

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JULY 15, 2015

## International Center for Japanese Culture

21st Century Japanese Music Project  
"New Music Composition Contest for the YIS Japanese Music Ensembles"

### A Message from the Director

On behalf of the International Center for Japanese Culture and the Toshiba International Foundation, I am pleased to announce the winner of the new music composition contest, "21st Century Japanese Music Project." This year's competition was held as part of ICJC's mission to promote and raise awareness of traditional Japanese instruments and music.

The competition received a total of 60 manuscripts from applicants in Australia, Canada, China, England, Finland, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Syria, UK, USA and Venezuela. Our distinguished panel of judges Katsuhiro Tsubonou, Noriko Nakamura and Kumiko Takahashi (\*) examined all works anonymously. The number of scores and geographic range of the submissions attest to the growing interest in Japanese music around the world.

This year, only one winning composition was selected. Unfortunately, the other scores were either impossible to play or otherwise not suited to the koto instrument. Nonetheless, these compositions showed true promise and we acknowledged the composers with an honorable mention.

Believing that overall transparency is vital in the development of our mission, we include the following information:

- Greetings from panel chair Katsuhiro Tsubonou
- Award announcement and composer's names
- Panel timetable
- Judges comments

*(These comments were collected from the panel during the judging process. We hope these comments will help composers in the future who write for the Japanese koto.)*

In October 2015, the award winning composition will have its Japan premiere in Yokohama and its world premiere in New York City by the Yokohama International School High School Japanese Music Ensemble. These concerts, along with the exposure by the young musicians, will hopefully increase appreciation of Japanese music while promoting new compositions for Japanese traditional musical instruments both in Japan and abroad.

The "21st Century Japanese Music Project" will continue to stimulate interest and recognition for Japanese music on an international level.

Dr. Joseph Amato  
Director  
International Center for Japanese Culture

*\*Shakuhachi player and scholar Christopher Yohmei Blasdel was unfortunately unable to attend the judging due to scheduling conflicts.*

## **A Message from the Panel Chairman**

"Judging the entrees for the 21st Century Japanese Music Project"

The judges for this project, sponsored by ICJC, were surprised and inspired by the unexpected numbers and high quality of the compositions submitted to this competition. All of the compositions exhibited a high degree of both sincerity and ambition, and as a result the organizer and the judges felt they had to extend the time allowed for the judging process.

The selection process used was as follows: for the first round the judges narrowed the applications down to a set number. The next time the panel met, a 13-string and 17-string koto were made available to the selection committee so the judges could actually perform some of the pieces from the preliminary selection. This step took time, causing a delay in the announcement.

All the pieces in this first selection exhibited great possibilities for the future of koto ensemble music, new narratives for music and unique performative expressions. These compositions opened up enchanting and wonderful possibilities.

Nonetheless, many of these compositions were physically impossible to play, due to problems with koto tunings and performance techniques, and we felt that these composers should probably take additional time to learn more about the koto. Unfortunately, we had to disqualify most of these compositions for this reason. If composers could freely interact with koto players while working on their compositions and learn more about the koto, we probably would have more successful koto ensemble music.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the composers who sent in their works for consideration, the organizers, the judges and our sponsors for their efforts to make this project such a success.

TSUBONO Katsuhiko  
Panel Chair

## 2015 Award Results

Place	Name	Composition Title	Prize (s)
First Prize	Reika Hattori	Traitor <i>violin and 17-string koto</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash Award: 500,000円</li> <li>• Concert Performance: Transportation/Lodging</li> <li>• Publication</li> </ul>
Second Prize	No awardee	-	-
Special Award	David Loeb	霧響 <i>cello, three 13-string kotos, 17-string koto</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible future performance</li> <li>• Certificate</li> </ul>
Honorable Mention	Hyo-Shin Na	Fukujuso	• Certificate
	Naoyuki Yokota	アンフォルメル I	• Certificate
	Shinichi Kaneko	雅び言	• Certificate
	Koumei Itou	走馬灯 3	• Certificate
	Hikari Ferneyhough	Sonata	• Certificate
	Sam Leith Taylor	Sweet belly, open field	• Certificate
	Mao Zhu	Over The River	• Certificate
	Kazuhisa Takahashi	三ツ舞	• Certificate
	Tomohiko Suzuki	～都節平行・交差・そして合成	• Certificate
	Martin Schreiner	Fire Walk	• Certificate
	John Seymour	波間の序、破、急	• Certificate
	Shinsuke Okamoto	Weaving spells into a starlit sky	• Certificate
	Mio Minamikawa	天道	• Certificate
	Yusuke Inatani	深緋椿	• Certificate
	Nicholas Frances Chase	Gayate	• Certificate
	Tsutomu Motsuzai	海に降る雨	• Certificate
	Hiroyuki Saeki	Utsu-Semi	• Certificate
	Chikako Yamanaka	To A Sanctuary	• Certificate
	Hiroaki Watanabe	影の香	• Certificate
	Stephen Cronin	Arion's Harp	• Certificate
	Haris Kittos	Fauve	• Certificate
	Kento Iwasaki Watanabe	Life Cycle of Cicadas	• Certificate
	Mayu Masuda	おとはしぐれか	• Certificate



