

PTNA NEWS LETTER

Piano Teachers' National Association of Japan, Incorporated by the Japanese Government

1st "Yasuko Fukuda Scholarship Audition" held to encourage young talents

The First Yasuko Fukuda Scholarship Audition was held in Tokyo on August 27th-29th. It was established after the Founder's will to encourage young promising pianists to study abroad. There was a document pre-selection and 9 pianists aged 14 to 18 went on to the audition. The 3 days audition was consisted of private lessons and the concert, which is a reasonable way to evaluate their potential talents. Jury members were Dr. Paul Pollei (U.S.), Prof. Bruno Rigutto (France), and Prof. Andrei Pisarev (Russia).

Each of the 9 candidates took lessons by 3 jurors respectively and every lesson was filled with excitement. On the final day, they played 30 minutes program in front of the public, whose performances were good enough to regard as the international standard.

Among them, Mr. Shohei Sekimoto (18) won the "Yasuko Fukuda Prize" and received 1 million yen scholarship. His passion and romanticism was fully expressed in Rachmanninov Sonata No. 2.

Mr. Hibiki Tamura (16) received the 2nd best prize with half-million yen scholarship. The Liszt and Mendelssohn's Sonata were artistically and expressively performed.

Sekimoto and Tamura has took part in the PTNA Piano Competition from their childhood, and PTNA witnessed their talents steadily grown up in the past years.

At the time when PTNA was founded in 1968, appropriate teaching method was not satisfactory developed. However after 35 years, teachers learned a lot through seminars, competitions and various occasions, and they raised up pianists who has technique and artistry of international standard.



Awarding ceremony at Yasuko Fukuda Audition (8/29). (from left) Special committee members (Mr. Seikoh Fukuda, Prof. Yuko Ninomiya, Prof. Mieko Harimoto), Sekimoto, and jury members (Prof. Bruno Rigutto, Prof. Andrei Pisarev, Dr. Paul Pollei)



Prof. Bruno Rigutto taught Shohei Sekimoto at the audition lesson. (at Tokyo College of Music)



Dr. Paul Pollei taught Hibiki Tamura at the audition lesson.

2003 PTNA Piano Competition



Mr. Sekimoto won 2003 Grand Prix



Sekimoto, Grand prize of 2003 PTNA piano competition, also got Audience prize. The presenter was Dr. Paul Pollei

Mr. Shohei Sekimoto (18) won the Grand prize of the 27th PTNA Piano Competition.

The highest grade requires finalists to play the whole movements

of concerto and 50-55min solo recital in a day. 5 finalists, from 16-year-old high school student to 42-year-old school teacher, faced this hard task.

Sekimoto played Chopin, Rachmaninov Sonatas, and Tsuchida for solo part and Tchaikovsky Concerto No.1, with a strong sense of passion. Especially he showed sharp interpretation in Tsuchida, the Japanese composition, and Chopin Sonata No2.

He had joined PTNA from B grade (under 10) and successfully went up to the higher grades in the past 10 years, and finally reached the grand prize.

In November, he took part in 5th Hamamatsu International Piano Competition, and got 4th prize. (See the news on 7p)

He is scheduled to play in Paris on January 27th, and will perform a concerto with Japan Philharmonic Orchestra at Suntory Hall on April 10th 2004. (Conductor: Maestro Ken'ichiro Kobayashi)

Sekimoto once played with Mr. Alexander Gabryryuk (Ukraine), who won the 1st prize at 2000 Hamamatsu International Competition. They performed Rachmaninov Suite No.2 for 2 pianos in April 2003.

3 million participants in total competed

27th PTNA Piano Competition in 2003 had been held from May to the end of August. 30,885 people participated in total, which was a 13% increase from last year. Against the phenomenon that the birth rate is decreasing, piano population seems to be on a steady increase. One of the statistics proves it that the youngest age group, A2 grade (pre-school kids) had over 2,000 participants in total this year, which is increased by 12% compared to 2002.

There also seemed an outstanding increase under 10 year-old age groups. B grade (under 10) had nearly 8,000 participants in total, which was one fourth of all the participants this year. And about 500 of them also took part in Duo division, 1.4 times increase from last year.

Elementary school pupils nowadays are said to be busy in studying and other activities, etc., but they are likely to join PTNA competition continuously to recognize their achievements.

It is also identical that the number of participants was sharply increased in suburban cities. This explains the standardization and the qualitative development of piano education throughout Japan.



266 teachers were awarded as "Excellence Prize for teachers". And two teachers were awarded for their 20 years of achievements (above).



Above: Shohei Sekimoto (18) also got warm support from the audience. He played with Mr. A. Gabryryuk in April (right).
 Left: Overseas professors adjudicated (left); Prof. Vladimir Ovchinikov (Russia), Prof. Bruno Rigutto (France), Dr. Paul Pollei (U.S.), Prof. Kyung-Sook Lee (Korea), Prof. Andrei Pisarev (Russia), Dr. Thomas Hecht (US/Singapore) and Prof. Marian Ryicki (France, for 2nd round) also attended as jury members.

60% Increase in Amateur Division

570 people took part in the amateur division of PTNA Piano Competition, which was increased by 60% last year. This division is subdivided into 4 categories to accept as many piano lovers as possible, from elementary to advanced level.

This year, there appeared a participant who took part in both amateur division and special grade of solo division, and both proceeded to the final. This result reinforced the rise of semi-professional pianists, emerged from amateur ground.

In December, a small concert for the winners of amateur division was held at one of the biggest automobile showrooms in Japan (TOYOTA). They will also perform at the Minato Mirai Hall in next January.

Exchange winners with international competition

PTNA invited Ms. Oleksiy Stukalenko (Ukraine) to our winners' concert, as an exchange program between Liszt International piano competition and PTNA piano competition. He was the youngest prize winner in Liszt 2002. He played Liszt pieces with sensible tone and interpretation.

What's going on there? "Competition"



1. Seminars and master classes are held nationwide before the competition begins.



2. Preliminary and second rounds are organized by PTNA branches.



3. During the performances, jury members write brief comments and marks for each participants. After all the performances, marks are immediately calculated and results are announced in the end of the day.

4. Awarding ceremony at preliminary venues. There are prizes sponsored by regional organizations and enterprises.



5. PTNA Head office announced the result on internet right after each regional round finishes.



6. PTNA publishes a review booklet featuring the results, winners and participants name list, marks of final round, etc.

"Come and Join STEP" spirit goes round Japan

STEP is not only an examination system, but also a concert. It is the mixture of both elements.

It is basically the grade system, divided into 23 of grades, and participants get marks and evaluations by 3 professional advisors. It sounds like an ordinary examination, but the atmosphere is like a salon concert. Participants enjoy playing on stage, and audience appreciate their performances. This system is enjoyed by teachers and students all over Japan, and nearly 18,000 people are expected to join by March 2004. And from last March, MEXT(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) began to support this system.

STEP encourages teamwork between teachers

Piano teachers are mostly independent. There had been not so many opportunities for them to get to know other local teachers and do something together.

Recently PTNA teachers came to undertake STEP administration unit called "STEP station". This small organization is consisted of local piano teachers whose objective is to organize "STEP". Members are in charge of gathering participants, planning, preparation and operation. They make proposals and ideas to make this event to be more entertaining and educational.

For example, they can set up the "mini concert & talk session" by inviting professional pianists, give special presentation by teachers, hold tea party after the event, etc. (see the next page)

This system not only provides students to play piano on official stages, but also encourages piano teachers to bring up the companionship and the teamwork between neighboring teachers. More teachers are now waiting for the next opportunity to be a leader of their local area.

Nowadays even college professors, such as

Prof.Mieko Harimoto or Prof.Yasuko Sugimoto, become representatives of STEP station. They get along with local private teachers by running Stations together and thus become easier to know excellent students. Music colleges are now confronted with serious reduction of students, and this is expected to be one of the measures to increase the number of college students.



Station staff preparing for the special presentation given at the intermission. (above)Hand-made script and arranged music score of "Peter and Wolf" by Prokofiev.

Professionalism in STEP

Professional advisors are indispensable in STEP. To develop and refine their judging skills, advisors' training seminar was held in Tokyo in September.

STEP is coordinated in free and casual manner than competition, but the quality of adjudicators

is highly maintained, as this event is aimed at educational purpose, not just for the entertainment.



Advisor from U.S. joined

Mrs. Lisa Bastien(U.S.), in charge of promotion of Bastien Method has attended STEP as one of the advisors. This is the first time that STEP accepts an overseas advisor. She gave us the following comment;

"It was my pleasure and true honor to have the opportunity to adjudicate the PTNA STEP performances in Fukuoka! I had heard about the STEP program for many years and was delighted to see and hear it in action. I was wholly impressed not only

by the playing I heard, the wide variety of repertoire I heard, the way the students presented themselves on the stage, but also by the invaluable and positive effect I felt this event had on the students' musical experience. The one thing that stands out in mind more than any other when I look back on my day at the STEP is "confidence builder." STEP provided a secure and inclusive atmosphere that allowed many children and adults to perform. I saw joy on the students' faces and heard joy in their playing as well. I congratulate all the teachers, students, and parents who helped to make this event happen!"



Mrs. Lisa Bastien wrote comments to every participant (about 50 a day). She gave brief comments and one point advice lesson after all the performances.



What's going on there? "STEP"



STEP leaflet and programs



Advisors' comments, encouragement prize, etc.



Participants and Advisors. Those participants were awarded for their continuous participation of STEP. (right) Over 180 people participated at two-days STEP session.



Staff of "STEP Station" are local teachers.



"To Continue" is one of the most important elements in STEP. Those who participated in 5 times or more, encouragement prize are awarded.



STEP is not only for participants, but also for teachers. They invite professors to give special lecture after the event.



2300 mandatory pieces. Brief advise can be seen on the PTNA internet.



STEP can be arranged in various ways. (left) tea ceremony is held after the event. (right) Using Japanese traditional architecture as a hall.



Participants can play piano with any other instruments, strings, wind instruments, voice, or even Japanese traditional instrument like Shamisen (left) was appeared. (center) Piano used by Richter, played in STEP.



No more "Neighborhood Teacher". Teacher-student matchmaking service grows

Teacher matching service is enjoyed by many students and teachers so far--180 requests per month in average. About one third of the PTNA members are on the list so that students can select whom they want to take lessons. The number of request was doubled last year from the year before, and this year it is estimated to be about 2000, which will again be doubled by last year. To respond as many requests as possible, we provide detailed teacher's information, such as teaching career, method, lesson fees, genre, level, the number of students, prizes&achievements, etc.

This fact reflects the current tendency that students are no more satisfied with the "neighborhood teacher", but seek for the "best teacher" for them. They try to find the best teacher by this online service, and if this matching goes successfully, they even go to the teacher who lives afar from their town.

氏名	住所	年齢	経歴	料金	備考
山本 太郎	東京都千代田区	45	東京大学音楽学部卒業	10000円	ピアノ、作曲
佐藤 花子	東京都港区	38	桐朋学園大学卒業	8000円	ピアノ、声楽
鈴木 一郎	東京都目黒区	52	武蔵野大学卒業	12000円	ピアノ、指揮



Teachers' information database is on PTNA website. We also feature serial article of "Visiting lesson rooms" which gains 1,000pv of daily access.

Teachers are reliable concert planners!

Currently the number of concert goers are seriously decreasing. One of the factors is that the supply(artists)-consumption(audience) proportion is not well-balanced.

Then how to motivate the audience? One of answer is to make them select the artist by themselves. PTNA had a discussion with several teachers over the selection of guest pianists, and knew that they had a strong request. Therefore, PTNA invited Professor Victor Makarov and his



Teachers of PTNA-Nagoya branch.



Long queue waiting for their sign.(from left) Sekimoto, Gabryryuk, and Hibiki Tamura.



Masterclass of Chopin Etude Op.25 by Prof. Victor Makarov. Audience greatly appreciated his detailed and passionate way of teaching.

student, Mr.Alexander Gabryryuk, to play with Mr.Shohei Sekimoto(2003 PTNA grand prize). The masterclass and concert were held in April 2003 in Tokyo and Nagoya, and the halls were fullhouse. Especially the duo performance received great applause and left strong impact on Japanese audience.

Amateur pianists expand their community

Amateur pianists are eager to flock together. PTNA organizes salon parties for amateur pianists. This is a free-drinking, free-talking, and free-playing party. They enjoyed playing piano and exchanging information and ideas.



PTNA Branches congregates in Okinawa

PTNA annual national assembly was held on November 29th, in Okinawa, where over 120 people from PTNA branches throughout Japan has attended. They discussed over competition administration, measure to encourage local piano teachers, network building between other branches, etc.



MTNA articles on PTNA Web

PTNA occasionally put articles cited from MTNA journal on our website. (Music Teachers' National Association, U.S.)

PTNA young pianists go to the world

● 1st prize at Cleveland

Mr.Kotaro Fukuma(1998, G grade 1st) won the 1st prize at Cleveland International Piano Competition in August. He played Chopin Etudes, Barcarolle, Brahms Sonata, Ligetti, etc. and performed Brahms Concerto No.1 with the Cleveland Orchestra at the final round. He also received Chopin prize.



He had a debut concert at the Alice Tully Hall in N.Y. on November 18th and received a favourable review on N.Y.Times, where he was highly praised especially for the Brahms Sonata No.3--"he played with a weight, articulation and coloristic flexibility that touched on an often overlooked aspect of Brahmsian sensibility, a sense of grandeur couched in terms of sober modesty ." (text by Allan Kozinn)

He is studying at Paris Conservatoire de Superier, and will have concerts in U.S. over the next 2 years.

● 3rd prize at Leeds

Ms.Yuma Osaki(1998, PTNA 3rd) got 3rd prize at 14th Leeds International Pianoforte Competition 2003. She has already got prizes in major international competitions, such as Hamamatsu (1997, 5th), Long-Thibaud(1998, 5th), Rubinstein (2000, 5th), and Geneva(2002, 3rd), and this 3rd prize in Leeds will again boosts up her career as a pianist.



She is scheduled to play with Tokyo Philharmony Orchestra on January 30th, 2004. She is now studying at Paris Conservatoire de Superier.

● 4th prizes at Hamamatsu

Mr.Shohei Sekimoto, the grand-prize winner of 2003 PTNA Piano Competition, got 4th prize at 2003 Hamamatsu International Piano Competition held in Japan in November 10th-24th. There were lots of talented young pianists entried from all over the world, including many prize winners of major competitions. The competition was very hard,especially at the 1st stage where only 25 contestants out of 83 could go on to the 2nd round. Sekimoto showed brilliant and convincing performances at each round and played Tchaikovsky concerto No.1 at the final.

Ms.Rina Sudo(16) , the silver medalist of G grade in 2002 PTNA Piano Competition, also received the 4th prize. She is one of the youngest contestants this time. Her outstanding technique and passion were fully reflected on her performances.

● 5th prize at Queen Elisabeth

Mr.Kazumasa Matsumoto, one of the PTNA member got 5th prize at the 2003 Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Music Competition.



● Concerts in Brazil and Holland

Mr.Hibiki Tamura(16, 2002 PTNA Grand prize) joined the Liszt International Festival in 2003 October in Utrecht, Holland. This is an exchange program between 26th PTNA Piano Competition.



Tamura(right) in Utrecht (photo by Gustav Alink)

He took masterclass of Professor Dmitri Bashkirov, and received curtain call from the audience at the exhibition concert. He had lots of concerts in Japan and abroad this year, and will be scheduled to play in Paris on January 27th, 2004.

● Yasuko Fukuda Prize winners in Japan

The winners of Piano, Violin, Voice division of 2002 Mozart International Music Competition visited Japan as a part of "Yasuko Fukuda Prize" and they went around 4 major cities in Japan. This prize was established in 1991 and winners of Mozart

Awarding Ceremony at Hamamatsu International Piano Competition (left to right) Rafal Blechacz(2nd), Alexander Kobrin(2nd), Sergei Salov(3rd), Rina Sudo(4th), Shohei Sekimoto(4th), Hironao Suzuki(5th), Romain Descharmes(Best Performer of the Japanese Work, Diploma of Outstanding Merit), David Fray(Diploma of Outstanding Merit)





(left) Dr. Bin Ebisawa, the authority of Mozart music in Japan, (center) Hye-Soo Sonn (Bass), Yoko Kikuchi (pf), Esther Hoppe (vl), the winners of 8th International Mozart Competition. Kikuchi once participated in PTNA Piano competition.

Competition had been invited to Japan every four years. Recently this incentive prize is spread out to another competitions. In 2003, it was given to the winner of Queen

Elisabeth of Belgium International Music Competition, Mr. Severin von Eckardstein, who is scheduled to come to Japan in June 2004.

PTNA teachers abroad

● **Germany:** Professor Katsue Fujisawa, aged 86, was invited to Manheim to give 3 days masterclass session in October. Piano teachers from six different countries came to see her masterclass and her students' concert. She gave presentation of producing brilliant



Fujisawa was invited to Germany by Professor Peter Eicher.

presentation of producing brilliant

sounds and efficient use of fingers and arms, which were appreciated by the audience.

● **Australia:** Professor Akira Imai gave lecture and concert at The 6th Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference in Australia, in place of Professor Paul Vadra Skoda.

● **Russia:** Professor Masahiro Kawakami visited Mr. Nikolai Kapstin, one of the leading Russian composers and pianists in present days, and observe his recording of "Sonata No.12".

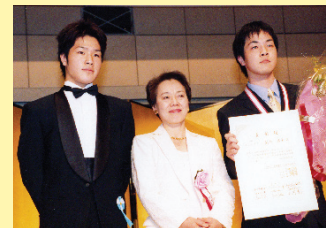


Kawakami given advice by Mr. Kapstin.

● **Czech Republic:** Mr. Noriyuki Miyazawa adjudicated International Rudolf Firkusny Piano Competition in Prague held in June. Mr. Tomohiro Hatta (2002 PTNA, 2nd in F grade) got 3rd prize.

● **France:** Prof. Jun Kanno adjudicated Concours International de Piano "Olivier Messiaen" in November.

28th PTNA Piano Competition for Promising Pianists



*Preliminary round / TOKYO

I. 2004.6.12-13 (deadline 2004.5.5)

II. 2004.7.3-4 (deadline 2004.5.26)

III. 2004.7.17-18 (deadline 2004.6.9)

*Second round / TOKYO

2004.8.11-12

*Final round / TOKYO

2004.8.22

1,000,000yen & Concerto for Grand-Prize

<http://www.piano.or.jp/english/>

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*alphabetical order, omit titles	

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PTNA