

The 35th Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award
for Music Composition
Junichi Matsumoto's
The Society of Space-Embroidery for Orchestra



Junichi Matsumoto ©Aya Sunahara

The concert to publicly select the winner of the 35th Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition (formerly, Akutagawa Award for Music Composition) was held at Suntory Hall in Tokyo on Saturday, August 30 at 3pm. The winning composition was Junichi Matsumoto's *The Society of Space-Embroidery* for Orchestra. He received both an award certificate and cash prize of 1.5 million yen.

Additionally, *QUEEN* for Euphonium, Electric Guitar, Female Voice Ensemble and Large Orchestra (with Organ), a work by the 33rd award winner Wataru Mukai commissioned by the Suntory Foundation for the Arts to commemorate his winning, had its world premiered on the same day prior to the public concert.

The Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition was established by the Suntory Music Foundation (now the Suntory Foundation for the Arts) in April 1990 with the support of the Japan Federation of Composers, and celebrates the achievements of Yasushi Akutagawa (1925-1989), one of the leading Japanese composers of the post-war era.

In fond remembrance of the late composer's love of music, his lucid views on music and the passion that he brought to the promotion of music, this composition prize, which was the first of its kind in Japan, is a unique initiative aimed at up-and-coming composers creating orchestral works full of freshness and steeped in potential, with winners selected from among pieces premiered at public concerts. This is a compound award, as composers winning the prize also receive a commission for a new orchestral work, with the premiered performance held two years thereafter.

In 2019, marked the 50th anniversary of the founding in 1969 of the parent organization of the Suntory Foundation for the Arts, the Torii Music Foundation, and also a change in the name to “the Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition,” to make the spirit of the award clearer. At the same time, the prize-money was increased to ¥1,500,000. Going forward we will continue to support the young composers of Japan as they emerge onto a wider stage.

▽The 35th Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition

Junichi Matsumoto's Work

The Society of Space-Embroidery for Orchestra

▽Reason for the award

A lot of instructions written on the score, and ‘*banda*’ setting were effective for acoustic at the performance. Each section voiced independently as like collective drama, and the interactions of each sound described a kind of "embroidery." These ideas were rated highly. The timing of transitions to the next scene was executed well. In addition, the three-dimensional acoustics, not only horizontally but vertically, were expressed effectively. We eagerly anticipate the commissioned work in two years.

▽Biography

Born in 1973 in Hokkaido. Graduated from Kunitachi College of Music, Department of Composition. He has received several awards, including the 1st Prize in the composition section of the 93rd Japan Music Competition, finalist for the 33rd Akutagawa Award for Music Composition, the 2nd Prize in the composition section of the 91st Japan Music Competition, the Finalist Prize in the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition of Belgium 2011, and the Excellent Music Award (“Like Father, Like Son”, directed by Hirokazu Koreeda) in the 37th Japan Academy Prize.

▽Selection process

1. On Wednesday, March 5, 2025, the three members of the selection committee, after careful consideration, came to a decision on the three nominated works at the conference room of the foundation. These were chosen from among orchestral pieces created by Japanese composers that were first performed in Japan or abroad during the period from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, based on the music score and the recording of the first performance.

The three members of the selection committee were Sunao Isaji, Noriko Koide, Akio Yasuraoka. (In alphabetical order)

Takuma Saito: *Antigone et Créon* for Soprano, Ensemble and Electronics (2024)

Premiered “Concert du Prix de Composition 2ème Partie”

on September 27, 2024

at Salle Remy Pflimlin (Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris)

Satori Hironiwa: *The silent girl(s)* for Piano and Chamber Orchestra (2024)

Premiered “Composition Department Workshop 2024” with Prof. Zsolt Nagy

on June 11, 2024 at Tokyo University of the Arts Hall 6

Junichi Matsumoto: *The Society of Space-Embroidery* for Orchestra (2024)

Premiered “The 93rd Music Competition of Japan, Composition Division, Final Round” on November 7, 2024 at NHK Hall

2. At Suntory Hall Main Hall on Saturday, August 30, 2025, the above three compositions were performed publicly by the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Yoichi Sugiyama. Following the concert, the three jury members—Sunao Isaji, Noriko Koide and Akio Yasuraoka—discussed the compositions publicly (moderated by Seiji Choki) and chose Junichi Matsumoto’s composition *The Society of Space-Embroidery* for Orchestra as the winner of the 35th Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition.

3. At the award ceremony held on the stage immediately following the public selection, Suntory Foundation for the Arts Managing Director, Tetsu Tanaka delivered the award certificate and cash prize (1.5 million yen).

The Suntory Foundation for the Arts will also commission a new orchestral work to Junichi Matsumoto which, upon completion, will have its premiered performance at a concert sponsored by the foundation. (Commission fee: One million yen)

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

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