

2024 Hamamatsu International Piano Competition awards Manami Suzuki First Prize, Chamber Music Prize & Audience Prize



Watch Manami Suzuki's performance of Beethoven No.3 last night
[LINK HERE](#)

Monday 25 November 2024, 19:00
Prize Winner's Recital
ACT CITY Hamamatsu Main Hall

22-year-old Manami Suzuki becomes the first Japanese pianist to win the **Hamamatsu International Piano Competition in Japan**. She won not only the **First Prize but the Chamber Music Prize and Audience Prize**. **On behalf of the distinguished international Jury of the 12th Competition, chair Noriko Ogawa** presented the awards to Suzuki after her performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.3 with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra conducted by Toshiaki Umeda on Sunday evening in front of a packed 2,300-seater audience at the ACT CITY, Hamamatsu.

Manami Suzuki, who is supported by the Argerich Arts Foundation in Japan and is in 1st year of postgraduate studies in Tokyo, commented,

"This is a huge honour for me. I watched the 10th Hamamatsu Piano Competition on YouTube in 2018 and knew I wanted to enter it one day. I was also hugely inspired by the film based on Riku Onda's wonderful

book *Honeybees and Distant Thunder*, a fictional tale about a Japanese piano competition (newly-available translated into English). It is quite overwhelming to win but I just want to carry on as before, practising my favourite composers - Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert - and playing as sincerely as I can."

Suzuki will receive ¥4,000,000 (just over £20,000), an extensive concert tour of Japan, **a recording on Orchid Classics to coincide with a recital at King's Place, London on 23rd January, 2026** arranged by **Ikon Arts Management** and further concerts in Paris and Warsaw in the season ahead.

After a thrilling fortnight where 87 pianists from around the world competed, the 12th Hamamatsu International Piano Competition draws to a close with the winners' recital this evening - Monday 25 November 2024.

Noriko Ogawa commented:

"Following the strict rules of the competition duly upheld, my colleagues of the Jury were not permitted to confer between themselves about any of the competitors, so it was a wonderful surprise to discover that we had voted the first Japanese prize winner, who has now become the first woman to win. The Hamamatsu Piano Competition is above all a wonderful showcase for the famous piano makers of Hamamatsu, the home of the manufacturers of Yamaha and Kawai pianos. With the choice of three instruments, Manami Suzuki selected the new Steinway which is held at Act City's concert hall. This was also the first time Steinway won the Competition!"

1st Prize, Chamber & Audience Prizes: Manami Suzuki (Japan)

2nd Prize - Jonas Aumiller (Germany)

3rd Prize - Kaito Kobayashi (Japan)

4th Prize - JJ Jun Li Bui (Canada)

5th Prize - Korkmaz Can Saglam (Turkey)

6th Prize, Prize for best performance of Japanese new commission - Robert Bily (Czech Republic)

Diploma of Outstanding Merit - Valère Burnon (Belgium)

The distinguished international jury chaired by **Noriko Ogawa** featured **Hortense Cartier-Bresson, Dang Thai Son, Paul Hughes, Peter Jablonski, Momo Kodama, Ewa Kupiek, Pedja Muzijevic, Ronan O'Hora, Ilya Rashkovskiy,** and **Akiyoshi Sako**, who listened to some 70 hours of piano playing in just over a fortnight.

This year's Competition attracted 638 applications, double that of 2018, and 87 competitors from 26 countries participated live in Japan.

Manami Suzuki

Born in Osaka, **Manami Suzuki** started playing the piano at 4. She is currently studying at Tokyo College of Music as a scholarship student. In 2023, she won First Prize at the 92nd Music Competition of Japan and Iwatani audience Award.

Hamamatsu Piano Competition

The competition was started in 1991 in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the founding of Hamamatsu City and takes place every three years. Previous winners have included **Seong Jin Cho** (also 1st Prize at the Chopin Competition), **Rafal Blechacz** (also 1st Prize at the Chopin Competition), **Alexander Gadjiev** (BBC New Generation Artist), **Sergei Babayan**, **Alessio Bax** and **Alexander Gavrylyuk**, as well as **Alexander Melnikov** as runner-up. The last winner of the 2018 Competition was **Can Çakmur**. This has resulted in a recording partnership with BIS Records which now sees the Turkish pianist record the complete Schubert piano works.

Discounting the competitors' travel and hosted by the Competition for the entire 3-week duration, the Competition welcomed 87 candidates to take part. Those who are not involved in later rounds got opportunities to perform all over the city in community concerts at locations across the city, including numerous home concerts. The candidates form life-long bonds and often get reinvited in subsequent years.

While competitors had freedom to offer any solo repertoire, whether virtuosic, romantic, classical or baroque, for the second round, the Competition commissions a piece by a Japanese living composer - which 24 candidates will perform. This year's commission is a new work by **Toshiro Saruya**. In the semi-finals, competitors were asked to present a Mozart Piano Quartet as well as their solo recitals. For the final round, finalists performed with the **Tokyo Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Toshiaki Umeda** on a piano of their choice - whether a **Kawai, Yamaha or Steinway**.

THE FINAL ROUND AVAILABLE TO VIEW

[HERE](#)

Robert Bily (Czech Republic) – Prokofiev Concerto No.3

Kaito Kobayashi (Japan) – Bartok Concerto No.3

Jonas Aumiller (Germany) – Brahms Concerto No.1

JJ Jun Li Bui (Canada) – Rachmaninov Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini

Korkmaz Can Saglam (Turkey) – Brahms Concerto No.1

Manami Suzuki – Beethoven Concerto No.3

Hamamatsu

Hamamatsu is the home of piano manufacturers including Yamaha and Kawai. Hamamatsu and the two renowned piano makers share a bond forged by the city's special history of craftsmanship. The most famous Shogun Tokunaga Ieyasu gathered craftsmen from all over Japan to build a castle in Hamamatsu where he would rule from. In 1900, the first Japanese piano was built here, and now it is

not only home to Roland Electric Pianos and Tokai Electric Guitars but also the world famous Shinkansen Super Express carriages, aircrafts, textile more.

Since its inauguration in 1991 by the City of Hamamatsu, this international cultural program has been held every three years to celebrate the history and tradition of the city of music and musical instruments. The purpose of this Competition is to encourage the development of music and culture, to promote international cultural exchanges and to contribute to the nurturing of musicians by providing promising young pianists from all over the world with an opportunity to display the fruits of their daily study.

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