Note from Artistic Director Naoyuki Miura

Musical America, the oldest magazine on music in the US, included Mari Ono and myself in "Top 30 Professionals of 2018" listing. The Japanese government and several organizations have recognized the work of Music From Japan and myself over the years, but this was the first time a US organization honored us. We are very grateful to Musical America and Music Critics Association of North America for recommending us.



It is almost a miracle that Music From

Japan has survived all these years of ups and downs to be able to celebrate its 45th anniversary season. This would not have been possible without the support of our friends and organizations. The thought of all of this fills me with deep gratitude.

The Artist Residence program started in 2016 will mark its 5th year. I am hoping to publish a compilation of keynote lectures as The State of Japanese Contemporary Music Today

MFJ has presented 645 works by about 190 Japanese composers and 30 foreign composers with 87 commissions and 99 world premieres. Many of the Japanese composers we have introduced have taken flight worldwide, and others have been re-evaluated in Japan. I am pleased that MFJ's efforts have contributed to the Japanese music world.

Our challenge after this season is to determine which direction to navigate this organization.

A Farewell to Two Friends of Music From Japan

MFJ's Honorary Advisor Donald Keene passed away at the age of 96 on February 24th. Professor Keene was a celebrated scholar and longtime Shincho Professor at Columbia University.

Gagaku transverse flute virtuoso Sukeyasu Shiba passed away on July 5th at the age of 83. Mr. Shiba established and directed the world-renowned gagaku ensemble Reigakusha, which performs both contemporary and classical gagaku repertoire. MFJ was honored to present Sukeyasu Shiba three times: in 1996 as part of Lincoln Center Festival's educational programs; in 2004 on the occasion of MFJ's 30th Anniversary; and in 2010 as part of the 35th Anniversary events.

Music From Japan's Resource Center for Japanese Music receives inquires from around the world. Your tax deductible contribution helps us to continue our Resource Center activities, as well as the concerts and programs designed to bring you closer to Japanese culture and music. In an era of declining public support, your contribution is more important than ever. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

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三浦尚之ご挨拶

2018年「ミュージカル・アメリカ30傑(トップ・プロフェッショナル)」 に小野真理と私が選ばれました。これまでに日本の政府や機関か ら表彰されたことはありますが、アメリカのもっとも古くからの音楽誌 に、北米批評家協会の推薦により認められたことは、実に嬉しく光 栄に思っています。そして、ミュージック・フロム・ジャパン(MFJ)が紆 余屈折しながら多くの皆さんに助けられて、今回創立45周年を迎え ることができるのは奇跡に等しく、感無量です。

2016年から始めたアーティスト・レジデンスも今回5回目となりま す。第3回の柿沼敏江氏、第4回の白石美雪氏と貴重な講演が累積 しました。これを機に5年間の集大成として、日本現代音楽界の現 状を報じる冊子としてまとめ、出版したいと思っています。

今までおよそ190名の日本人の作曲家の645曲、外国人作曲家 30名も含めて委嘱作品87曲、世界初演99曲、多くの米国初演作品 を紹介できた事に満足しています。さらに、MFJが米国に紹介した 日本の作曲家が日本で再評価され、そして世界に羽ばたいている ことがこの45年間の成果といえるでしょう。少しでも日本の音楽界に 貢献できたことを、誇りに思っています。

今シーズン後の課題は、MFJの舵をどのような方向に取って行っ たら良いか見極めることです。

Music From Japan appreciates support from the Consulate General of Japan in New York, and cooperation of The Japan Federation of Composers, Inc., and Japan Society for Contemporary Music.



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2019 Newsletter

"Music From Japan [is] long a force in opening pathways for Japanese music in the West" James R. Oestreich The New York Times







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Facebook: English: www.facebook.com/musicfromjapan Japanese: http://on.fb.me/1jxp7Hs

Looking ahead:

MUSIC FROM JAPAN 45th Anniversary

Fukushima 2019



November 24: The Ryukyuans at Fukushima City Concert Hall November 25: The Ryukyuans at Iitate and Fukushima City Schools

New York 2020: Scandinavia House

February 22: The Works of Noriko Koide

February 23: Concert Curated by Seiji Choki



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Permit No. 36

2019年秋 - 2020年春 45周年音楽祭予定

2019年秋 福島 福島テルサ

11月23日『基調講演』小和田恆 ふくしん夢の音楽堂(福島市音楽堂)大ホール 11月24日『琉球の音色~沖縄音楽と琉球舞踊~』 福島市立福島庭坂小学校 飯舘村立小中学校

11月25日 『琉球の音色』 ワークショップとミニ・コンサート

2020年春 ニューヨーク市 スカンジナビア・ハウス 2月22日『小出稚子個展』 2月23日 長木誠司選択作品によるコンサート

Newsletter volume 12, 2019 © Music From Japan, Inc



Festival 2019 New York Fourth Artist Residency

Victor Borge Hall, Scandinavia House

For its Festival 2019, the Fourth Artist Residency, Music From Japan invited composer Yumi Saiki and musicologist Miyuki Shiraishi for a series of concerts and other educational events in New York City.



Japanese Composers Influenced by John Cage

To begin the festival, Professor Shiraishi, who curated the March 2nd program, delivered a lecture titled "John Cage in Japan: Shock and Afterwards." She traced the reception of Cage and of his music in Japan, from his first visit in 1952 until he won the Kyoto Prize in 1989, and beyond.

The Shirarishi-curated concert Japanese Composers Influenced by John Cage began with Jo Kondo's piece Dithyramb, a duo for flute and guitar. Oren Fader (guitar) and Eliza-

beth Brown (flute) brought this playful and melodically refined piece to life. Yoichi Sugiyama's Smoking Prohibited, a Bay Street Ballad II, New York Version is a piece for alto saxophone composed in honor of Eric Garner. Performed by Ryan Muncy, the microtones, wide vibrato, and rubato feeling of the piece lent it a lyrical and contemplative quality. Why You Scratch Me, Not Slap? is an unconventional piece for guitar written by Tomomi Adachi and was performed by Oren Fader. Rather than a written score, the performer is only provided with a video of hand motions. The guitarist must watch the video and perform the hand motions in real time on the guitar, which is placed on a table. The video is also projected for the audience to see.

The piece following the intermission was by far the quietest and most minimal work on the program: Takahiro Kuroda's string quartet Let's also be careful about small things, performed by Momenta Quartet. The piece consisted of alternating moments of sound and silence of approximately the same duration, with the sound gradually, barely perceptibly changing over time. The performance of the Kuroda piece, commissioned by Music From Japan, was a world premiere. Time Sequence by Toshi Ichi-



yanagi, played by Vicky Chow, was the oldest piece on the program, and stood out among the pieces because of its very repetitious and overt usage of pulse and meter. Akiko Yamane chose to have two of her pieces performed at once on the same stage: Dots Collection No. 3 for violin and piano and a vibrating sphere in a room No. 1 for violin. Their con-



Pneuma III by Yumi Saiki

room No. 1 consisting of mostly upper register Following the concert, a panel, moderated

by George Lewis, convened. The panel included guitarist Oren Fader, composer David Behrman, musicologist Miyuki Shiraishi, and composer Takahiro Kuroda.

The Works of Yumi Saiki

Day two of the Festival, The Works of Yumi Saiki, presented a compelling cross-section of the diverse work of the composer. The insistent pulse of Turn My Mourning into Dancing for flute, clarinet and cello, seemed to echo through the ensemble in various guises, before dissolving into trills and glissandi. In the open forum following the concert, pianist Aaron Wunsch mentioned that when he first saw the score for JOY, a piece for solo piano, he was not overcome with the feeling of joy—that is to say that the piece is very challenging. Yet ultimately joy is precisely what his performance projected: an exuberant feeling, not an effort of technique. Entomophonie II comes from a series of Saiki's pieces inspired by insect sounds. While the repetitive sounds coming from the quintet of winds and strings were unconventional and dissonant, a calm relaxed feeling presided over the hall, much like actually being surrounded by the plaintive and insistent call of insects in nature. The piece was conducted by renowned cellist and conductor Fred Sherry. Deux Sillages II for violin solo and string trio, is, according to Saiki, a juxtaposition of two types of music, "Asian music on the one hand and Western music on the other." The result was a flurry of musical ideas and musical movement throughout the performance by Momenta Quartet, who artfully interpreted the challenging music. To punctuate each of her phrases, Emilie-Anne Gendron, who performed the solo violin part, kicked a cluster of bells suspended in front

of her. *Pneuma III* for flute, cello and piano closed the concert. "Pneuma" means "breath" in Greek but also can take on the metaphorical meaning of "spirit." The central role of the flutist (in this case Elizabeth Brown), and the use of techniques on the flute that emphasized its breathiness, indeed gave it an airy, effervescent feel.

The weekend concluded with another open for rum with Saiki, pianist Aaron Wunsch, composer/



All production photos by Ken Howard unless otherwise noted

writer Matthias Kriesberg, and Ryo Sasaki from Suntory Arts Foundation, moderated by cellist/conductor Fred Sherry. First and foremost, they discussed Saiki's music, and took questions from the audience. Sharon Nakazato served as the interpreter for the forums on both days.

Apart from the public events, MFJ hosted its annual symposium at the Japan Foundation, and Yumi Saiki presented at Columbia University's weekly composition seminar.

Overall, the week was filled with beautifully interpreted new music by Japanese composers, informative educational programs, conversation, and new connections between composers, musicologists, performers and

Festival 2018 Third Artist Residency

Victor Borge Hall, Scandinavia House

For the third year of the Artist Residence Program, Music From Japan invited composer Tokuhide Niimi and musicologist Toshie Kakinuma from Japan to participate in a series of educational events and concerts in New York. In the days preceding the public activities, MFJ presented several events around New York, including a composition seminar led by Mr. Niimi at Columbia University, and a symposium with composers and critics at the Japan Foundation.

The Works of Tokuhide Niimi

Musicologist Toshie Kakinuma gave a compelling lecture called "Trends in Contemporary Music in Japan after the Osaka Expo in 1970," preceding the concert. In it, she discussed the history of, and shed light on some of the ideological dissonances within, the field of avant-garde composition in Japan after this momentous occasion. The Expo represented a turning point both for the cultural history of Japan and in the life of Professor Kakinuma.



Following the lecture, Momenta Quartet performed Tokuhide Niimi's String Quartet No. 2 Asura, composed in 2011. The piece began with a pianissimo flurry of notes, that increased in a slow crescendo. Niimi, who seems to have a penchant for bringing life to simple material through his imaginative thematic development, then introduced a descending four note theme. That material would reappear in many forms throughout the piece, which was sometimes

manic, sometimes brooding. As it came to a close, the descending theme was inverted into an ascending one, and just as the work began with a tremulous flurry of notes, it seemed to disperse back into the place from which it came, tapering off into nothingness.

The second section of Concerto for Chorus, Bios, followed. Per-

formed by the C4 vocal ensemble, the work opened with a unison that gradually broke off into dissonances. Like the quartet before it, Bios covered a lot of compositional ground, from ponderous chordal stops to tremulous unisons in the upper register. The text, which drew from Kenji Miyazawa, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and a Latin aphorism, were all delivered in their respective languages. Nonetheless, the meaning of the words—which all contemplated the most penetrating questions of life seemed to be transmitted through the music itself, for all to know and

The final piece, a piano quintet called *shape of the soul*, was the world premiere of a commission by Music From Japan. The work set itself apart insofar as it heavily incorporated elements of traditional harmony. The use of two double-reeded instruments (oboe and bassoon), and the choice of scale hinted at the music of the Middle East.

After the concert, the first panel included Mr. Niimi, Timothy Brown (the conductor of C4 Vocal Ensemble), John Fleming (the current president of the Music Critics Association of North America) and Barbara Jepson (former president of the Music Critics Association of North America), who moderated the panel. The panelists each voiced their impressions of the program, and asked Mr. Niimi questions about his music. The second panel included American composers Anthony Cheung and Julia Wolfe, and Japanese conductor Yasuaki Itakura; John Fleming and Barbara Jepson remained. The panelists discussed MFJ's upcoming collaboration with MCANA Institute and two American composers, to take place in July in Japan.



Kayoko Nakagawa performs on the wa-go-n

Diversification of Japnese Contemporary Music

The second concert f the weekend opened ip with two short piano pieces by composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, arranged by Yuji Takahashi. Sakamoto is famous for his remarkable deptness at writing and playing music across many genres, from

the the popular to the avant-garde and the classically elegant. the two pieces that began the program fell into the latter camp. Both River and Grasshoppers, smartly interpreted by Aaron Wunsch on piano, gleamed with clarity and compositional precision, but at the same time did not seem like a repetition of the past, through certain rhythmic eccentricities. Melodia for bass clarinet, by Makiko Nishikaze and performed by Marianne Gythfeldt, followed. Nishikaze is interested in the spacialization of sound, and somehow, even though the sound was coming from a single



C4 performing the Second Movement of Tokuhide Niimi's piece *Bios*



erformer positioned at the center of the stage, the long tones and staccato notes seemed to emanate from the corners of the room itself. The wa-go-n an ancient koto indigenous to Japan, was the featured instrument in the only traditional piece on the program, Shizuuta, which was transcribed by Mayu Masuda from a manuscript compiled over one thousand years ago. Kayoko Nakagawa performed the piece, which consisted of mostly broken chords complementing the vocal line homophonically. The next piece, shima-zima (Islands), by Makiko Nishikaze did involve an actual spacialization of

the sound, with the six performers walking about the auditorium while playing. Like the collection of islands that make up Japan, in *shima-zima* each performer simultaneously existed as a unique entity and came together to perform as a musical whole. The performance of the piece was the world premiere of a MFJ commission.

After the intermission, Kayoko Nakagawa returned to the stage with the wa-go-n to perform Mayu Masuda's new work, Narrating Function IV—Rain Rain, another MFJ commission and world premiere. Unlike *Shizuuta*, the voice and wa-go-n seemed to act more in counterpoint. Dharani, a work for guitar and voice by Yoshihiko Shimizu and performed by Oren Fader was a slow meditation on a single note interspersed with flourishes and microtonal chords on the guitar, and grace notes and glissandi in the voice. The concert closed with *Hika Runners High* + a playful piece by Noriko Koide. Each of the seven performers also held a music box, with a melody written by Koide. The work, for flute, clarinet, percussion, guitar, piano, and cello, heavily employed chromatic scale runs, glissandi and repetitive machine like rhythms. It was conducted by esteemed Japanese conductor Yasuaki Itakura.

Before the post-concert panel began, there was a demonstration on the wa-go-n. As Mayu Masuda explained different features of the instrument, Kayoko Nakagawa demonstrated, finally performing a short piece. A forum including several of the composers, Stephanie Griffin (Momenta Quartet), John Fleming, and musicologist Toshie Kakinuma, followed.

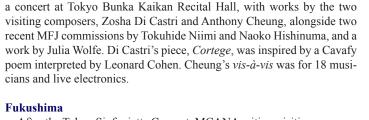
US-Canada-Japan Encounters in Music July 2019

For the MFJ-MCANA institute in Japan, Music From Japan (MFJ) collaborated with the Music Critics Association of North America (MCANA) to bring ten MCANA critics, one US and one Canadian composer to Japan for various concerts and educational events.

On July 5th Classical and Contemporary Gagaku introduced the US and Canadian visitors to gagaku instruments, their use in traditional music, and their subsequent incorporation into contemporary music. Following an informative lecture by Professor Naoko Terauchi, the musicians performed four classical pieces. Afterwards, John Cage's One9 and Ichiro Nodaira's Voix Interieur were performed by Mayumi Miyata. Both pieces were originally composed for Miyata. The 2012 MFJ commission To Be Human for kugo, voice and haisho, by Fuvuhiko Sasaki, followed.

On Friday July 6th, Highlights of MFJ Mayumi Miyata performs John Cage's One9 Commissions Tokyo II featured five chamber works MFJ has commissioned over the photo by Sachie Hamaya

years. While most of the pieces have been composed in the current decade, a highlight was Shigeaki Saegusa's Cello '88 (1988) performed in its Japanese premiere by Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, for whom it was originally composed.



On the 7th, Tokyo Sinfonietta presented, Music From Japan in Tokyo,

After the Tokyo Sinfonietta Concert, MCANA critics, visiting composers and staff of Music From Japan made their way to the train to head to Fukushima. The following day, on the 8th, the group was treated to regional folk performing arts of Fukushima Prefecture at Fukushima City Concert Hall. John Fleming, in his article for Musical America, summed it up well: "A dozen children, ages four to twelve, wearing turquoise kimonos and holding fans or flowered hats, performed graceful choreography



Visitors from US and Canada with MFJ staff at the Yamatsumi Shrine photo by Masaru Takenaka

to a chanting vocalist, drum, and flute. Three Lions of Kuryuusawa featured dancers in gold lion masks. Booming taiko drumming [of Ryozen Taiko] showed how villagers might celebrate the rice harvest." (Musical America Worldwide, August 7, 2018).

During the visit, the critics and composers also had the chance to meet with Masaaki Suzuki, vice-governor of Fukushima Prefecture. He emphasized that radiation levels are safe in most of Fukushima and that the area is recovering

The final stop of the MFJ-MCANA institute in Japan was litate, a village in Fukushima Prefecture where MFJ's own Naoyuki Miura's mother was born and raised. Iitate was almost entirely evacuated after the nuclear disaster. In part due to Miura's personal connection to the region, MFJ has commissioned several works that were in some way influenced by the tragic events of March 11th, 2011. One such piece, Time, Come Around (commissioned by MFJ in 2012) was performed on that final day by a students' choir at Iitate's newly built school.

Overall, MFJ's events in Japan offered the invaluable opportunity for ten critics and two composers to travel to Tokyo and Fukushima, meet with their counterparts there, be exposed to both contemporary and traditional Japanese musical culture, and gain a glimpse of the Japanese way

Comments from the Participating Composers

I am extremely grateful for having had the opportunity to visit Japan for the first time...It was an eye and ear opening experience to hear music in Tokyo and Fukushima, as well as to encounter the culture (particularly all the unique visits Music From Japan planned like the trip to the Onsen and to the village). I was very pleased with the performance of my piece and enjoyed working with the conductor and ensemble in Tokyo.

--Zosha Di Castri

I found the entire experience to be culturally, intellectually, aurally,

and visually stimulating. The various focuses of each concert – the mix- 家・芝祐靖さんが復曲。 ture of tradition and innovation in Japanese music, the juxtaposition of new works from North American and Japanese composers with the Tokyo Sinfonietta, and finally the importance of keeping folk traditions alive as a way of bringing community together in the wake of tragedy – these are all deeply imprinted on my memory of this unforgettable trip. I especially appreciated the variety of music presented... it was especially moving to hear Mayumi Mayata perform the piece for sho that John Cage had written for her... The Fukushima portion of the trip gave me great hope that the area is being revitalized through education, agriculture, and perhaps most importantly, culture. The performances at the concert hall and school featuring taiko drummers and young students were especially moving, and attested to the power of music and dance to bring communities together through any kind of hardship. I want to thank Music From Japan once more for curating an unforgettable experience for all of us. --Anthony Cheung



Three Lions of Kuryuusawa photo by Masaru Takenaka

English Language Media Coverage

"Music From Japan: Uncompromising Avant-Garde Vibe" by John Fleming

Classical Voice North America

https://classicalvoiceamerica.org/2018/02/23/music-from-japan-uncompromising-avant-garde-vibe/

"Critic Explores New and Old Music in Japan"

by Sarah Bryan Miller

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

https://www.stltoday.com/entertainment/arts-and-theatre/critic-exploresnew-and-old-music-in-japan/article 0d8a1dfb-a899-5576-a1ef-dc26dd6a7f67.html

"Music From Japan: Restoring Culture after Nuclear Devastation" by Michael Huebner

Arts Birmingham

http://www.musicfromjapan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/artB-HAM2018.pdf

"2 Concerts Accent John Cage Factor in Japanese Music" by Susan Brodie

Classical Voice North America

https://classicalvoiceamerica.org/2019/03/06/2-concerts-accent-johncage-factor-in-japanese-music/

日本語メディアよりの抜粋 (2018-2019)

Quotes from Japanese media

2018年福島音楽祭

福島民報新聞 2月4日

雅楽の響き郷土愛育む-MFJの音楽祭「古の響き・雅楽」は三 日、福島市音楽堂で開かれた。東京を拠点に国際的に活動 する雅楽アンサンブル「伶楽舎(れいがくしゃ)」が清澄な音色 を響かせた。・・・ 文化勲章受章者で伶楽舎音楽監督の雅楽 に包まれた。

らんぶ)」を繰り広げた。約 五百人の聴衆が典雅な調 べに聴き入った。演奏に先 立ち、笙演奏家で伶楽舎メ ンバーの宮田まゆみさんが 基調講演し、雅楽の歴史 などを解説した。・・・ 開演 に先立ち、福島市の福島 三小の全校児童約三百七



photo by Masaru Takenaka

十人を対象に雅楽教室を開いた。

2018年NY音楽祭

福島民友新聞 2月19日

・・作曲家の新実徳英さん(東京都)によるMFJ委嘱曲「魂の 形」が世界初演された。東日本大震災などの犠牲者らに向け た鎮魂の思いを込めた曲で、来場者は繊細な旋律に聞き入っ た。・・・演奏に先立ち、音楽学者の柿沼敏江京都市立芸術大 学教授が1970(昭和45)年大阪万博以降の日本の現代音楽 の動向について講演した。・・・「今回のMF」音楽祭でも京都や 大分など日本各地の作曲家が参加している。かつては作曲家 は東京にいなければ評価されにくかったが、今後はローカル な仕事がより重要になる」と語った。

週刊オン・ステージ新聞 3月30日

二日間にわたる演奏会では、初日の新実による新作ピアノ五 重奏曲《魂の形》初演、二日目の増田による和琴のための新 作《物語る機能IV・雨 雨》初演などが注目された。三浦による と、米国での和琴の演奏は、初めてという。

2018年 音楽による出会い 日本・米国・カナダ

日本経済新聞 「窓」 7月10日 米国とカナダの音楽ジャーナリストや作曲家が9日、福島県飯 舘村の村立小中学校を訪れ、子供たちによる村民歌や伝統 芸能の田植踊りなどを鑑賞した。・・・ミネソタ州から来日したマ イケル・アンソニーさんは、「伝統芸能が廃れている場所も多い 中で、このような機会は子供たちにとって良いことだ」と笑顔で

読売新聞 2019年1月30日

Creators 日本の現代音楽 息長く米へ-ニューヨークで1975 年、非営利団体「ミュージック・フロム・ジャパン」を、ダンサーだ った妻の小野真理さんと設立し、日本の現代音楽を紹介する 音楽祭を開いてきた。2018年、活動が評価され、世界の芸術 家の情報を発信する米メディア「ミュージカル・アメリカ」が、革 新的な活動を行う人物をたたえる「30傑」に、北米の音楽批評 家らの推薦で妻と共に選出された。『資金集めなどが大変な 中、二人三脚でやってきた家内への孝行になった』と喜ぶ。

2019年ニューヨーク音楽祭

共同ニュース 3月3日

米国で日本の音楽を紹介するNPO「ミュージック・フロム・ジャ パン」(三浦尚之理事長)の音楽祭が2日、ニューヨークで2日 間の日程で始まった。初日は20世紀の前衛音楽を代表する米 国の作曲家、故ジョン・ケージ氏に影響を受けた一柳慧氏ら日 本人作曲家6人の作品が演奏された。・・・一柳氏の作品から は、難易度の高い約9分のピアノ曲「タイム・シークエンス」をカ ナダ人女性ピアニストのビッキー・チョーさんが演奏。「ブラボ 一」の声と共に、約100人の聴衆で埋まった会場は盛大な拍手