

31st Kumamoto National Hōgaku Competition: In Commemoration of Nagatani Kengyō

Application Guidelines

The Kumamoto National Hōgaku Competition was instituted to celebrate the life and work of Nagatani Yukiteru (1842-1920), a figure of peerless eminence in the musical world of Jiuta-shamisen, with the aim of contributing to the transmission and development of Japan's illustrious legacy of music for traditional instruments (*hōgaku*). By providing gifted *hōgaku* performers with the opportunity to display and develop their skill and artistry, this competition is intended to spur on the development of Japanese traditional music for a new era.

1. Categories

- (1) Koto
- (2) Flutes (shakuhachi, etc.)
- (3) Biwa
- (4) Shamisen and kokyū
- (5) Ensemble (sankyoku, etc.; max. 5 players)

All categories apply to traditional Japanese instruments. Categories (1) to (4) are for solo performance. Accompanists may be used but only the applicant will be judged. Applications in Category (5) for ensemble performance (sankyoku, etc.) should involve participation of ensembles consisting of any of the instruments in Categories (1) to (4) or of the same instrument.

2. Eligibility

The competition is open to anyone wishing to pursue a career in Japanese traditional music, irrespective of age, nationality and professional or amateur status.

3. How to apply

Having prepared the requisite materials set out in items (1), (2) and (3) below, all the necessary items in the application form should be completed using the following URL

or barcode.

<https://logoform.jp/f/wujAo>



(1) Recording of a performance lasting a maximum of five minutes to be submitted in MP3 format with a maximum file size of 10MB. The name of the file should be that of the applicant (soloist or ensemble).

(2) Copy of an arrangement authorisation certificate (in the case of an excerpt or arrangement).

If a piece is performed in the form of an excerpt or arrangement, authorisation must be obtained from the copyright-holder or from the publisher in the case of a published score. If not in possession of the prescribed form, an authorisation certificate may be downloaded from the competition website.

(3) Musical notation (in all categories required only when a performance is to be given by two or more players)

The parts of the piece where the applicant is playing should be clearly indicated.

4. Application fee

¥6,000 per applicant (under no circumstances to be refunded)

Payment should be made employing either of the following methods.

1) Transfer to the following bank account:

Ordinary deposit account, no. 3100873, at Nanaichihachi Branch, Yucho Bank in the name of Kumamoto Dai Hōgakusai Executive Committee

(Transfer charges to be borne by the applicant)

2) Transfer to the following PayPal account:

Account: @kumahou (Kumamoto Dai Hōgakusai Executive Committee)

https://paypal.me/kumahou?country.x=JP&locale.x=ja_JP

(The full name of the applicant should be attached to the message. Charges to be borne by the applicant)



5. Deadline for applications

Thursday, January 15, 2026

6. Announcement of successful applicants

Participants in the main competition will be determined following a preliminary examination of the submitted materials and will be notified early in March.

7. Main competition

Performances in the koto, shakuhachi and flute, biwa, shamisen and kokyū, and ensemble categories will be given at the Kumamoto Prefectural Theatre on Sunday, June 14, 2026. Individual performances should last no more than five minutes and should feature the same piece as that performed for the preliminary examination.

8. Judges

- Soh Fujimoto (traditional music producer)
- Mari Kanō (Japanese music researcher)
- Haruko Komoda (Professor Emerita, Musashino Academia Musicae)
- Mihoko Nogawa (Japanese music researcher; Lecturer, Tokyo University of the Arts)
- Keizō Ideta (composer and conductor; Former Dean, Heisei College of Music)

9. Prizes

- Grand Prix, Prize of the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology, Prize of the Governor of Kumamoto Prefecture:

¥500,000 (one individual or ensemble)

- Prize for Excellence: ¥200,000 (three individuals or ensembles)

- Encouragement Prize: ¥100,000 (four individuals or ensembles)

NB: A single certificate of commendation will be issued in the case of an award being given to applicants in the ensemble category.

10. Sponsor

Kumamoto Dai Hōgakusai Executive Committee (Kumamoto City, Kumamoto Prefecture Cultural Association, Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun-sha)

11. Enquiries and applications

Office of the Kumamoto Dai Hōgakusai Executive Committee, Kumamoto Civic Hall, 1-3 Sakura-machi, Chuo-ku, Kumamoto City, Kumamoto Prefecture 860-0805 (closed on the first and third Mondays of each month)

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