

The 17th
Fukushima
Vocal Ensemble
Competition
2024



21 March - 24 March 2024
Fukushima, Japan



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The 17th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition 2024

“Inspiring singing voices, Resonating to the true skies”

21 March – 24 March 2024 Fukushima, Japan

The Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition is the biggest choral competition for small vocal ensemble groups (2-16 singers) in Japan. Every year we invite more than 120 top level choirs selected from all over Japan. And now the competition is open internationally to share the joy of singing with people from all around the world.

Fukushima is known as the “Kingdom of Choirs” in Japan, which has a big population of music fans and award-winning choirs. You are cordially invited to experience the fascinating atmosphere of our music cities, and let your singing voices ring out together under the sky that a 19th century poet once described as the “True Sky.”

Hosted by • Fukushima Prefecture
 • Fukushima Prefectural Board of Education
 • Executive Committee of the Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition

Co-hosted by Japan Choral Association, Japan Choral Association Tohoku Branch, Fukushima Chorus League, Fukushima City, Fukushima City Board of Education, Fukushin Yume no Ongakudo (Fukushima City Music Hall)

Sponsored by Agency for Cultural Affairs, All Japan Senior High School Cultural Federation, Fukushima Prefecture Senior High School Cultural Federation, Fukushima Prefectural Association of Junior High School Principals, Fukushima Prefectural Association of Elementary School Principals, Fukushima International Association, Fukushima-Minpo Co., Ltd., The Fukushima Minyu, The Asahi Shimbun Fukushima General Bureau, The Mainichi Newspapers Fukushima Bureau, The Yomiuri Shimbun Fukushima Bureau, Sankei Shimbun Co., Ltd., Fukushima Branch Office, The Kahoku Shimpō, Nikkei Inc. Fukushima Bureau, Jiji Press Ltd., Fukushima Bureau, Kyodo News Fukushima Bureau, NHK Fukushima, Radio Fukushima, Fukushima Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Fukushima Central Television, KFB (Fukushima Broadcasting Co., Ltd.), TV-U Fukushima, Inc., FM Fukushima Co., Ltd.

Venue Fukushin Yume no Ongakudo (Fukushima City Music Hall), Grand Hall
 1-1 Irie-cho, Fukushima City, Fukushima 960-8117 Japan

Tentative Schedule	Time	Wed., 20 Mar.	Thu., 21 Mar.	Fri., 22 Mar.	Sat., 23 Mar.	Sun., 24 Mar.
		Competition				
10:00			Category I	Category II	Category III	Grand Champion Competition
12:00					Award Ceremony	
14:00					Category IV	Special program
16:00						Award Ceremony
18:00			Award Ceremony	Award Ceremony	Award Ceremony	
20:00	(Hall Visit)	(Hall Visit)	(Hall Visit)	(Hall Visit)	(Meeting for tomorrow)	

*Open at 9:30 a.m. Start at 10:00 a.m. on 21–24 March / This schedule is subject to change by the committee.

Program • Category Competition
 • Grand Champion Competition
 Competed by Gold titled choirs in each category
 • Special Program

*Overseas choirs will be asked to perform at the Category Competition.



Competition Rules

- Category**
- Category I : Ages 12-15
 - Category II : Ages 15-18
 - Category III : Ages 6-12 (up to 18)
 - Category IV : Other than Category I, II and III

*Ages are determined as the age of the participant on the day of 24 March 2024

*Some singers of ages 12-15 (Category I) and ages 15-18 (Category II) can participate in Category III. However, the majority of the singers in Category III must be between ages 6-12.

*The singers of ages 12-15 (Category I) and ages 15-18 (Category II) must sing as a children's choir, when in Category III.

**Entry
Qualification**

- a. The number of singers should be 2-16 (no fewer than 2 and no more than 16) and member changes for musical pieces will be approved only within the registered members.
- b. No singer shall compete as a member of more than one choir, regardless of the categories. A conductor and an accompanist will not be included in this regulation.
- c. For Japan-based choirs, each category can only accept a single choir from the same group.
- d. No qualification is required for a conductor or an accompanist. For Japan-based choirs, a principal shall approve a conductor and an accompanist for Category I, II or III.
- e. A conductor and an accompanist will be included in the singers when they sing in the choir.
- f. The Gold titled choirs in each category shall proceed to the Grand Champion Competition on 24 March.
- g. In principle, singers who have not registered in the category competition will not be able to perform in the Grand Champion Competition.

Performance

- a. There is no compulsory work in any category. All music pieces performed will be determined by the competitors. Any change will not be allowed after registration.
- b. For each category, the overall duration of performance time from the beginning of the first piece until the end of the last piece (including time between songs) must not exceed 10 minutes.
- c. For the Grand Champion Competition, the total performance time from the beginning of the first piece to the end of the last piece (including time between songs) must not exceed 15 minutes.
- d. Tuning musical instruments on stage is included in the performance time.
- e. Failure to comply with the above rules will result in disqualification.

**Order of
Performance**

- a. The order of performance in each category shall be determined by a lottery, drawn by representatives from each choir on a specified date. Choirs that cannot attend the lottery shall leave the selection to the organiser.
- b. The Category-III performance will take place during the first half of the event on 23 March, and followed by the Category-IV performance in the second half.
- c. When a conductor or an accompanist performs in more than one choir, and their schedule in the venue is in conflict with others, the lottery will be held again to resolve the conflict.
- d. The order of performance for the Grand Champion Competition shall be determined by lot, drawn by the organiser, and will be announced at a later date.



- Accompaniment**
- The instruments and style of accompaniment shall be up to each competing choir.
 - A piano (Steinway & Sons), a positive organ and a pipe organ (Marcussen & Søn) will be provided by the organiser. The pitch of the piano will be A=442Hz.
 - If the contestants use musical instruments other than the above, they are expected to carry their own instruments, and will be responsible for the required expenses.
 - If the contestants require a person to turn the pages of notes, each choir shall make appropriate arrangements.

- Judging and Evaluation**
- The following judges will evaluate the competition:
Vytautas Miskinis (Composer), Kazunobu Kurokawa (Conductor),
Teruaki Suzuki (Composer), Hirohisa Tsuji (Tenor),
Saeko Hasegawa (Conductor), Kazuhiro Fukunaga (Conductor),
Hiroki Fujii (Conductor)
 - The evaluation of each competition will be conducted using a round-robin system specified separately.
 - Results of the Category Competition and judges' comments will be mailed to each participating choir after the competition.

- Prizes and Awards**
- The competition will be evaluated in each category, and Gold, Silver, Bronze or Excellence prizes will be awarded to every participating choir in each category.
 - In the Category Competition, Gold prizes will be awarded to the top 5 choirs in each of the respective categories, I, II and IV, and the top choir in Category III.
 - In the Grand Champion Competition, JPY 500,000 will be awarded to the best choir, JPY 300,000 to the 2nd winner, JPY 100,000 to the 3rd winner and JPY 30,000 to other finalists.
 - In addition, an extra prize will be awarded to the higher-ranking winning choirs in the Grand Champion Competition.

- Rehearsal**
- On the day of the performance, the participating choir will be able to do a rehearsal at least once at the venue.
 - Also, the travel agency authorised by the organiser will book a rehearsal room in the city.
 - Up to 2 members of the participating choirs can look over the competition hall on the day before the performance.

- Copyright**
- Copyright royalties for performances and live distribution managed by the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers (JASRAC) or NexTone Inc. will be paid by the organiser. For other songs, the participating choirs must obtain permission from the copyright holder by themselves.
 - If the competitors partially omit or rearrange the piece, they must gain approval in advance from the copyright holder and submit a document showing permission has been obtained to the organiser. Negotiations with copyright holders should be handled by the competitors.
 - If problems arise between a participating choir and the rights holder for a song that requires copyright procedures, it must be handled under the responsibility of the participating choir.

- Information**
- The information provided by the participating choirs will be used for organising the competition, such as posting on websites, printing in publications, recording to CDs or DVDs, and provided to the mass media and parties related to management of the competition.
 - The organiser or the companies authorised by the organiser may use pictures, sound recordings and video recordings on the Internet, in publications and broadcasting, and provide the information to the mass media. The companies authorised by the organiser will sell pictures and recordings in the form of photos, CDs or DVDs.
 - This competition will be streamed online in Japan. Please note that tickets for viewing cannot be purchased from overseas. All the participating choirs will be eligible for live distribution, but archive distribution will only be available to those choirs for which the organiser has handled the copyrights of the songs performed.



Conditions of Participation

Preliminary Japan-based choirs

Screening

Applicants have to be recommended by the choral association of each prefecture or approved by the organiser through the preliminary screening. Some choirs could be qualified on the recommendation of the organiser.

Overseas choirs

Applicants have to be approved through the preliminary screening conducted separately prior to the one for Japan-based choirs. Some choirs could be qualified on the recommendation of the organiser.

Applications for the preliminary screening;

- a. An Application form written in English
- b. A recent recording of the choir recorded by 2-16 expected singers, after April 2023.
 - *The screening process will be conducted anonymously. Therefore, the choir's name and any other sounds except the performance must not be recorded on the CD etc.
 - *The time of performance shall be within 10 minutes, and the choral pieces can be different from the ones to be performed in the competition. Each piece must be recorded on separate tracks.
 - *The mixing of recorded sound is strictly prohibited for the fair screening.
 - *The recording media shall be a CD (CD-DA format). DVDs are not acceptable. The recording media will not be returned.
- c. One digital photo showing the choir

Deadline: 31 October 2023

*The result of the preliminary screening will be announced by November 30, 2023 at the latest.

Registration Qualified Choirs should provide the following documents.

Registration Documents;

- a. Fully completed registration forms.
- b. A bank cheque or proof of bank transfer covering the participation fee (only if you select bank transfer).
- c. 7 original scores for the Category Competition

Deadline: a. & b. 15 December 2023 / c. 12 January 2024

*The mailing address will be announced later.

Immigration Upon entering the country, it is necessary to follow the entry procedures indicated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. It is recommended to thoroughly confirm the requirements beforehand as they may vary depending on the current COVID-19 infection situation.

Participation Japan-based choirs

Fee

Ticket fees will be charged when the choirs participate as an audience. The costs for CDs, DVDs and photos will be announced separately later.

Overseas Choirs

For participation in the competition, a non-refundable participation fee of JPY 20,000 has to be paid per choir after being selected through the preliminary screening. Any other costs that arise must be paid by the applicant.



The participation fee JPY 20,000 per choir covers;

- a. Free entry to the competitions for each choir member including the conductor and the accompanist
- b. Program booklet and clear file folder as memorabilia per choir member
- c. CDs and DVDs recorded by the authorised agent
- d. Photos taken by the authorised agent
- e. Rehearsal room
- f. English speaking guide

Payment Methods;

- a. Credit card
- b. Bank transfer *The bank details will be notified later.
- c. A Bank cheque

Deadline: 15 December 2023

Accommodation / Meals / Transport Japan-based choirs

The participating choirs will be responsible for their travel and accommodation costs. The general travel services could be provided by the travel agency authorised by the organiser.

Overseas choirs

The participating choirs will be responsible for their own costs of travel and accommodation. The organiser provides the following package.

*The hotel room prices fluctuate and may vary depending on the date.

NO.	Package	Room	3 nights per person	Additional day per person
1	Economy Hotel	Twin	JPY 30,000	JPY 10,000
2	Deluxe Hotel	Twin	JPY 33,000	JPY 11,000
3		Single	JPY 39,000	JPY 13,000

This package includes:

- a. Accommodation for 3 nights, 22-25 March (check-out)
- b. 10 Meals
3 × breakfast, 4 × lunch, 3 × dinner (from lunch on 22 March to lunch on 25 March)

Payment Methods:

- a. Credit card
- b. Bank transfer *The bank details will be notified later.

Deadline: 15 January 2024

Financial Assistance Choirs selected for the Grand Champion Competition will have financial assistance of a maximum of JPY 7,000 per stay at hotels after being selected for the finals for each choir member, including the conductor and the accompanist.

Admission/ Application of Visa a. Please kindly note that all applicants will be only admitted as a participant and obtain visa-related documents issued by us, if we received fully-completed registration forms and payments.
b. Our authorised travel agency, on request basis, will arrange for non-performers' stay and issue the documents for visa applications as a tourist, but only if they received fully-completed applications and payments.

Contact Address

The Executive Committee of the Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition
(Cultural Promotion Division of the Fukushima Prefectural Government)
2-16 Sugitsuma-cho, Fukushima City
Fukushima 960-8670 Japan

URL <http://www.vocalensemble.fukushima.jp/en/>
E-mail v-ensemble@pref.fukushima.lg.jp

The 17th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition 2024
PRELIMINARY SCREENING APPLICATION FORM

Fill in the form using block letters and put ✓ mark in the chosen boxes.

Choir

Choir Name in English script

Choir Name in Chinese or Korean (if any)

Address

Country

E-mail

Phone

Fax

Country code / Area code / Number

Country code / Area code / Number

Website

Contact Person

Mr. Ms. Mrs. Dr. Prof.

Name in English script

First Name

Last Name

Name in Chinese or Korean (if any)

First Name

Last Name

Address

Country

E-mail

Phone

Fax

Country code / Area code / Number

Country code / Area code / Number

Participating in

Category I (ages 12–15) Category II (ages 15–18) Category III (ages 6–12 / up to 18) Category IV (others)

List of Choral Pieces – Recording (Max.10min.)

No.	Title	Composer	Duration
	Example	W.A. Mozart	3:00
1.			
2.			
3.			

Number of Singers on the Media Recording Male Female Total (2–16 singers)
 + =

Date of Recording Date Month Year

Profile of the choir

Year of Establishment

Main Annual Activities and Highlights

Award History

Questionnaire – How did you hear about the competition?

List of Documents

Put ✓ mark in the column if the document has been enclosed and fill in the number of copies of the document.

✓	Document	Number of Copies
	Application Form (with signature)	
	A separate CD sound recording (2–16 expected singers/ recorded after Apr. 2023 / Max 10 min.)	
	Digital photo of the choir	

All the documents should be submitted no later than 31 October 2023 to:
The Executive Committee of the Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition
(Cultural Promotion Division of the Fukushima Prefectural Government)
2-16 Sugitsuma-cho, Fukushima City, Fukushima 960-8670 Japan
E-mail v-ensemble@pref.fukushima.lg.jp

Agreement

We hereby declare that the information given in this form is correct. We also understand and agree to the competition rules and conditions of participation.

Date Month Year
 – –

Signature

Name

Position

福島 Fukushima

Fukushima is located in the north-east region of Japan and is approximately 200km, 100 min. by express train from Tokyo. It is called the “Kingdom of Choirs” in Japan, which has a big population of music fans and award-winning choirs. Along with its unique music friendly culture, there you can find abundant natural beauty and traditional samurai culture, which is still being handed down over the generations. You can enjoy renowned hot spring resorts and historical samurai sites before/after the competition. All true music lovers looking to experience the real Japan are welcome to Fukushima.

Thanks to the support and encouragement from all over the world, Japan has steadily been recovering since the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. The Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition has also received hundreds of messages to encourage people in Fukushima. We will never forget the warm and heart-felt moments that we have shared with participants of the competition.

Now we are sure music has the power to get people together and bring about hope and encouragement. The Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition will keep going on to convey the joy of singing together.



Fukushima Prefecture

福島県



Aizuwakamatsu, which used to be a castle town during the Edo Period (1603-1867)



Fukushima is an "onsen" (hot spring) kingdom.



From Fukushima Airport

Approx. 75 min. to the hotel in Fukushima city by taxi

From Narita Airport

Route 1

Narita Airport

Tokyo Station

Approx. 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min. by Express Train "Narita Express"

Tokyo Station

Fukushima Station

Approx. 1 hr 30 min. by Express Train "Tohoku Shinkansen"

Route 2

Narita Airport

Keisei Ueno Station

Approx. 45 min - 1 hr 50 min. by Keisei Railway trains

Keisei Ueno Station

JR Ueno Station

Approx. 5 min. on foot

JR Ueno Station

Fukushima Station

Approx. 1 hr 25 min. by Express Train "Tohoku Shinkansen"

Route 3

Narita Airport

Fukushima Station

Approx. 5 hrs by Highway Bus (only runs two services a day)

The 18th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition is scheduled to be held in Fukushima City from 20 to 23 March 2025.

Details will be announced in the summer of 2024.



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