

Fulbright Centennial Concert

Marigold S. Holmes
Manager for Public Relations
JUSEC

On a beautiful Saturday afternoon in February, over 425 people gathered at Tsuda Hall in Sendagaya, Tokyo to celebrate Senator Fulbright's Centennial Year through music. Two world renowned Fulbright musicians, Pianist Etsuko Tazaki and Cellist Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi performed in commemoration of this very special occasion. As the lights were dimmed and the first notes rang throughout the hall, we all knew what a special treat this would be, and for the next two hours, the audience remained captivated by the beautiful music performed by the two talented Fulbright alumni.

This special concert held on February 4th was organized by the Japan-United States Educational Commission (JUSEC), the Japan GARIOA/ Fulbright Alumni Associations and the Japan-U.S. Educational Exchange Promotion Foundation (Fulbright Foundation). Fulbright Alumnus Mr. Shinji Yamada (1992, Fulbright Journalist), who coordinated a similar concert in 2002 on the occasion of the Japan-U.S. Fulbright Program's 50th Anniversary, once again orchestrated this successful event. Unlike the 50th Anniversary Concert however, ticket sales were managed "in-house" by the organizers, and an on-line ticket sales and booking management system was developed by JUSEC's Systems Specialist. By November 1, 2005 preparations were completed and ticket sales began. From the initial reservations to assigning seats, confirming payment and sending the tickets, the JUSEC Secretariat turned into a "ticket pia" type operation with various staff involved each step of the way. Despite minor glitches, the operations ran very smoothly. Tickets were sold for 4,000 yen (reserved seats) and 3,000 yen (non reserved seats). The concert was very popular, with tickets in high demand, and by mid-January, 2006 tickets

available to the general public had been sold out. Of the 490 seats available, all but one seat had been spoken for by the start of the concert.



As ticket sales were well underway, Mr. Yamada and the performers were busy planning the program. With the hopes that the audience might experience international exchange through music, Ms. Tazaki and Mr. Tsutsumi suggested incorporating modern works representative of Japan and the U.S. among numbers fundamental to German classical music. With this in mind, the following scores were selected: Lucas Foss--*Capriccio for cello and pinao*, *Toru Takemitsu--Orion*, *Beethoven--Piano Sonata No. 31 in A flat major, Op. 110*, *Bach--Cello Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV1008*, and *Brahms--Cello Sonata No.2, in F major, Op. 99*.

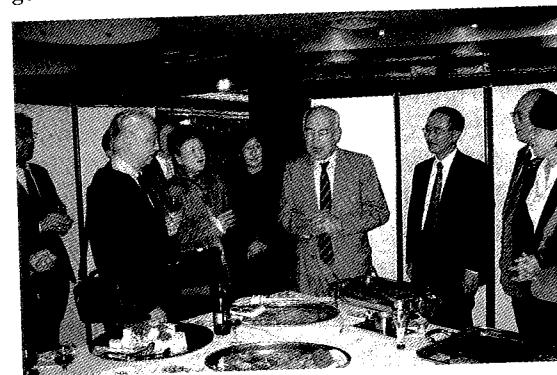
The audience roared with applause as the last note was played. The magical afternoon was nearing an end, but not before the performers answered to the crowd's standing ovation with Debussy's *Reverie*. The concert would remain a vivid memory for all of us who had the fortune to share the afternoon together, and we all left the hall feeling honored to have been a part of this extraordinary gathering.

After what seemed like a very short two hours, Ms. Tazaki and Mr. Tsutsumi were greeted back-stage by beautiful flower bouquets and



excited fans waiting to express their appreciation for the stunning performance. Though one can only imagine the energy that went into performing such breathtaking music, the performers pleasantly greeted their fans without a sign of being tired.

As the hall buzzed with excitement over the success of this concert, key supporters and guests gathered at Jucchiem Restaurant in Tsuda Hall to honor the musicians and those who made the concert possible. Though the venue was rather small, everyone seemed to enjoy an intimate evening, recounting the amazing concert and getting to know one another, while enjoying the good food and wine.



Of course, such a concert would not have been possible without the understanding and assistance of numerous individuals and organizations. The energy and countless hours put into organizing this concert by Mr. Yamada were

above and beyond, and we cannot thank him enough for his leadership and contributions. We would also like to extend our most sincere appreciation to the performers, Ms. Tazaki and Mr. Tsutsumi, who shared, so generously, their time and talent and contributed most graciously to the success of this concert. We are also very fortunate to have strong community support including the Tsuda Institute which provided the use of their hall at a very reasonable rate, United Airlines which donated two roundtrip business class tickets between Bloomington, Indiana and Tokyo for Mr. Tsutsumi and his cello, and the International University of Health and Welfare which purchased advertising space in the concert program. Without such generosity, the concert would not have been possible.

Looking back at the concert a year later, I can still hear the incredible sounds that filled the hall that day. I am sure that had Senator Fulbright been there with us, he too would have enjoyed the gathering and acknowledged the power of music in bringing the world closer together. There are many ways to promote mutual understanding, and music, over the years, has definitely contributed to this effort. I hope that with the continued support of our alumni, we will be able to provide such opportunities again in the near future.