

The 34th Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award
for Music Composition
Kento Ishikawa's *BRICOLA-JUGEMU*



Kento Ishikawa

The concert to publicly select the winner of the 34th Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition (formerly, Akutagawa Award for Music Composition) was held at Suntory Hall in Tokyo on Saturday, August 24 at 3pm. The winning composition was Kento Ishikawa's *BRICOLA-JUGEMU*. He received both an award certificate and cash prize of 1.5 million yen.

Additionally, *THE STEPS TO FLYING IN THE SKY*, a work by the 32nd award winner Yuya Haryu 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 34th Yasushi Akutagawa Suntory Award for Music Composition

Kento Ishikawa’s Work

BRICOLA-JUGEMU

▽Reason for the award

The composer’s inventiveness is evident in the unusual yet marvelous combination of bricolage and the rakugo story *Jugemu*, and his manner of composing drew high praise for incorporating unique and sophisticated techniques to express hybrid aspects of Japanese culture.

▽Biography

Kento ISHIKAWA was born in 1997 in Tokyo Japan. He is developing creative activities by referring to ideas from social issues and all kinds of non-musical concerns. He has received numerous awards, including the First prize in the composition section of the 91st Japan Music Competition, Meiji Yasuda Prize, Miyoshi Prize (2022), and Mitsubishi Estate Prize (2023). He graduated from department of composition, Tokyo University of the Arts, and completed his postgraduate studies in composition at the Graduate School of Music, Tokyo University of the Arts.

▽Selection process

1. On Monday, February 26, 2024, 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, 2023 to December 31, 2023, based on the music score and the recording of the first performance.

The three members of the selection committee were Misto Mochizuki, Tokuhide Niimi and Hiroyuki Yamamoto. (In alphabetical order)

Kento Ishikawa: *BRICOLA-JUGEMU* (2023)

Premiered “Composition Department Workshop 2023 with Prof. Zsolt Nagy”
by Zsolt Nagy, conductor/Tokyo University of the Arts Student Orchestra
on June 16, 2023
at Tokyo University of the Arts, The 6th Hall

Masashi Kawashima: *e→e IV* (2022)

Premiered “Basel Composition Competition, Zweites Wettbewerbskonzert”
by Heil Clemens, conductor/ Sinfonieorchester Basel on February 10, 2023
at DON BOSCO BASEL, PAUL SACHER SAAL

Koji Yamabe: *Underscore* (2022)

Premiered “Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2023”
by Kosuke Tsunoda, conductor/ Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra on May 28, 2023
at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall

2. At Suntory Hall Main Hall on Saturday, August 24, 2024, the above three compositions were performed publicly by the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Yoichi Sugiyama. Following the concert, the three jury members—Misto Mochizuki, Tokuhide Niimi and Hiroyuki Yamamoto—discussed the compositions publicly (moderated by Miyuki Shiraishi) and chose Kento Ishikawa’s composition *BRICOLA-JUGEMU* as the winner of the 34th 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 Kento Ishikawa 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