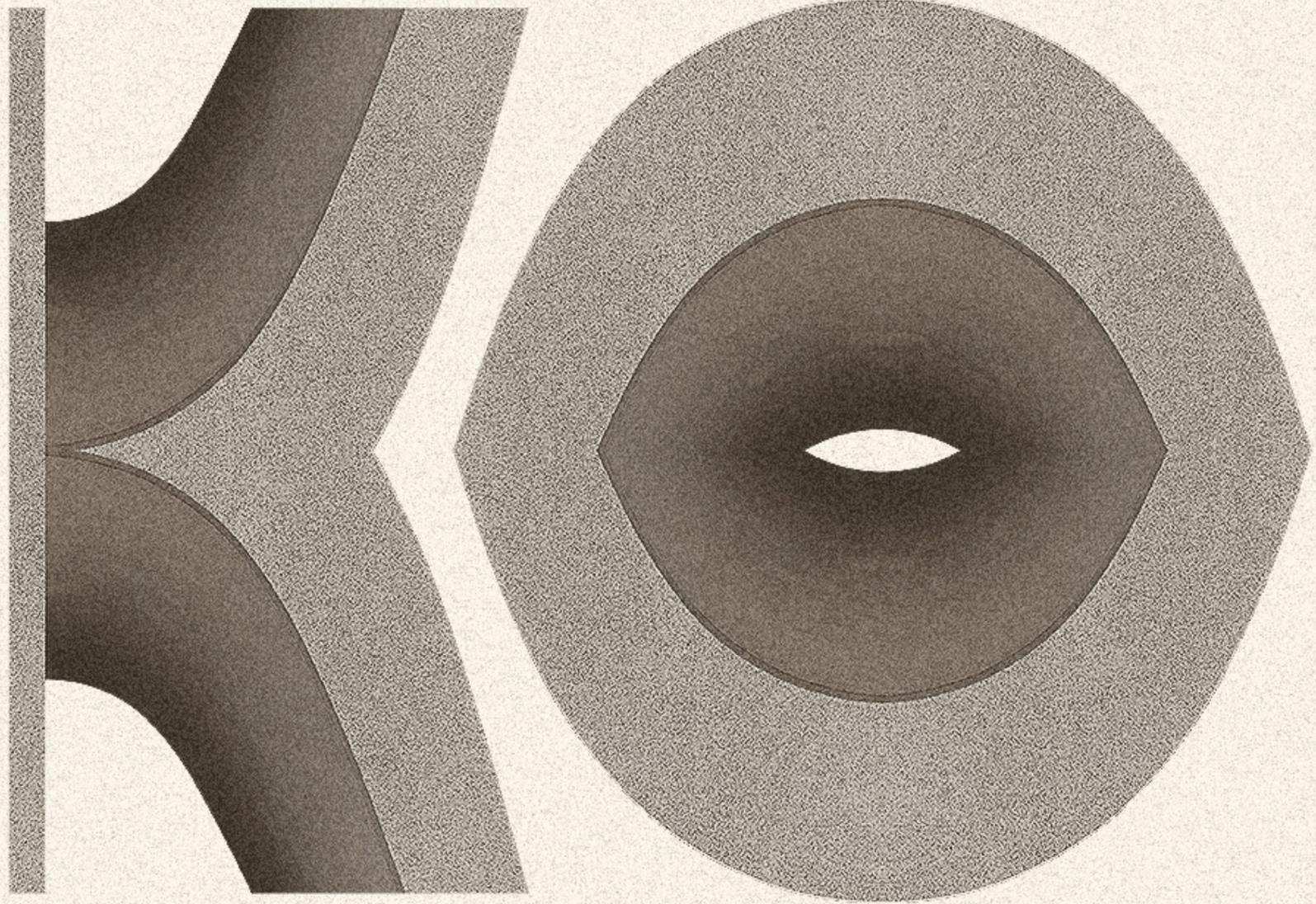




dai fujikura
akiko's piano





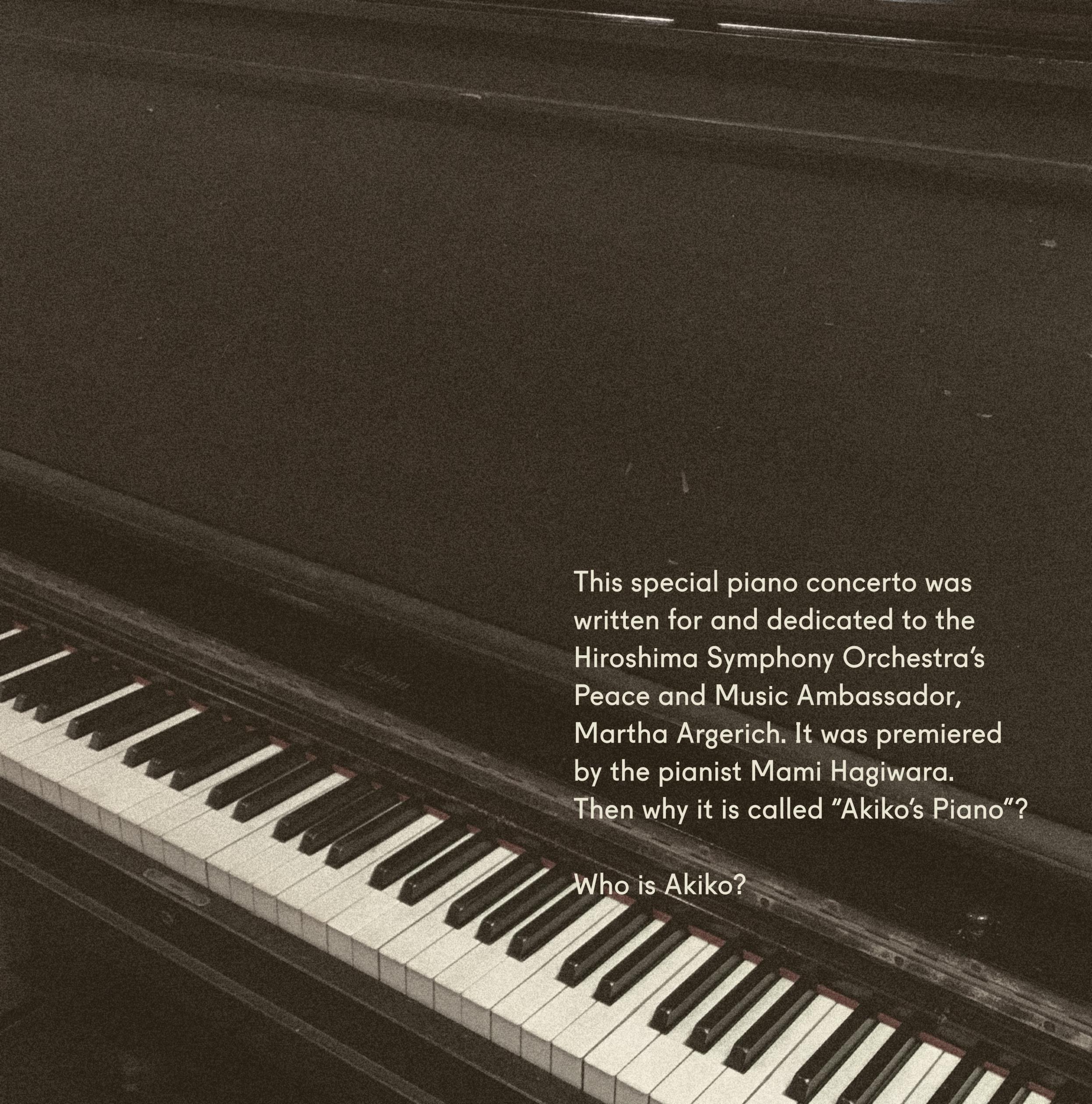
dai fujikura

akiko's piano – piano concerto no.4 (live)

hiroshima symphony orchestra

mami hagiwara, grand piano + upright piano (akiko's piano)

tatsuya shimono, conductor



This special piano concerto was written for and dedicated to the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra's Peace and Music Ambassador, Martha Argerich. It was premiered by the pianist Mami Hagiwara. Then why it is called "Akiko's Piano"?

Who is Akiko?

In Hiroshima, there is a piano that survived the atomic bomb, the smashed glass window from the blast is still stuck to the piano's body. This piano belonged to a 19-year-old girl, Akiko.

Akiko was born in LA to Japanese parents. There was a strong friendship, especially in LA, between the American and Japanese people before the Second World War.

Akiko got the piano when she was still in America, this piano is also American, Baldwin, made in Cincinnati.

When Akiko was six, she and her parents moved to Japan, to live in Hiroshima.

She kept practicing the piano, having lessons, and when she was 19 years old, while she was working as a mobilized student, the atomic bomb was dropped.

She walked and swam as the bridge had been destroyed, to her home where her parents were that day. Then, the next day, she died in her parents' arms. Her parents cremated their daughter's body under a big persimmon tree which still exists today. Her last words were "Mom, I want to have a red tomato."

Though naturally this concerto will have "music for peace" as its main message, as a composer I like to concentrate

the personal point of view. This microscopic view to tell the universal subject, is the way to go, I feel, in my compositions : the view of Akiko's, ordinary 19-year-old-girl who didn't have any power over politics (and she was born in US, which means she is also an American) At the time of her death, she didn't know what had happened, or what killed her (radiation poisoning, as she didn't die from the initial blast).

There must be similar stories to that of this 19-year-old girl in every war in history and in every country in the world. Every war will have had an "Akiko".

In this recoding, two pianos are used in this concerto: one is the main grand piano, then, the cadenza at the end of the concerto is played on Akiko's Piano, the piano that survived the atomic bomb.

To express such an universal theme of "music for peace", the piece should portray that most personal, smallest point of view. I think that is the most powerful way, and only music can achieve this.

Dai Fujikura (edited by Alison Phillips)

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Akiko's Piano – Piano Concerto No. 4 was commissioned by Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra

Live recording from the world premiere performances on August 5th & 6th 2020 in Hiroshima "Music for Peace Concert"

Composed, edited, mixed and mastered by Dai Fujikura



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