THE INTERNATIONAL CLARINET ASSOCIATION
CLARINETFEST® 2005
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JULY 17–24, 2005, PART I
by Kelly Johnson and Alan E. Stanek

From July 17 to 24, clarinetists from all over the world (600 performers from 26 countries) attended the International Clarinet Association's Clarinetfest 2005 in TAMA, Tokyo, where the attendance was the largest since the beginning of the annual event. With great music, a gorgeous facility, and friendly hosts, the convention was definitely a success. There were so many proposals for the convention that the organizers decided to accommodate everyone in two ways. First, events started on Sunday, July 17, a full three days before the convention usually starts. Second, some events were double booked. This made it impossible to get to everything but it was nice to have so many options available.

The first event was a clinic supervised by Professor Takayuki Ral from the Sonology Department of the Kunitachi College of Music titled "Computer System by Digital Art Creation." That evening the first concert took place. The first portion of the concert featured the Tama Dream Jazz Orchestra, the Funny Fellows Jazz Orchestra, the Tama New Sound Jazz Orchestra, and the Morpheus Jazz Orchestra. The second portion of the concert featured the Koji Fujiyama Quintet (Koji Fujiyama, clarinet, Makoto Itagaki, vibraphone, Yuji Mineno, piano, Ushio Ito, double bass, and Hideki Yagi, drums). Koji Fujiyama, a big fan of Benny Goodman, formed this quintet in 1958. The concert ended with tunes that combined the four bands and the quintet together.

Monday, July 18, began with a parade featuring the Tokyo Comical Clarinet Philharmony with bagpipe (see Photo 1). The group followed with a concert in the recital hall. This orchestra, composed of about 30 members, was formed specifically for the conference, and all the pieces they played were commissioned for them. Their concert was very humorous and entertaining. Next there was a concert featuring the Kanazawa Clarinet Ensemble, the Sendai Clarinet Ensemble conducted by Sengoku Susumu, the Senzoku Gakuen College of Music Clarinet Orchestra conducted by Masato Kaihoku (see Photo 2), the Aeolus Clarinet Choir (Showa Akademie Musicae) conducted by Toyohiko Horikawa, the Kunitachi Clarinet Orchestra conducted by Tadayoshi Takeda, and the Osaka College of Music Clarinet Orchestra conducted by Koichi Honda and featuring solo clarinetist Hitoshi Takeda. The program was quite varied and beautiful.

This was followed by a late afternoon recital featuring rising stars in the Japanese clarinet world. Titled "Fresh Recital," it was a pleasant mixture of sounds and styles. Hisashi Mito (Japan) performed the historical Three Caprices for clarinet solo Nos. 1 and 2 by Anton Stadler. Then we heard Mozart's Divertimento No. 2 for three bassett horns performed by Basset Sound (Takeshi Sugimoto, Rika Irii and Chisato Takahashi). Yoko Miyake and pianist Akiko Asakawa followed with Reynaldo Hahn's Sarabande et Theme Varié. Igor Stravinsky's Suite from L'Histoire du Soldat was next with Naoko Fukushima, clarinet, Akiko Kishida, violin, and Yuki Kusumoto, piano. Sora Hirao (U.S.A.) performed Bird is Free by Kazuo Yoshikawa. Clarinetist Kazumi Itani and pianist Ayako Yamada performed Sonata for Clarinet and Piano by Leonard Bernstein. The Brahms Trio was next by performers Natsuka Kawai, clarinet, Hiroki Kadowaki, cello, and Yoshiaka Suzuki, piano. This was followed by another trio performance by Chikako Kondo, clarinet, Mस. Tagochi, violin, and Chika Nagisa, piano, performing Khatchaturian's Trio and the Suite from Carmen by Bizet. The recital ended with selections from Vent du Nord, a Japanese clarinet quintet (Mumi Kuroiwa, Tomohiko Owada, Hiroyuki Sato, Fuminori Haga and Kei Itoh).

Tuesday, July 19, started with a Matinée Recital. The first group on the program, Quinteto de Clarinetes (Brazil), Hudson Nogueira (teacher at Tatuí Conservatório), Hideo Masuda, Ado Kihara, Manabu Kitada and Masaharu Kanazawa performed admirably. Sadahide Yamashita joined them on percussion to perform some entertaining traditional Brazilian music. Students of Istanbul University State Conservatory founded the second ensemble, the Turkish Uzel Ametist Clarinet Quintet, in 1996. Members Hande Sarici (B and E clarinets), Gurhan Eteke, Ozlem Kolat, Selda Argeso, alto clarinet and basset
horn, and Oyku Karadag, bass clarinet played an enjoyable program with selections that varied from Bach to Bartók. Their blend and balance earned them warm applause. Norway’s Hakon Stedje with Tomoko Kaitoh at the piano gave Franz Schubert’s beautiful Arpeggione Sonata a fine reading. The recital ended with a stunning performance by Céleste Zewald from The Netherlands. She first played Rudolf Escher’s Solo Sonata and then was joined by pianist Kooi Jaap for Robin de Raaf’s new piece, Chalumeau for clarinet and piano. The pieces were well played with a great sound and good technique, which gained her two warm ovations. At the same time as this recital, Eva Wasserman-Margolis, I.C.A.’s National Chairperson for Israel, conducted a lesson and workshop titled “Time for Tone.” Students Maika Ikebe, Takuma Sato and Makio Kato played during the workshop.

An early evening clinic called “A Battle Talk Show — Do you know this clarinet player?” was presented by Masashi Togame and Kazutoki Umez. Various uses of the clarinet throughout the world were explored through recordings from Bulgaria, India, Turkey, Hungary and other countries. Following the clinic, József Balogh (Hungary) and Japanese legend Kazutoki Umez gave a recital entitled “An Evening with the Artist-Composer.” During his passionate performance, Balogh used an American interpreter to explain the sampling of Hungarian folk songs that he had written or arranged. He also performed his arrangement of Brahms’ Hungarian Dances No. 1 and 2. Kazutoki Umez, known throughout Japan for his energetic performances, was joined by Yoko Tada, clarinet and alto saxophone, Ayumi Matsui, violin, Koyo Cho, accordion, and Kozo Arai, drums for an exciting Klezmer program. It was a fun and fitting end to the evening.

Wednesday morning began with a welcome concert by the Tokyo Clarinet Philharmony under the direction of conductor Masatake Kaitoh. This large clarinet ensemble played very well to a full house, and the arrangement of Tchaikovsky’s Serenade for String Orchestra was especially beautiful. The Matinée Recital featured the Flanders Quartet (Belgium). Members Conrad Onclin, Filip Demeyer, B♭ clarinet, Tom Daans, basset horn, and Karel Plessers, bass clarinet did not disappoint. Their performance was impressive (and memorized!) and earned them an encore. The Webster Trio (U.S.A.) followed with Webster’s arrangement of Puccini’s Madama Butterfly. Leanne Bayse, flute, Michael Webster, clarinet, and Chizuko Sawa, piano, played with great artistry and beauty. The program ended with the Sapphire Trio (U.S.A.). Members Maxine Ramsey, clarinet, Margaret Baldridge, violin, and Jody Graves, piano performed the beautiful Artarian Suite for Trio and the fun Peter Schickele Serenade for Three.

The first afternoon recital featured American composers played by American clarinet college teachers. The program opened with the Somoró Trio (Maureen Hurd, clarinet, Linda Hsu, violin, and Carl Anthony, piano.). They played the exciting Labyrinth of flames by New York composer Evan Hause. Performance of this virtuoso piece was excellent and the trio was well received. Hurd then had a good run on Hause’s Spelunk for solo clarinet. Eric Mandat and Ani Berberian played several Eric Mandat pieces. Mandat is rapidly becoming one of the foremost composers for clarinet, and these pieces were no exception to his brilliant and unique compositions. Ritual for two B♭ clarinets is a neat “skit” for two lovers while Black Swirls for two B♭ clarinets contains interesting effects and colors. Gail Novak joined the two for the world premiere of Cool 2 Cool 2 B, which featured some really great B♭ clarinet playing by both performers. Kelly Johnson followed with the exciting new piece by her colleague Philip Parker titled Grooves for clarinet and piano. Along with Gail Novak, the two gave a spunky performance. William Nichols and his pianist colleague Richard Seiler, next performed the Elliott Carter Pastoral. It was beautifully done. Caroline Hartig played the newly commissioned work Clarinet solo by William Bolcom. It is an exciting new work that was played expertly by Hartig. William Nichols came back to the stage with Richard Seiler to play Muczynski’s Time Pieces. As usual, the audience enjoyed the beautiful melodies and fast grooves.

French clarinet legend Guy Deplus performed next with pianist Naoko Endo, playing the Poulenc Sonata and Gaubert’s Fantaisie. This was truly a treat and the audience, who gave him several ovations, was granted an encore.

In a recital entitled “Greetings from Poland,” Jan Jakub Bokun played several fun tunes with Michal Moc, accordion. It was a pleasant change of pace and an enjoyable performance.

Eric Hoeprich (The Netherlands) gave an interesting and informative lecture recital with Kikuko Ogura, fortepiano, and
Japanese clarinetists Toru Sakamoto, and Hisasi Mito, Hoeprich has written numerous articles on historical clarinets, and his presentation highlighted music from the Baroque through the late Romantic period. It was warmly received.

The concert hall opened for a late afternoon recital by Italian clarinetist Alessandro Carbonare. His first selection, Ren-ga for clarinet solo by Michio Kitazume, featured his virtuosity and dynamic control. Divertimento sopra l’Opera “Mose” by Gioacchino Rossini was given a world premiere performance. A very exciting Poullenc Sonata and a solo from the third act of Verdi’s La Forza del destino followed. The program concluded with the composition FZ for Alex by Frank Zappa. A true tour de force, Carbonare and pianist Andrea Dindo were up to the challenge. The large audience demanded an encore and was treated to a solo from Tosca (see Photo 3).

The Yamaha Evening Concert “Vent d’Oriente” featured Asian composers and performers. This was the largest crowd in the recital hall so far with standing room only. The first two pieces of the program featured composer Toru Takemitsu. Naoko Kotaniguchi, clarinet, Mikio Nitta, trombone, Kouichi Nonoshita, bass trombone, Maro Abe, French horn, and Mayuko Uchida, percussion expertly performed his first piece, Waves for Clarinet, Trombone, Horn and Percussion. It contained many effects such as multiphonics, flutter tonguing, and blowing through the instruments to make a “wind” sound. The second work, Song of Autumn for Clarinet and String Quartet also featured clarinetist Naoko Kotaniguchi in the romantic-sounding piece that was beautifully played. Clarinetist Tatsuo Akasaka joined the string quartet to play Isang Yun’s Quintet für Klarinette und Streichquartett Nr. 2. Then Akasaka went back to the stage to play commissioned works by Satoko Torii with the composer on electric piano for a very enjoyable performance.

A huge crowd filed into concert hall for the JCS Gala Concert. American clarinet favorites Larry Combs and Julie DeRoche played duets for two clarinets by John McCabe and Andrzej Anweiller. This last duet was a world premiere written especially for the ClarinetFest. Their sounds were beautiful and blended perfectly. Philippe Cuper and Eddie Daniels joined Combs and DeRoche for a quartet by Jean-Michel Defay (see Photo 4). It was a treat to see these clarinetists sharing the stage. During a brief intermission the Toho Gakuen School of Music Orchestra, under the direction of Chikara Iwamura, entered the stage. Then French great Philippe Cuper played the beautiful Pastoral Cévenole by Cahuzac followed by the virtuoso Variations sur un Air du Pays d’Oc also by Cahuzac. After this stunning performance Eddie Daniels joined Cuper for a speedy rendition of Ponchielli’s Il convegno. The concert ended with a stirring performance of Mendelssohn’s Konzertstücke Nr. 2 by Daniels and Combs (see Photo 5).

Throughout the day, there were also several master classes. In the morning Wenzel Fuchs (Germany) conducted a master class for orchestral study with Japanese students Chikako Kondo, Fuminori Haga and Daisuke Katsuyama. In the afternoon there was a research presentation titled “Japanese Shakuhachi Works for Clarinet,” Christopher Ayer (U.S.A.) lectured and played clarinet while Kae Hosoda served as pianist and interpreter. Another lecture/recital took place with Christopher Hill, clarinet, (U.S.A.) and John Walker, piano. They performed selections from the 32 Etudes for Clarinet by Cyrille Rose with piano accompaniment by John Walker. Sponsored by BG, Spencer Pitfield (U.K.) made a research presentation, “British Clarinet Music from the Turn of the 20th Century — A Lost Tradition.” Miyako Hashimoto served as pianist and interpreter. Pitfield followed his research presentation with a lecture titled “How the Ligature Can Affect the Sound.”

In addition to the recitals and master classes, the I.C.A. Young Artist Competition and the I.C.A. High School Student Clarinet Solo Competition were open to the listening public. It was said by many that the talent in the competitions this year was very high.

Thursday July 21 began with a morning recital titled “Greetings from Portugal,” Ricardo Alves, a rising young clarinetist, and pianist Naoko Ishibashi, played Debussy’s Première Rhapsodie, Portuguese composer Alexandre Delgado’s Langar, and the Poullenc Sonata. He played with a beautiful sound and nice control. Quattuor Ventus (U.S.A.), under the direction of Gary Sperl, followed with the Uhl Quartet, a difficult arrangement of Kenneth Wilson’s Variations on a Theme by Paganini, and Astor Piazzola’s fun Histoire du Tango. Quartet members William J. Casada, Benjamin G. Gessel, Heath L. Klenow and Ysabel M. Sarte played well together and represented their school, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, well. Gregory M. Barrett (U.S.A.) played Espékka Salonen’s Nachtlieder and the In-
Introduction et Air Suédois Varié by Bernhard Crusell with pianist Naoko Endo. This was an excellent look into the music of Finnish composers, and Barrett executed the pieces well.

French clarinetist and pedagogue Michel Arrignon gave a master class titled “Conservatoire de Paris” in which students Maguy Giraud, Oliver Patey and Tomomi Nakagawa performed.

Appearing late on the Bullet Train from Kyoto following a whirlwind tour of Japan, this writer arrived just in time to hear the exceptional recital by I.C.A.’s Israel and Italy National Chairpersons, Eva Wasserman-Margolis and Luigi Magistrelli. Eva and Luigi performed three selections from their recent CD recording for two clarinets and piano of original music from Finland, Malta, Israel and points in between (reviewed in The Clarinet, Volume 32, Number 3 (June 2005, page 18). Felix Mendelssohn’s Two Songs, Sarah Feigin’s Fantasia, and Bernhard Crusell’s Adagio and Rondo were well suited and beautifully performed by these two artists, demonstrating their musicality, sensitivity, and superb intonation and matched tone qualities. Interspersed with the duos were Ms. Wasserman-Margolis’s performance of a tonal composition, Moshe Gassner’s Sketches for clarinet and piano, and Magistrelli’s dazzling rendition of Ivan Müller’s Duo for clarinet and piano. What a way to be introduced to the recital hall and the many memorable recitals, master classes, and gala concerts of the Tama, Tokyo ClarinetFest. 2005! Wonderful!

During the lunch hour the ensemble Chants d’Auvergne took the stage. Clarinetist Dallas Tidwell (U.S.A.), soprano Edith Davis Tidwell, and pianist Kiyoshi Asano performed D. Tidwell’s arrangement of Chants d’Auvergne by Marie-Joseph Canteloube.

The recital hall was packed for the “Greetings from Asian Composers” early afternoon recital. The first three pieces were all by composer Rikuya Terashima, who provided commentary before each of his selections. The first, titled All that the Man Left Behind When He Died for clarinet and piano was played by clarinetist Masaharu Yamamoto (Japan). It was very well done with circular breathing and great technique. The second piece, Mai (Dance) IIIa for clarinet and kotsuzumi, was especially interesting. The kotsuzumi is a drum-like instrument held against the shoulder and played with the hands. The woman who played this instrument was dressed in traditional Japanese dress. It was a very stirring performance by clarinetist Masashi Togame (Japan). Next was Feast in Summer performed by Masashi Togame, clarinet, Kazuko Takada, shamisen (a three-string Japanese lute), and Akikuni Takahashi, percussion. This was the world premiere performance, and it was especially moving because of the significance of the reference to summer, which not only signified the clarinet conference, but also the impact of the summer 60 years ago when World War II ended. Michael Richards, clarinet (U.S.A.) and Yuki Nakajima, piano, expertly performed the avant-garde piece Aquatic Aura by Akira Nishimura. Next was Im-Soo Lee (Korea) who played Ih Kangyul’s Einsamer Abend. This piece was fresh and different, and Lee was received very warmly. Clarinetist Min-ho Yeh (Taiwan/U.S.A.) performed three pieces next. His portion included Shin-Hui Chen’s Twice Removed for solo clarinet, An-Lun Huang’s Capriccio for clarinet and piano, and Nobuyoshi Inuma’s Kokiko Genso for clarinet, violin (David Gillham) and piano (Chiharu Inuma). The well-played performance was a nice mixture of styles and sounds. Tie Bai, I.C.A.’s China National Chairperson, was the next clarinetist to play. Joined by Jahyenog Ko on piano, his first piece, Jeong W. Jin’s Movement II for clarinet and piano, was very intriguing. The last piece, Bijing Hu’s Sound of the Pamir was a series of dance styles that highlighted Bai’s technical prowess. He displayed incredible control and circular breathing technique in this very nice work. Daniel Geeting, clarinet (U.S.A.) followed in traditional Indian dress with...
Aloke Dasgupta, sitar (India), Joyce Geeting, tanpura (a drone-like instrument), and Hegoda, tabla (an Indian drum played with the hands). They played a piece in the classical Indian tradition, and it was a very interesting look into how the clarinet can fit into this type of music. The program ended with three pieces by American clarinetist Timothy Perry. *Raga Music* for solo clarinet, a work by John Mayer (India) consisted of nine short movements, musically describing morning, rainy, evening, dusk, etc. *Ma-Wal Masri* by Egyptian composer Ali Osman followed. Colleagues Stephen Stalker, cello, and Margaret Reitz, piano, joined Perry on the final piece, *Among Friends* by Chan Ka Nin (Hong Kong/Canada). This is a terrific piece, and it received a good ovation by the appreciative crowd. Whoa — must go find me a super cellist and pianist, get this music and perform it!

Jochen Seggelke (Germany) gave a lecture/recital. An expert on period instruments, Seggelke was joined by Clarimonia members Bernhard Köslng and Ekkehard Sauer for a performance titled “300 Years of Clarinet Music for 3 Players” (see Photo 6). The trio tradition continued with Jan Guns, Belgian bass clarinetist, with Seiki Shinohe (Japan), clarinet, Hiroshi Kamata (Japan), bassett horn, and Naoko Endo, piano. While the previous lecture/recital featured early music for the clarinet, this performance contained works by Mendelssohn, Schallner, Westerlinck, Owens and Glinka.

Japanese pieces performed by winners of JCS competitions was an inspiring and informative recital that demonstrated the quality and high standards of performance by our host country’s young artists. Remember these clarinetists — the next generation of Japan’s finest: Mami Kuroiwa, Hiroyuki Sato, Yoko Fujii, and Junko Otani. Compositions respectively performed were *Rêve Colorié* by Akira Miyoshi, *Rengo* by Michio Kitazume, and *Three Pieces* for solo clarinet by Keiko Fujiie.

Photo 6. Jochen Seggelke, Bernhard Köslng and Ekkehard Sauer

A standing room only crowd gathered to hear French clarinet star Philippe Cuper. Cuper most often orders the musical selections in his recital appearances in such a manner as to engage his audience from start to finish (to which clarinetists should pay more attention in the opinion of this writer). Philippe’s performance was enhanced by the superb artistry of pianist Naoko Ishibashi, who accompanied many recitals during our stay in Tama, Tokyo. First was *Sonate pour clarinette et piano*, a beautiful two-movement sonata, unknown to this writer, by Mieczyslaw Wainberg. The first movement had an andante-cantabile quality enabling him to project his singing tone and sensitive phrasing. The second was march-like, but not fast, demanding circular breathing. Next was the world premier of *Aigre-doux*, five vocalises for clarinet and viola by Janos Komives. This rather short work deserves to be performed again and again — that is, if you have a violist the likes of Natsumi Echigo — lovely. This excellent piece was played with great flair. Finally, in the 1980 work by Franco Donatoni, *Clair* for solo clarinet, Philippe demonstrated an amazing altissimo register and fast supple fingers with some repetitive melodic and rhythmic hints of Stravinsky’s *Three Pieces*. The audience demanded encores and Cuper delivered three, first, a French ballet tune, was cute and contained dance steps. The second, *Immer Kleiner*, was comical as the clarinet was dismantled during the piece. Fun, but a bit of unexpected schlock from this artist! The final encore, Cahuzac’s *Pastorale* was very moving and played from memory.
An early evening crowd was treated to two of the more difficult quintets for clarinet and string quartet. First, Japanese clarinetist Yuji Murai joined the group for Weber’s Quintet, Op. 34. Then, Shuhei Isobe, also of Japan, played the Reger Quintet, Op. 146.

The evening Selmer Gala Concert featured the Orchestra Strofinare accompanying a wide variety of musical styles and instruments. Ricardo Morales and Jessica Phillips (U.S.A.) performed Mendelssohn’s Konzertstücke Nr. 1 — a sensitive yet exhilarating performance of this work. Their balance, blend, and technique were amazing. Next, Morales played Messager’s Solo de concours from memory. With his fabulous tone and smooth technique, it was a real treat to hear him play. Alessandro Carbonare (Italy) and Hidemi Mikai (Japan) then played a rousing version of Ponchielli’s Il convéno with the orchestra under the direction of Chikara Iwamura. A welcome break in such a serious musical concert was the gorgeous and unique performance of Tchaikovsky’s Andante cantabile, Op. 11 given by Michel Portal (France) and string orchestra. Portal’s tone in the chalumeau register and sensitive vibrato made this simple but beautiful melody even more memorable (see Photo 7). Japanese clarinetist Yuko Hattan, winner of the 21st Japan Wind and Percussion Competition, joined with pianist Kaori Naka in a brilliant version of the difficult TEMA CON VARIAZIONI by Jean Françaix. Next, we were treated to the bass clarinet artistry of Louis Sclavis (France) on Contre contre. Using circular breathing, he performed for several minutes of the most outlandish doodles, stretching the boundaries of bass clarinet playing technique. He was then joined by Michel Portal to play two interesting and grooving Portal duets, Michel jungle and Éspace 3. Alessandro, Louis, Michel, and Ricardo ended the concert with a tune based on a Portal piece. Hearing our instrument in the hands of these very special artists made for a superb evening. Thank you Selmer!

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To be concluded with Part II in the March 2006 issue.