

# News Letter 2004

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## 95 year-old woman played on stage!

Passion is shared by everybody who loves music. As long as passion exists, no one is too late to study something.

A 95-year-old woman, Ms.Hideyo Gunji(right) caught a great attention from audience, at a concert held in Tokyo on September 5th. This is an incentive award for piano learners who had continuous participation in STEP(concert style evaluation system). This time, 73 people took part in.

It is surprising that Ms.Gunji, who was born in 1909, at the very beginning of 20th century, started to play piano in 1999 at the age of 90. She had been good at Japanese fine arts, such as playing Shamisen, reading poems, writing calligraphy and knitting, but never played European music instruments. One day when she walked around neighborhood, she heard someone playing piano, and it attracted her very much.

As soon as she began playing piano, her teacher suggested her to participate in STEP, which helped her to meet other piano lovers and to involve herself further to music. Comments by professional advisors were also great encouragement for her, and every time she received, she read them carefully and wrote them back.

Nevertheless, at first she hesitated to join this special concert, because she felt awkward to play among young pianists. But finally she made up her mind, "I want to send my message that one can play piano even if one gets very old!"

In the concert, she played two pieces so lively. Afterward she said with a smile, "I try to make sounds which is in my heart." It was truly transmitted to everyone in the hall.

Another woman, Ms.Asako Furuhata(80), began playing piano just ten years ago. Since then, she tried to be on stage with her colleagues. She said "I am very much inspired by playing together with my friends in STEP. It



"95 years old is still young enough to start something...!"

Holding flowers, Ms.Hideyo Gunji showed smile to the audience. She always thinking about her late husband in her mind when playing.

"Be humble when you are happy, be positive when you feel unhappy. Happiness and Unhappiness come around equally"



"Who is 80 years old ...?"

She felt great joy while playing. She took part in STEP 1.5 times in the past 10 years.

encourages me to keep studying piano. Sometimes I think that I am too old to play in public, but my teacher always cheers me up. She said "Once you go and play on stage, you cannot forget it." and now I believe this word."

In this concert, she played "Queen of Sava" by Laurent with a cellist.

Music has such an extraordinary power to enrich one's life!

## PTNA Grand Prize winner set out for concert tour in Europe

Mr.Masataka Goto (19) got the grand prize of 2004 PTNA Piano Competition.

One of the music critics wrote "He showed well-balanced technique by selecting wide variety of repertoire from Baroque to Contemporary. Especially the commissioned work by Naoko Mikami "First Impression" was superb. His interpretation of the music was clear and intellectual, and was represented with sensitive tonality. In "Petrouchka" by Stravinsky, he showed brilliant technical ability. " (Takayoshi Isayama, the reviewer).

He is scheduled to have a concert tour in London(1/24, Royal College of Music), Paris(1/25, Salle Cortot), Modena(1/23, Chamber Music Festival) and Bologna(1/27,Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna) early next year. He will play Mephisto Waltz No.1, Benediction de Dieu dans la solitude by Liszt, Wanderer Fantasy in C major, D.760 by Schubert, and Petrouchka.



Mr.Goto, the grand prize winner of 2004 PTNA Piano Competition(center), Prof.Yoheved Kaplinsky(right), Prof.Yuko Ninomiya(left).

Masataka Goto began his music studies in the Yamaha Music School, taking lessons in piano, composition and general musicianship. Since May 1996, he has been studying in the Yamaha Master Class. His teacher includes Fumiko Eguchi. Important concerts include performances at Amakusa Music Festival (Kumamoto, Japan) 1997 and the "Royal Gala Youth Concert" at the Kioi Hall, Tokyo in the presence of his Royal Highness the Prince Edward of UK 1998; Beethoven Piano Concerto No.3 at the International Music Day Festival in Tokyo at Sumida Triphony Large Hall 1998; the D'Auvergne-Sur-Oise, Cergy-Pontoise, France 2001, and he performed at the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1 with Krakow State Philharmony, Yokohama Japan, 2003. He won 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize at International Competition for Young Pianists in Ettlingen in 2000, and 4<sup>th</sup> Prize at 19<sup>th</sup> Epinal International Piano Competition in France, 2003.

## PTNA prize winners got invitation by Aspen Festival



Kyoko Kaise also received Audience Prize.

Two prize winners of this year will be invited by one of the world renowned music festivals, Aspen Festival. Ms.Kyoko Kaise(20, 2nd prize in Grade Superior) and Ms.Hitomi Maeyama(17, gold prize in grade G).

And Ms.Maeyama and Ms.Yui Fushiki(14, silver prize in Grade G) are entitled to join a junior international competition in U.S. next June.

## 8 year old girl amazed jury and audience

With her little body and small hands,an eight-year-old-girl exhibited outstanding maturity and infinite musical talent. She, Miss Aimi Kobayashi won at the grade under 15 years old(Jr.G grade), leaving other participants far behind.



At the final round, she performed Beethoven Sonata No.10-1, Chopin Etude op.25-2 and Nocturne. Her music was really coming from inside, and was expressed thoroughly on the piano. The Chief Jury, Prof.Mieko Harimoto(head professor of piano faculty, Tokyo Music College) addressed "Construction of Beethoven Sonata, concentration to play the 3rd movement without any disruption, was remarkable. And her technique was really proficient." Prof.Yoheved Kaplinsky (head professor of Juilliard School) who also served as an adjudicator of Jr.G grade, praised her distinguished talent and maturity which was well beyond the expectation.

The emergence of this little pianist is not by chance. Prof.Harimoto analyzed that the development of educational materials for young piano learners are greatly dedicated. For instance, the assistant pedaling system has been developed, so that even young children under 140cm can play with sensitive and natural pedaling. This was invented by one of the PTNA members, whose idea was based upon researches and experiments over 10 years.

The efforts to make better education materials helps the innovation of piano study in Japan.



## PTNA past winners went abroad

Mr. Shohei Sekimoto (2003 grand prize) and Mr. Hibiki Tamura (2002 grand prize) played in Paris (Salle Cortot) last January, and both received big applause from the audience. This was the award of 1st and 2nd prize at 2003 Madam Fukuda prize, which established last year.



left to right: Prof. Yuko Ninomiya, Shohei Sekimoto, Prof. Marian Rybicki, Hibiki Tamura

Ms. Kobayashi will play in Paris next March with three other Japanese young pianists.

## Average 10,000 people/day access to PTNA website

From May to the end of August, PTNA website disclosed the results of every regional round (270 local venues) within 24 hours, and nearly 10,000 people/day looked. And monthly page views recorded 2.2 million at its best, which was doubled by last year.

We also uploaded the sound data of prize winners, and performance of Miss Aimi Kobayashi (gold prize at Jr.G grade) was downloaded by over 10,000 people within two weeks.

## 280 received Teachers' Award

Teachers' award is given to those who make remarkable achievements in this competition. This year, 280 teachers were awarded. 39 of them got this prize for the first time.

This award was established when it started in 1977, and it has been a great incentive for teachers.

## Celebration at local schools and towns

Winners were celebrated at their local schools and towns after competition. Some were requested to play in front of hundreds of schoolmates, awarded by the school principals and music teachers, featured on the school circulations, or invited by local festivals, etc.

## Talented pianists appeared on major TV

Young talented boys are recently caught attention by major newspapers and TV. Most remarkable ones are Mr. Sonosuke Takao (left) and Mr. Hayato Sumino (2nd from left). Both are only 9 years old, and have distinguished talents shown in the grade under 14 years old. They appear on TV shows, as the models of gifted children.

Mr. Takao will play in Paris next March.

Another winners are also featured by local newspapers and magazines, and even appeared on a popular TV drama in Japan.



Jury members for 2004

-1st & 2nd rounds: Prof. David Locket (Associate Professor of The University of Adelaide Elder Conservatorium of Music), Prof. Peter Eicher (Prof. Staatl. Hochschule fu Musik Karlsruhe), Prof. Avedis Kouyoumdjian (professor of Universitat fur Musik und Darstellende Kunst Wien).

-Final round: prof. Zhou Guangren (China), Prof. Yoheved Kaplinsky (U.S.), and Prof. Marian Rybicki (France).

## "To Continue" is a new value

Evaluation is often based upon the quality of performance. Therefore, prizes are likely to be offered to the best performance shown on the stage. But, is that the only way to appreciate one's achievement?

On September 5th, a concert was held at Hakuju Hall in Tokyo, which is often used for professional concerts and recitals. This is to praise people for their continuous participation in STEP (concert style evaluation event), and 73 of them took part in.

It is usually said that perseverance is a key to success, and STEP tries to make this value recognizable.

Therefore, incentive prizes are offered according to the number of participation, and this concert was to celebrate those who had more than 10 times of participation.

Most people tend to hesitate or feel nervous at their first appearance on the stage, but as they get used to it, they feel more relaxed, and moreover, learn how to present themselves effectively. When they look back the past records and realize how far they come, they become really convinced.

At the concert on Sept.5th, everybody on stage was lively and confident and the performances were in good standard. Their improvement might not be fast, but steady. It was certainly proved in this concert.

## Concerto experience for every student

Lots of people dream of playing concertos one day.

It has been believed that only a few talented pianists are eligible to play concertos. In fact, it is realized only when one's talent, ability and chance coincides.

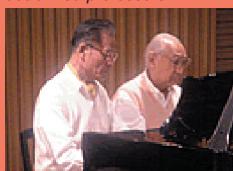
But nowadays opportunities are increasing, with a new style of orchestra--electronic orchestra and a few string players, and with wide range of repertoires. Along with Mozart, Beethoven, Hyden, Liszt, etc., several works were composed for beginners, which adopted in PTNA piano competition last year.

This year, it becomes much easier to try, since it is available in STEP. (see the interview below)

To be familiar with concerto works will encourage them to play with full orchestra, some day in the future.



Advisors were internationally acclaimed professors.



Piano brings joy to their life, even after retirement.



Mother dreamed of playing with her daughter, and it comes true.



Family ensemble are really heartwarming.



September 5th, 2004 at Hakuju Hall. People of different age groups joined. Passion for music are passed generation to generation.

"Concerto for everyone"  
— A Japanese businessman's challenge



Ensemble STEP



writing message to other participants whom they got interested.

Mr.Okajima(35) said "I was so much attracted by Chopin concerto when I first listened to the performance by S.Bunin at Chopin competition in 1985. Since then I had been dreaming to play, but it was very difficult to find a chance. Finally I found an opportunity in STEP, and I immediately applied. I had a lots of advices from the conductor and string players, which gave me confidence. I am an amateur, but would like to try lots of things- solo, ensemble, concerto..everything!"



Play concerto with three electronic orchstras.

## 500 musicians and dancers joined the one-day fest

One of the PTNA branches and Ministry of Education organizes collaborative event annually. This year, more than 500 musicians and dancers of the local area took part in and show brilliant performances. The most impressive performance was a chorus, performed by three pianos and choir of 300 people. It was commissioned by one of the PTNA members, and the music expressed deep admiration to the local area.



## Regular TV program started

Weekly TV program named "Pianists of this week" started on the satellite TV broadcasting company, "Classica Japan". This channel is an expert in classical music, by broadcasting concert films, music and dance documentary programs.

One of the leading music critic&reviewers, Mr.Takayoshi Isayama (PTNA member) served as the main personality for this 30min program. He picks up a pianist once a week, and give detailed reviews to his/her performances. Several overseas artists were featured already, such as Freddy Kempf, Alexander Gavrylyuk, Dinorah Varsi, Jorg Demus etc.

For instance, when he took up Kempf's recital, Mr.Isayama focused on the beginning of Beethoven Sonata No.8 1st movement and compared it with performances of other renowned artists, and explained uniqueness of



Kempf's interpretation.

This program caught attention by many piano teachers and learners. Mr.Isayama, known by his achievements of reviewing works at several International competition like 2000 Chopin, 2002 Tchaikovsky, or 2003 Queen Elizabeth, is now planning to feature some upcoming international competitions for this program.

## Teachers from abroad gave lectures

Renowned professors came to Tokyo to give lectures. Prof.Michail Voskresensky gave lecture of "Pictures At An Exhibition" by Mussorgsky, in PTNA teaching seminar vol.22. Hundreds of teachers listened to the lecture enthusiastically. Next January, Prof.Andrzej Jasinski will appear on this seminar.



In October, Dr.Leslie Howard, known for his achievement of all Liszt recordings, gave Liszt masterclass to 6 students in Tokyo. Next day, Dr.Howard and 6 students were invited to the Holland Embassy in Tokyo next day, and played Liszt pieces.



Master class(above) and recital of Dr.Howard in Tokyo (right)



"Liszt Night" at Dutch Embassy  
Participants(left to right; Christopher Devine, Hibiki Tamura, Shunsuke Tsuruoka, Ichiro Kaneko, Kasumi Yamamoto and Fumika Hirose), Dr.Leslie Howard (back, right)and Mr.Quinten Peelen(the Director of Liszt International Competition).

## Online Music Reviews from Verbier, Beijing, Salt Lake City..

Mr.Takayoshi Isayama went to Verbier Festival& Academy2004 in August to make online music reviews. The beautiful landscape of Switzerland and rich musical environment, was daily reported to Japan. Mr.Shohei Sekimoto (2003 grand prize winner of PTNA piano competition) joined this festival as a student of masterclass.



This year, Isayama visited several international competitions to report the performances of all contestants; The 5th International Tchaikovsky Competition for young musicians(Japan, March), The 3rd China International Competition(Beijing, May) and Gina Bachauer International Competitoin for young artists(Salt Lake city, June).



Gina Bachauer International Competition in Utah

PTNA also introduces reports from amateur reviewers. Recently masterclass report of Prof.Leon Fleisher, concerts of Kissin, Pollini, Lang Lang, etc. were reported from Washinton DC.



China International Competitoin in Beijing

## Online Service expands, music encyclopedia, music data, etc

Production of "Online encyclopedia of Music" is one of the big projects that PTNA is working on. Currently, thousands of music pieces are introduced and nearly 1,000 sound data extracted from CD or live recordings are available. And on weekly basis, new sound clip is introduced, which is downloaded 300,000/month. Some are the winners' performances of recent international competitions like Liszt 2002(Holland), Hamamatsu 2003(Japan) or Gina Bachauer(U.S.).

## PTNA young pianists, prizes and awards abroad

### 2nd prize in Sendai International Competition(Japan)

Mr.Masataka Takada(27) won the 2nd prize at Sendai International Competition which took place in June 2004. This competition is mainly focused on concerto works, where participants had to play concertos in every round. Mr.Takada played Liszt No.2 at the final, producing well-balanced acoustic effect and combination with orchestra. He is now studying in Budapest, Hungary.



### 2nd prize in Cantu International Competition (Italy)

Mr.Shohei Sekimoto(19) won the 2nd prize at Cantu International Competition in Italy last May. This competition is also focused on concerto, but participants have to prepare only one concerto work. He played Tchaikovsky concerto No.1, and audience appreciated his passionate performance very much. The standard of the final round was high, as well as in the past.



### 3rd prize in Young Tchaikovsky International Competition (Japan)



Tchaikovsky International Competition for young pianists was took place last March in Japan, and Mr.Yoshito Numasawa(17) got 3rd prize.

A number of young talented pianists came to the old town of Kurashiki, from Russia, Ukraine, China, Korea, U.S, Australia etc. Mr.Numasawa was successful in showing his technique and thoughtful ideas in music. He likes to play football, but was injured a few months before this competition, which forced him to put plaster for 3 months. But he made



speedy recovery and showed brilliant performance on stage.

## 4th prize in Paderewsky International Competition

Ms.Rieko Nezu(25) won 4th prize in Paderewsky International Competition last November, and also awarded for the best performance of Sonata.



After graduation from Tokyo University of Music and Fine Arts, she has been studying in Poland with Prof.Ewa Poblocka. She was proud of receiving the Sonata prize this time, as she dedicated herself in studying polish music these days, which is one of her life works.

## 2 PTNA young pianists joined the concert of Mr.Eckertstein, 1st of 2003 Queen Elisabeth



Mr. Severin v. Eckardstein, the winner of 2003 Queen Elisabeth International Competition in Belgium came to Japan, as the recipient of "Madam Yasuko Fukuda prize". He gave concerts in Tokyo and Osaka, and

two young pianists joined the concert in Osaka.

## Mr.Hibiki Tamura got "Arion prize"

Mr.Hibiki Tamura(17, grand prize winner of PTNA 2002) received "Arion Prize" in piano division last March. This is a highly acclaimed prize in Japan, which awards one- promising artist every year. The winner of piano division had been vacant for 20years.



Past recipients have already launched worldwide career, such as Maestro Yutaka Sado(Conductor), Ms.Shoji Sayaka(Violin).

Mr.Tamura recently released the first CD by the strong support of Prof.Takahiro Sonoda, one of the leading

pianists in Japan who passed away last September.

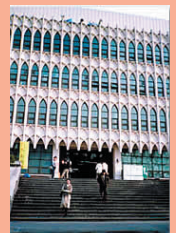
## Mr.Shohei Sekimoto made Suntory Hall Debut

Mr.Shohei Sekimoto made sensational debut at Suntory Hall, one of the most prestigous halls in Japan, on April 10th. This is an incentive award for 2003 PTNA Grand prize. He played Tchaikovsky concerto No.1 with Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Maestro Kenichiro Kobayashi. His performance was really confident and energetic, and audience appreciated the birth of a pianist of new generation.



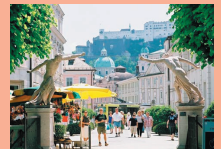
## PTNA teacher visited music college in Seoul

Prof.Yuko Hisamoto, the pianist and music writer, visited Yonsei Music University in Seoul, Korea to meet the head professor of piano department. Her long report was introduced on PTNA website.



## Concert in a Palace

Junko Nishikawa(1999 Grand Prize) played at the beautiful Mirabell palace in Salzburg on May 16th, with violinist Mr.Luz Leskowitz. They played Mozart K.376, Brahms Op.100 and Sonata by Franck. She also played in solo recital on 15th.



## Teachers' tour to Mrs.Jane Bastien

20 of piano teachers paid a visit to San Diego to see Mrs.Jane S.Bastien's piano lesson. They learned several new methodologies of Bastien textbooks and had a nice time talking and exchanging ideas of piano lesson and music.



*Past prize winners and further career*

Kotaro Fukuma(1st, Cleveland 2003)  
Yuma Osaki(3rd, Leeds 2003)  
Shohei Sekimoto (4th, Hamamatsu 2003)  
Rina Sudo (4th, Hamamatsu 2003)  
Kazumasa Matsumoto  
(5th, Queen Elisabeth 2003)  
Yoko Kikuchi (1st, Mozart 2002)  
Hibiki Tamura(2nd, Ettlingen 2002)  
Yurino Izumi (1st, Porto 2002)  
Mika Sato(6th, Chopin 2000)

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2004 Grand Prize winner, Masataka Goto

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(1979,1985,1996, 2003)  
Andrzej Jasinski(1981)  
Klaus Schilde(1988)  
Seymour Bernstein(1992)  
Christopher Elton(1992)  
Sergey L.Dorensky(1993)  
Oxana Yablonskaya(2000)  
Bruno Rigutto(2003)  
Yoheved Kaplinsky(2004)  
Zhou Guangren(2004)

# 29th PTNA Piano Competition for Promising Pianists

**\*16th July-21st August, 2005 Tokyo**

Grand Prize:1,000,000yen, Concerto with Japan Philharmony Orchestra,  
Concerts in Japan and abroad.



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Incorporated by the Japanese Government

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