

Reiko Obata – Bio

A leading American koto performer in the traditional and jazz arenas, Reiko Obata studied under masters in the U.S. and Japan, including composer and koto virtuoso Shinichi Yuize. Reiko received her master's degree in music from San Diego State University and daishihan (grandmaster) degree from the Seiha Conservatory of Japanese Music. She is founder and director of the [Obata International Koto School](#), the first online distance learning koto school.

Obata has been featured as a soloist with multiple orchestras, including Orchestra Nova under the direction of Jung-Ho Pak for KPBS-TV. As a multi-genre performer, she has collaborated with leading artists including flutist Demarre McGill, bassist Marshall Hawkins, jazz saxophonist Hollis Gentry, trumpeter Derek Cannon, pianists David Ward-Steinman and George Nagata, guitarists Fred Benedetti and Jimmy Patton, drummers Russell Bizzett and Kevin Koch, and shakuhachi virtuoso John Neptune.

She has performed at Warner Brothers Studio, the Venetian and LINQ in Las Vegas, San Diego Convention Center, Petco Park, California Center for the Arts, and the Temecula and Idyllwild Jazz Festivals. She was a featured performer at major events including the Kyoto Prize Symposium, the World Baseball Classic Semifinals/Finals, America's Cup, and National Flute Association Conventions.

Obata has performed for TV, radio, live theater, and film, including performing koto and bass koto on the international blockbuster film "Monkey King 2" (2016) with music producer Christopher Young. Other film music includes Byron Barth's "The Art of Zen Shiatsu," Vivian Price's "Transnational Tradeswomen," and Tales Alive's "Chieko and the Pine."

Reiko has released multiple CDs featuring her original compositions and arrangements, including Serenity, Sound of Kiri, and a self-titled jazz koto album with her band [East West Jazz](#). She arranged and published the first koto book series in Western notation, and authored The Koto Player's Reference Manual—the first comprehensive English-language guide to the instrument. Her most recent publication, [Lost Secrets of the Koto](#), became an Amazon bestseller. Reiko is also a former college instructor in World Music and Music Appreciation.