



"Since my days as an opera student in conservatories of Tokyo and Rome, I have been pursuing a new universal (not only global) vocal art that goes beyond prior genres such as: opera, Jazz, pop Japanese, traditional and contemporary art music, and also transcends the boundary of East and West. I have been always thinking about how to best give life to the beauty of the true bel canto voice in music which reflects a sense of our contemporary time."

M a r i O k u b o

B i o

Japanese born vocalist/improviser Mari Okubo has pioneered a new style of singing, which goes beyond prior genres such as opera, jazz, funk, pop, contemporary art music and Japanese traditional and which also transcends the boundary between East and West.

Ornette Coleman has described her voice as "one of the most beautiful voices coming from a human being." Okubo has performed with Coleman in the variety of settings, as a featured singer in "The Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival" at Battery Park in New York, "The Umbria Jazz festival" at Teatro Morlacchi, Perugia, Italy, "Live Under the Sky," International Jazz Festival in Tokyo, with her own band "Evolving Cosmos," "the JVC Jazz Festival" at Carnegie Hall as well as "Art Project 92" International New Music Festival at Philharmonic Hall in Munich, Germany. Recently she has released her album with music and lyrics written and produced by Ornette Coleman.

Born and raised in Tokyo, Okubo graduated from Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music ("the Juilliard of Japan") where she studied Opera and German Lied. Upon graduation Okubo moved to Italy where she continued to study with world renowned voice teacher Maestro Giorgio Favaretto at Accademia Chigiana. From that time she was already interested in contemporary art music. After finishing her academic studies, Okubo was determined to create a new vocal art.

Following a fortuitous meeting with Ornette Coleman, Okubo began to study Coleman's Harmolodic Theory, synthesizing a variety of singing styles. Under his guidance Okubo finally succeeded in creating a universal style of singing, where the vocal and instrumental relationship have equal space instantly, and word and instrumental sound create universal oneness.

Prior to her collaboration with Coleman, as a contemporary art music singer, Okubo performed with leading Japanese composer Takehisa Kosugi (Music Director of Merce Cunningham Dance Company), Akio Suzuki in the Contemporary Music Festival in Japan, with Jamaaladeen Tacuma and Anthony Davis at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall and in the Avant-garde Festival produced by Charlotte Moorman.