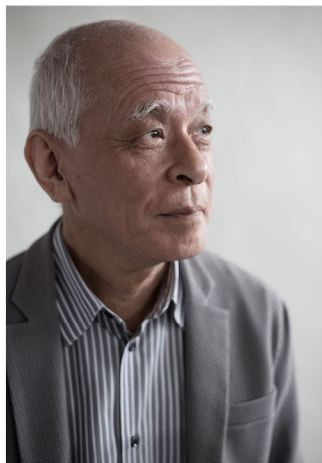


Jo Kondo announced winner of
the 55th Suntory Music Award for 2023



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The Suntory Foundation for the Arts (Directors General: Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi and Shingo Torii) has announced Jo Kondo as the recipient of the 55th (2023) Suntory Music Award, which is presented to individuals or ensembles for notable contributions to the development of Western-style music in Japan.

▽**Selection process**

The first round of selections to choose candidates was held on Monday, January 8, 2024 at the conference room of the International House of Japan. The competition continued with final qualifying round on Thursday, February 29, 2024 at the conference room of the International House of Japan. After careful consideration, Jo Kondo was chosen as the winner of the 55th (2023) Suntory Music Award, a decision that received the formal agreement of the Board of Directors of the Foundation on Monday, March 25, 2024.

▽**Prize-money** ¥7,000,000

▽**The members of the selection committee**

Seiji Choki, Atsuya Funaki, Nobuhiro Ito, Morihide Katayama, Akane Matsudaira,
Yuji Numano, Miyuki Shiraishi (In alphabetical order)

▽Reason for the award

Since his *sen no ongaku* (linear music) series exactly half a century ago, Jo Kondo has continued to enlighten Japanese audiences and musicians on a profound level with his works and writings. Unlike the loud, impassioned shouts of other pieces, Kondo's work always presents a quiet and yet quite clear contour, the impact of which has become even more illuminating over the years.

Composium 2023 (May 23-28, Tokyo Opera City) focused on Kondo's person and work. It included the screening of a documentary and a discussion, along with orchestral concerts featuring works from the 70s through to his latest pieces, including two world premieres. It was also an opportunity to gain an overview of the composer today, including the judging for the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award, as well as a master class in composition and related performances which were held at the same time.

Kondo's compositional method, of which he has frequently spoken, involved placing a single note, finding the next note by repeatedly listening to the first one, then finding a third note by again repeatedly listening to the first two. This was seen as too simple at a time when a wide variety of compositional techniques were popular. On the contrary, his work itself came across as enigmatic, and today his music and words seem to be telling us we need a deep awakening at a time when pandemics and wars have intensified human (and human group) isolation, and the erosion of art by AI has become a reality.

Considering the collective accomplishments of the aforementioned Composium, including his chamber music work recording CD "Jo Kondo: Day and Night", this year presents an excellent opportunity to honor this composer, who has continued to work with an intellect and integrity rarely seen in the world today. The Suntory Music Award is hereby presented to Jo Kondo.

(Nobuhiro Ito, Committee Member)

▽Biography

Jo KONDO (Compose)

Born in Tokyo in 1947, Jo Kondo graduated from the composition department of Tokyo University of Arts in 1972. He spent a year in New York on a grant from the John D. Rockefeller III Fund in 1977-78. In 1979, he taught as guest lecturer at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, invited by the Canada Council, and in 1986 resided in

London as a British Council Senior Fellow. In 1987, he was a composer in residence at Hartt School of Music, Hartford, USA, and in 1987 and 2000 taught at Dartington International Summer School in England. In 2005 he was invited by Eastman School of Music at Rochester University as Howard Hanson Guest Professor. Kondo has given lectures on his own music in many institutions in Europe and North America, such as Harvard University, New England Conservatory of Music, Edinburgh University, York University, Universität zu Köln, Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg, Conservatorium van Amsterdam. He was a professor at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo and Elisabeth University of Music in Hiroshima, and taught also at Tokyo University of Arts for many years. At present, he is a professor at Showa University of Music, Kawasaki, Japan and professor emeritus at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo. In 1980 Kondo founded the Musica Practica Ensemble, a chamber orchestra devoted to contemporary music, and was the artistic director of the group until its disbandment in 1991.

He has written more than 180 compositions, ranging from solo pieces to orchestral and electronic works, which have been widely performed in Japan, North America, and Europe. Almost all the works he has written have been published by UYMP (University of York Music Press) in UK, and C. F. Peters, New York. These were recorded on Hat Art, Wergo, ALM, Fontec, Deutsche Grammophon, and other labels.

He has received commissions from numerous organizations, ensembles and musicians. His music has been featured at many international music festivals including Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (UK), Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Italy), Festival d'Automne à Paris (France), Almeida Festival (UK), Tanglewood Festival (USA), etc. Performers associated with his music include Paul Zukofsky, Oliver Knussen, Satoko Inoue, Ives Ensemble and Nieuw Ensembles in the Netherlands, London Sinfonietta, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in UK, Ensemble recherché and Ensemble 'L'ART POUR L'ART in Germany, Quatuor Bozzini in Canada, Ensemble Nomad in Japan and many others.

He was on the jury of the Gaudeamus International Composer's competition, the Music Competition of Japan, the Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition, Toru Takemitsu Composition Award, the Kyoto Prize and many others. He is also known as a regular host of NHK radio programs on contemporary music for more than 35 years.

He received the Otaka Prize (the best Japanese orchestra work in the year) for his orchestra piece "In the Woods" in 1991, and the Nakajima Kenzo Prize for his achievements in the Japanese contemporary music in 2005. Jo Kondo was elected as a foreign honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2012. In 2018,

Jo Kondo was awarded “the 68th Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s Art Encouragement Prize”. He is presently Chairman of Japan Society for Contemporary Music (the International Society for Contemporary Music – Japanese Section).

UYMP (University of York Music Press)
www.uymp.co.uk

Edition Peters
www.edition-peters.com

Ongaku No Tomo Sha
www.ongakunotomo.co.jp

Jo Kondo Official website
<https://jokondo.b-sheet.jp/>

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See [here](#) for more on the Suntory Music Award

See [here](#) about the Suntory Foundation for the Arts