

## Judge Profiles

### 【Chairperson of judges】

#### Yuko Nakamichi

With her moving and richly expressive musicality and characteristic warm timbres, Yuko Nakamichi is a pianist beloved by audiences. She studied under Mitsuko Kinpara, Noriko Abe and the late Kazuhiko Nakajima. In the U.S., she studied with Sylvia Muehling.

After graduating from Toho Gakuen Music High School, she went to Germany to study under Klaus Schilde. She graduated from the Hochschule Fur Musik in Munich and from that institution's graduate school, completing programs in both the Piano and Chamber Music Divisions. She gave solo performances based in Germany. Nakamichi has been the recipient of numerous awards in international music competitions

and, afterwards, she began her solo career in Japan in earnest. Currently, in addition to recitals, she is engaged in various activities such as co-starring with orchestras, chamber music and collaboration with recitation.

Nakamichi has released CDs from Victor Entertainment and Octavia Records, and the piano piece collection for children "Love in the Wind" (Octavia Records) composed by Karen Tanaka has been selected as "THE RECORD GEIJUTSU Special Selection". Among them, "Spring Light" was selected as the assigned song for the "PTNA Piano Competition". Nakamichi is a professor in the Music Performance Department of Osaka University of Arts.



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### 【Judges】



#### Tomomi Fukui

Tomomi Fukui was active as an Electone player while attending Kanagawa University. She studied classical piano under Kazue Jajima for more than 10 years. Since 1988, she has studied under Hideo Ichikawa, who is a leading both pianist and jazz pianist in Japan. She has been recognized as an up-and-coming pianist with performances at long-established live houses in the suburbs of Tokyo, performances at numerous hotels, side-men, and her own unit. In addition to her activities as a pianist, she also manages a studio, produces vocals, appears on radio programs, and writes books. She currently appears on a radio program called "The Standard SongBook" on CS radio "Music

Bird” (a 24-bit satellite digital music broadcast) (From 10:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Wednesdays on the channel "122ch THE JAZZ"). The score series “Standard Song Book”, used in the radio program title, is a jazz vocal series book for female vocalists and is now on sale throughout Japan. Fukui has performed for five years at the NHK FM charity concert for the Great East Japan Earthquake. In May 2016, she performed a solo charity concert for a live broadcast on NHK Fukushima. In May of the same year, she was an enthusiastic participant in a charity performance for the Kumamoto Earthquake, and actively solicited donations. As a jazz pianist living in Minato Ward, she has been instructing big bands at elementary and junior high schools in Minato Ward since 2016. Her achievements in promoting the revitalization of the local area were recognized when she was presented with the Special Award of the “Nissan Presents Jazz Japan Award 2016.” In April 2017, the Tomomi Fukui Piano Trio released its 5th album, “Rising Love.” In April 2019, the self-titled debut album from “Mt. Nonet,” a 9-piece jazz band that uses Fukui’s arrangements for wind instruments, was released by Disk Union. In September 2019, Fukui won the FIM Grand Prize Special Award at the Fuji-no-Kuni “All Japan Pop Song Festival.” She has been a music advisor for Hiroshima Hino Motors, Ltd. for 10 years, in charge of arranging music and composing company song and cheering song.

### **Rina Yamamoto**

Rina Yamamoto graduated from Toho Gakuen Music High School and the Toho Gakuen College Music Department. She graduated from the Graduate School of the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich and the Graduate School of the University of Music and Performing Arts Hanover. She received the Award of Excellence in the Piano Division at the 28th Finale Ligure International Competition, and the Diploma Award and the Messiaen Award at the 3rd Grieg International Piano Competition. She held recitals in 2000, 2003, and 2004. Yamamoto performed with the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Romanian National Radio Orchestra. She has studied under Sumiko Tachibana, Yuko Oshimo, Emi Maruyama, Eiko Yoneda, Reiko Kikuchi, Nobutatsu Kawashima, Makiko Yamazaki, Shoji Ishikawa, Karl-Hermann Mrongovius, and Einar Steen-Nøkleberg. She is a member of the Hiroshima German Lied Association. In addition to performing solo and accompanying others, she also instructs young pianists. Yamamoto is a part-time lecturer at Yasuda Women’s University.



### Ryoko Nakayama



Ryoko Nakayama graduated from Elisabeth University of Music. She studied in Paris, France starting in 2000. She graduated from the Conservatoire à rayonnement régional de Paris, where she earned a unanimous First prize in both the Piano and Chamber Music Divisions. She studied chamber music at the École Normale de Musique de Paris, where she won a diploma for superior performers. She performed concerts throughout France. In 2005, she was awarded a unanimous First prize in the Chamber Music Division at the UFAM International Competition held in France. After returning to Japan, she has performed in concerts throughout

the country. She is currently instructing young pianists. She has studied piano under Fukiko Sato, Eiko Yoneda, Kazumi Minobe, Makiko Yamazaki, and Genevieve Martini, chamber music under Genevieve Martini and Monique Mercier, and accompaniment under Kanako Abe.

### Eriko Nakatomi

Eriko Nakatomi graduated from the Piano Program at the Elisabeth University of Music. She completed a master's degree from that institution's graduate school. While studying at the university, she completed a master class presented by Jacques Rouvier at the Elisabeth International Seminar. Nakatomi was awarded the First Prize in the Piano Division at the 15th Chugoku Youth Music Competition. She has studied under Motoko Kojima and Miho Tokaji. She is currently instructing young pianists, while continuing her own studies under Miho Tokaji.





### Rumi Iryo

Rumi Iryo is from Miyazaki Prefecture. She was a leading actress in the Shiki Theatre Company.

Her major performances included Christine in “The Phantom of the Opera,” Belle in “Beauty and the Beast,” Maria in “West Side Story,” “Cats,” “A Chorus Line,” “Aspects of Love,” Sayoko in “Yuta and His Amazing Friends,” Isabelle in “The Man Who Walked through Walls,” and many other stage productions. After leaving the group, she appeared in the Toho musical “Les Misérables” as Fantine, “Himeyuri” as Uehara, “Hello, Dolly!” as Mrs. Molloy, “Butterflies are Free” as Mrs. Baker, “Tuesdays with Morrie” as Janine, “The Story of Akira Takarada,” “Li Hsiang-lan

Revue Show” as Li Hsiang-lan, tpt “Yerma” as Yerma, and many other stage productions. In 2015, Iryo released the album “Konohana-no-Sakuyahime,” which was based on the tale of a princess in Japanese mythology. She is active in a wide range of activities, such as concerts, straight plays, musical recitations, and dinner shows, as both an actress and a singer. Last year she launched the Rumi Iryo Musical Master Course, and is passionate about instructing young performers. Her dream is to teach the skills and experiences that she learned while growing up in the world of performing arts to as many people as possible.

[http:// iryo-rumi.com](http://iryo-rumi.com)

### Makoto Miyazaki

Makoto Miyazaki has been involved in stage music in a variety of fields, such as composition, arrangement, performance, music production, vocal instruction, and translation. He has worked on numerous Broadway musicals, original musicals, and musical concerts in the role of music director or keyboard director. In addition, he often conducts, composes, arranges, and performs for the Shiki Theatre Company, Toho Musicals, Takarazuka Revue, Ongakuza Musicals, Musical-za, and Meijiza. He has also produced many concerts and CDs. Miyazaki has written music for SMAP, KinKi Kids, and Chemistry.





### **【Judges for Qualifying Round】**

The following is a profile of each judges for qualifying round who applied through the Internet.



#### **Tsuyoshi Fukunaga**

Tsuyoshi Fukunaga started playing the piano at the age of 3, and also studied music in brass band during junior and senior high school. He also experienced being a student conductor while in high school. He participated in the "Kawai Piano Competition" and the "Glanzen Piano Competition in Kyushu". He majored in computer music at Kurashiki Sakuyo University. He also studied composition and arrangement, as well as a wide range of fields from electronic music to folk music. Since graduating from university, Fukunaga has been involved in a wide range of musical activities, including solo piano performances, programming, and bands. He has appeared on TV, and had an original composition used in a commercial. He performs regularly at bistros, and distributes music under the name "Tsuypop" via subscription services such as YouTube and iTunes. Fukunaga is creating music every day, primarily on the piano.

#### **Asuka Moro**

Asuka Moro attended Toho Gakuen Music High School, studied in the Piano Program at Toho Gakuen College Music Department, and completed the Master's Program at that institution's graduate school. She studied under Yuko Ninomiya. She was awarded the Gold Prize at the Glanzen Piano Competition. After earning a unanimous Premier Prix at the Concours International de Piano d'Ile de France (Paris, France), she was interviewed by both the Yomiuri Shimbun and Sankei Shimbun newspapers. She received 1st Prize at the Asia International Music Competition, and performed at the award winners' concerts at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria) and the Xi'an Conservatory of Music (China). She placed 3rd in the Professional Division (ages 18 to 25) at the 2016 Nohant Festival Chopin in Japan Piano Competition. She received the International Academy Award. As a supplementary prize, she attended a lesson by Professor Yves Henry of the Paris Conservatory, and performed at the George Sand Museum and the House of George Sand (Nohant, France). Moro participated in the 2016 International Summer Course, where she studied under Peter Efler, chairperson of the piano department at University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and earned a diploma. Since 2018, she has been performing regularly at lunchtime concerts as a registered artist at



Kawaguchiko Music Forest Museum. She has performed in numerous concerts, actively working on ensembles with other instruments (flute, clarinet, oboe, French horn, bassoon, violin, etc.), providing accompaniment for vocal music and choirs, and participating in duo piano performances. She studied chamber music under Etsuko Tazaki, Kazuoki Fujii, Takako Takahashi, Masaki Norikura, Fumio Kawamura, Shigeo Neriki, and Keiko Urushihara. Moro is active in a wide range of activities, including a joint concert with her sister (Shiori Moro) at Steinway & Sons Tokyo in 2019, and a piano duo recital at the Sumida Triphony Hall in September 2020.

### Kanji Kozuta



Kanji Kozuta majored in piano in the Department of Instrumental Music at Tokyo University of the Arts, and completed the master's program in that institution's graduate school. He studied in Germany for 5 years, earning degrees at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media, Musik Akademie der Stadt Kassel, and Berlin University of the Arts Graduate School. He has won many international competitions, including 2nd place in the Piano Division at the International Johannes Brahms Competition, 2nd place at the Palma de Mallorca International Piano Competition, and 1st place at the Baltic International Piano Competition. He has performed piano concertos with the Hiroshima Symphony Orchestra, the Kärntner Symphony Orchestra, and the Stanislaw Moniuszko Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra. He also appeared on ORF, a major radio station in Austria. Kozuta was invited to the Bebersee Festival and the Goslar Harz Music Festival. In 2014 and 2015, he was invited to perform a total of three concerts at the Japanese Embassy in Berlin. After returning to Japan in the fall of 2015, he continued to perform recitals, chamber music, vocal accompaniment, guest pianist with orchestras in Europe and Japan. He has performed extensively, including Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos and duo recitals with his wife, Hayu Kozuta. Kozuta is a lecturer at Elisabeth University of Music and Yasuda Women's University. He is managed by Kreis Music Entertainment.

## Maria Takahashi

After completing preparatory classes for Elisabeth University of Music, Maria Takahashi graduated from the Piano Program of the university in 2009. She won the university's "Xavier" scholarship, which is awarded to the most excellent students, in 2005, 2006, and 2007. After winning 2nd prize in the 11th "Talented Young Musician Competition" at Sakurapia Hall, she traveled to France. She completed the Piano Program at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Départemental de Musique de Ville-d'Avray (France), earned a diploma with the highest score, and earned a diploma in the Departments of Piano Accompaniment and Culture Musicale. She was selected as a Nakamura Music Scholarship recipient for Hiroshima Scholarship 2012. She completed the Harpsichord Program at Conservatoire Rayonnement Régional de Musique Cergy-Pontoise (France), and earned a diploma with unanimous consent from the judges on both the practical exam and basso continuo exam. She earned 2nd Medal at the 8th competition Piano Chatou (France), and 2nd Prize in 1st International Piano competition Piano Challenge d'Aliénor. She was invited to perform at the 12th "Talented Young Musician Competition" at Sakurapia Hall, as the winner from the previous year. She has held a total of 5 piano recitals in Paris, and 2 piano recitals in Japan. She has also performed many concerts in both France and Japan. Takahashi has studied piano under Yoshiko Hirokawa, Hidemi Miyata, Naomi Sunada, Yasuko Mitsui, Maki Maeda, Jean-Marie Cottet, and Rikako Murata. She participated in the Summer Workshop (France) sponsored by MusicAlp 14 times over 10 years, and the Cagliari Summer International Music Academy and Brescia International Piano Master Class in Italy, while studying under Pascal Devoyon and Rikako Murata. She studied in master classes under Hervé N'Kaoua, Irina Piitskaya, Futaba Inoue, Philippe Entremont, and Pascal-Jean Marignan. She studied vocal music under Shina Takamatsu and Masako Katsura, harmonics under Yasunori Saeki, and piano accompaniment under Jean-Michel Louchart, Paul Montag, Jean-Marie Cottet, and Christophe Henry. She studied harpsichord and basso continuo under Marie Van Rhijn. After working as a piano instructor at a Japanese nursery school and kindergarten in Paris, Takahashi has been involved in a wide range of musical activities, including solo piano performances, accompaniment, and chamber music while instructing young performers in Paris. Having studied in France for 11 years, she will return to Japan by the end of 2020 to live in Hiroshima.



### Miho Haga



Miho Haga is from Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. She graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts, majoring in piano. She completed the master's program in fortepiano at that institution's graduate school. Haga started her music education at Yamaha at the age of 2, began playing the piano at 4, and started composing at 6. She appeared on the TV Asahi program "Original Concert: Music Created by Us," and played her own compositions at several concerts, including overseas appearances in Taiwan and France. In 2011, she won 2nd place in the Krems Egg Castle International FortePiano Competition. In 2013, she won 3rd place in the FortePiano Division at the International Competition Musica

Antiqua Bruges. As an accompaniment pianist, she won the Outstanding Co-performance Award at the 21st Sogakudo Japanese Song Competition. Currently, in addition to her activities as a fortepiano performer, Haga also provides piano accompaniment for both instrumental and vocal music by many other performers. In June 2015, "Beautiful Upright Piano: Duet Pleasure," her four-hand playing with Kikuko Ogura, was released as the Hamamatsu Museum of Musical Instruments Collection Series CD.

### Masahiro Yamaguchi

Masahiro Yamaguchi started performing in earnest after studying in the U.K. in 2011. In addition to solo recital performances at St Martin in the Fields, St James's Piccadilly, University of Cambridge, University of London, Steinway Hall, St. Martin's Dorking, Philia Hall, PaToNa Hall, and Hodogaya Catholic Church, he has also performed as a soloist with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, the Tokyo College of Music Student Orchestra, and the Royal Academy of Music Wind Orchestra. He is also respected as a chamber musician and accompanist, having performed with Alison Balsom (trumpet), Brett Baker (trombone), Richard Williams (stage director), Steven Osborne (piano), Joanna MacGregor (piano), to name but a few.



He has also performed at the BBC Proms Series, the Bath International Music Festival, the Dartington Music Summer School & Festival, the Gubaidulina 80th Anniversary Music Festival, and the Stephen Montague 70th Anniversary Celebration. These performances were broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and UK local radio, and covered in Italian local newspapers. They were also broadcast on Miyagi TV, iTSCOM TV & Radio, and J:COM Online TV, and covered by local newspapers in Japan. Yamaguchi studied at Tokyo College of Music, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in the pianist program and a master's degree of music in that institution's graduate school. He received study abroad and admission scholarships from Yamaha, in order to enter the Royal Academy of Music. Upon completion of the



graduate program at the Royal Academy of Music, he received a special award. He also earned a master's degree in art from the University of London. While attending Tokyo College of Music, he received a special scholarship and a short-term study abroad scholarship. While attending the Royal Academy of Music, he received the Cork Fund Award, the Margaret Kitchin Scholarship, the Frances Early Award, and the Nancy Dickinson Award. Yamaguchi is a part-time piano instructor at Kanagawa Prefectural Sagamihara Yaei Senior High School, serves as a judge at the PTNA Piano Competition, WPTA Piano Academy & Audition, and the Japan Classical Music Competition, and is an official artist at the Dartington Music Summer School.

### Akiko Kojo



Akiko Kojo graduated from Hiroshima Music High School. While a student, she participated in regularly scheduled concerts and graduation concerts. She earned a diploma from University of Music Würzburg. She was selected as a recipient for the 3rd Nakamura Music Scholarship, and completed the master's program at the Elisabeth University of Music Graduate School. While studying, she held concerts in Germany, Poland, and Austria. She received awards at the PIARA Piano Competition, the PTNA Piano Competition, and the Kyoto International Music Competition. Kojo performed in the Hatsukaichi 20th Anniversary Concert and the Juneau Music Festival. Currently,

she manages Studio Kojo in two locations, Kure and Hatsukaichi. Kojo is teaching a wide range of age groups, from eurhythmics lessons for children as young as 18 months old, to piano lessons for adults. She is also active as a eurhythmics teacher for children at nursery schools and kindergartens, while also performing, providing accompaniment to other musicians, and offering interpretation in German during lessons.

### Shin Minjeong

After graduating from the Instrumental Music Department of the Faculty of Music at Seoul National University, Shin Minjeong earned a diploma in piano and music education from the University of Music and Theatre Hamburg in Germany, and graduated Konzertexamen in the Piano Program at University of Music Lübeck. She was selected by Justus Frantz, Germany's greatest pianist and music director, to play a solo performance at the Schleswig-Holstein Musikfestival in Germany, which has worldwide fame of the world. She has also performed actively in various other parts of Europe, including Valencia, Spain;



Antwerp, Belgium; Hamburg, Bochum, Frankfurt, Kiel, and Bad Bramfeld, Germany. After returning to Korea, she performed dozens of solo concerts on various themes, including the World Music Travel Series, and participated in the New International Music Festival (NSF) 2000, the Chopin 150th Anniversary Piano Music Marathon Concert, the Beethoven Piano Sonatas, and the 2nd Zheng Lücheng International Concert. Shin has also held concerts with additional commentary for younger audiences, and participated in numerous ensemble concerts, piano duo concerts, creative concerts, and charitable concerts. She has released many albums, including the Shin Minjeong solo collection "Glinka & The Mighty Handful" (published by Just Media). She has also published the book "Why Folk Music? A Review of European Nationalism and Music." She also wrote an academic thesis titled "A Study of Sonatine Pour Piano by Mikis Theodorakis." Currently, Shin is a professor in the Faculty of Music at Baekseok University, while also serving as the Director of the Korean Piano Duo Association and as a member of the steering committee for the Heart Piano Scholarship Society.



### Choi Ian

Choi Ian, a keyboardist, was a student of Shin Byung-ha, who was a representative of the Korean film music world in the 1980s and 1990s. From the mid-1990s, KBS's most popular talk show program, "Between Night and Music," etc. He played an active part in the terrestrial broadcasting and various album sessions.

After working for "Fibus" and "Kim Jong Soo Band", he has been composing and arranging with keyboards in the band until now.

He is also active in making albums.