



SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Bringing the World's Best to Houston

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPA Announces the Houston Appearance of Nobuyuki Tsujii

Blind at Birth, the Thirteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Gold Medalist to Make Houston Debut in September

HOUSTON (Aug. 26, 2009) – Society for the Performing Arts (SPA), bringing the world's best to Houston, presents the Houston debut of the **Thirteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Gold Medalist Nobuyuki Tsujii** on Sunday, Sept. 27 at 2 p.m. in Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. This event continues SPA's tradition of being among the first to present the Van Cliburn gold medalist following the competition.

On June 7, 20-year-old Nobuyuki (Nobu) Tsujii of Japan and 19-year-old Haochen Zhang of China tied for the Gold Medal in the elite piano competition held every four years in Fort Worth. The prize included the Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Gold Medal; a cash award of \$20,000; international and national concert tours for the three seasons following the competition; a CD recording on the harmonia mundi usa label; and performance attire provided by Neiman Marcus. The last time that the Cliburn Competition awarded a tie for the gold medal was in 2001 to Stanislav Ioudenitch and Olga Kern.

Tsujii's Houston program will begin with Beethoven's Piano Sonata No.14 C minor, Op. 27, No. 2 "Moonlight" and Piano Sonata No.23 in F minor, Op. 57 "Appassionata," followed by Chopin's Ballade No. 1 in G minor, Op.23; Four Mazurkas, Op.24; Nocturne in C-sharp minor, Op.27 No. 1; Nocturne in D-flat major, Op.27 No. 2; and *Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise brillante*, in E-Flat major.

The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* hailed, "Tsujii kept the audience spellbound from start to completion. He received an instantaneous and sustained ovation, a tribute to his character and also to musicianship that is unpretentious and edifying."

Blind at birth, Nobu Tsujii, began showing interest in the piano at age 2 and began taking lessons at age 4. At the age of 12, he made noted recital debuts at Tokyo's Suntory Hall and Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. Other performance credits include the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux, Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra and Tokyo Symphony

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Orchestra. An acclaimed debut album released by Avex classics in 2007 led to a 15-city tour of Japan and a second CD featuring Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, released in 2008. He currently participates in the performer's program at the Ueno Gakuen College of Music in Tokyo.

First held in 1962, the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, named for the American who won Moscow's First International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1958, is widely regarded as the supreme piano competition in its potential for launching careers. The event attracts talented candidates from all over the world; this year 29 pianists from 14 countries participated.

The 2009 competition was taken to the next level technology-wise as the entire event was streamed in real time to tens of thousands of viewers worldwide, offering the most expansive coverage of any competition to date. Viewers enjoyed backstage coverage of rehearsals, performances, competitor vignettes, symposia, as well as blogs, short features on the Foundation's history, an online audience vote (nonbinding) and streaming commentary. The website offered unlimited access to viewers around the world.

Part of the CenterPoint Energy music series, the performance of Van Cliburn Gold Medalist Nobu Tsujii is generously sponsored by Continental Airlines, The Brown Hand Center and H-E-B.

Tickets range from \$20-\$45 and can be purchased online at www.spahouston.org, by phone at 713-227-4SPA or at the courtyard level ticket office at Jones Hall located at 615 Louisiana St. Hours of operation: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday – Friday, and 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Saturday. For groups of 15 or more, call 713-632-8113.

About Society for the Performing Arts

Founded in 1966, Society for the Performing Arts (SPA) is the largest independent non-profit presenting organization in the Southwest. Since its inception, SPA has sponsored more than 800 performances of the world's finest music, dance and theater events, in adherence to the belief that the arts are fundamental to the overall enrichment and quality of life within the community. In addition to presenting artists, SPA seeks to provide a variety of learning experiences for adults and children through master classes, lectures and special student performances, as well as build relationships between the performing arts and other interests within the greater Houston area and throughout the state of Texas.

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