

Akiko Tsuruga

Jazz Organist

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New York City based Hammond Organist and pianist, Akiko Tsuruga, has established herself as an 'in demand' player since arriving from her home town of Osaka, Japan in 2001.

Akiko began Organ lessons at age three, and starting performing professionally throughout Japan after graduating from Osaka College Of Music. While performing in Japan, she encountered and played with many noted American musicians, Roy Hargrove, Jeff "Tain" Watts and Grady Tate to name a few. Grady Tate has been most influential in her career. He played on her debut CD, "*Harlem Dreams*" and encouraged her to move to New York.

After arriving in New York Akiko established herself as one of area's top organist / pianist. Her trio featuring guitarist Eric Johnson and drummer Vincent Ector has been one of the area's top groups, working many jazz nightclubs including, *Dizzy's (at Lincoln center)* and *The Blue Note*. Her trio also plays private parties and summer outdoor concerts. Her long awaited debut CD, "*Harlem Dreams*" featuring Grady Tate and Frank Wess was released in Japan on the M&I company on May 19, 2004.

Akiko's CD is so popular in Japan she has returned twice to perform. Her CD release tour featured Grady Tate on drums and guitarist Satoshi Inoue in August 2004. In September 2005, she returned to Japan with guitarist Eric Johnson and drummer Fukushi Tainaka.

It was this trip that caught the eyes and ears of Hammond Suzuki officials. The group was invited to the factory and Mr. Suzuki personally awarded her a Hammond XK-3 organ and endorsement.

Among her accomplishments is an organ jazz instructional book "*Hammond Organ Complete*" (Berklee Press) which was translated from English to Japanese and has been published in Japan.

When she's not leading her trio, she still enjoys working as a featured sideman in Grady Tate's vocal group and with saxophonist Lou Donaldson and many others.

Akiko's new CD "*Sweet and Funky*" is now finished and will be released in both Japan (M&I Company) and the United States and Canada on Allegro records.

Also Akiko was featured playing piano in the Japanese movie "*Last Love*".