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新報

Lantern-Plant Market in Asakusa Tokyo



Women visit a market selling Physalis alkekengi, also called Chinese lantern plant, at Sensoji temple in Tokyo's Asakusa district on July 9, 2013.

Each year on the 9th and 10th days of July, a lantern-plant market is held

at Sensoji Temple in Asakusa, Tokyo. The event dates back to the Edo era. It is believed

that if people visit and pray to Kannon (the Goddess of Mercy) at Sensoji on both days, they

are blessed for 46,000 days. This year, 550,000 visitors were expected.

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Sean Kubota Speaks What Conductors Make a Difference

Sean Shoichi Kubota, the winner of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first international Sir Georg Solti Conducting Competition in 2011, spoke about what conductors make the difference on June 21 at the Prairie Center of Arts in Schaumburg. The event was hosted by JCCC.

Kubota was chosen out of 225 applicants from 40 countries in the contest and won an apprenticeship under CSO's music director Riccardo Muti from April 2011 to June 2013.

Kubota asked the audience about the image of conductors, and the audience brought up some questions such as "a conductor is the greatest person in an orchestra," and "why does the sound change when a different conductor takes the stand?"

Kubota said that the orchestra

members have an ultimate authority whether they follow the conductor's directions or not.

Conductors often ask brass sections such as trumpet to play quietly, and most of them do so in a rehearsal, but no one knows what will happen in a real concert. Therefore, Kubota said, "Building a trust between a conductor and players is a critical element to make ideal sound."

Maestro Riccardo Muti

Why do many people want to go Maestro Muti's concert? How does he make a difference? Kubota spent time with Muti for more than two years and saw what he had done.

When Muti became the music director of CSO, he asked his assistant to bring him photos of CSO members with their



Conductor Sean Kubota (Photo: courtesy of Mr. Sean Kubota)

name. According to Kubota, Muti has minute-to-minute schedules as busy as the President of the U.S. His job

is not only directing CSO, but also doing many other things

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Sean Kubota

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including meeting patrons and holding press conferences. Besides, bedtime is usually 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. after finishing an evening concert and dinner, rehearsal starts at 10 a.m., so everyone wants to take a nap in a 30-minute after lunch break. Muti, however, memorized the faces and names of the 133 members of CSO by using the lunch breaks.

Muti began to greet the members by calling their names, and that gave them a great surprise. The members, who knew his busy schedules, were deeply impressed and thought, "I'll play my best for him," so a positive atmosphere emerged around CSO.

Kubota said, "When Maestro Muti's great talent, CSO members' skills, and the positive atmosphere came together, a wonderful harmony came out for the first time. In my apprenticeship, I was greatly moved learning the importance to build trust one by one."

Positive Spirit of Yo-Yo Ma

Famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma serves as a consultant for CSO's creative events. Kubota said that he was always smiling from his heart. One day, he brought an idea of River Project, which was to hold a concert in a shopping mall in Chicago's downtown. Everyone said, "It is impossible due to many regulations," but Yo-Yo Ma kept saying, "Let's try it. We can do it," with his smiling face. Eventually, the concert was realized in the middle of May.

Kubota said that Yo-Yo

Ma's positive spirit moved everyone to make it possible because he had a strong will to communicate with people through music and eliminate boundaries from music halls. Kubota said, "Creating trust and positive spirit are two of the most important treasures I learned from my apprenticeship."

Sean Kubota's Case

Kubota was selected from 225 applicants. How does he lead an orchestra and create his ideal sound?

He reads all parts of a score horizontally and vertically although it takes a substantial amount of time. Then he looks at the score where some musical instruments play the same melody. For example, if a flute, trumpet, and violin play together, he has to predict the balance of the sound and adjust it when the musicians actually play it. He said that it was one of his jobs.

Due to the nature of a musical instrument, the sound of trumpet, horn, trombone, and tuba is loud, but saying, "You are too loud," is a taboo. Instead, he can say, "Listen to flute and violin," or "make a round tone." The result is the same in that the brass sound becomes softer without embarrassing players. He said that a word choice was important to create a positive

atmosphere.

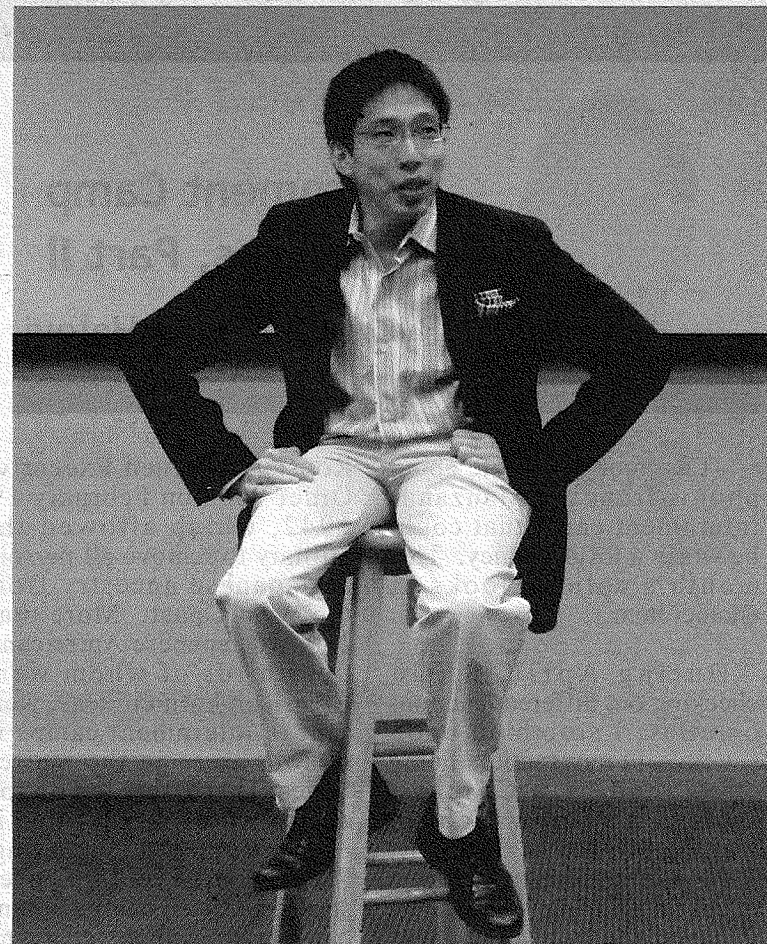
Is Extravagant Action Needed?

Do conductors need performance to entertain an audience? Does the audience get more excited if Maestro Muti opens his mouth during a concert? It might be true, but Muti demonstrated at an open rehearsal that the sound was the same no matter whether his mouth opened or not, according to Kubota. One of the reasons why Muti closes his mouth is that audibility deteriorates with an open mouth. That is why Muti puts priority on his audibility rather than entertaining his audience.

Do conductors need extravagant actions? Kubota said that his actions came from his ideal music. His actions come out when he thinks how he can express his music by using his body and hands. "Extravagant actions may seem to be cool, but they are not related with music," he added.

Sean Kubota received his Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting in 2005 from The Juilliard School and Professional Study Diploma from the Mannes College of Music in 2007. He received numerous awards during his studies such as S&P Stanley scholar, N.T. Milani scholar, Mary Power award and Bruno Walter award. During the past summer seasons, he has appeared as a fellow conductor at Accademia Musicale Chigiana where he earned the Diploma di Merito and at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen Music Festival. He is a 2008-2009 season recipient of the Japanese Government Artist Fund.

He currently resides in New York City where he has been serving as music director of 92Y School of Music



Sean Kubota speaks about what conductors make a difference at the Prairie Center of Arts in Schaumburg.

Orchestra, which is one of the oldest American orchestras with 95 years of history, since 2010 and concurrently has been serving as music director of Orchestrada in Tokyo since

2011. At both organizations, he is a founder of conducting classes and seminars where he provides opportunities to learn the art of conducting to the younger generation.

Standing Restaurants Offer 4-Star Meals at Reasonable Prices

An increasing number of sushi and French restaurants are providing food in a casual, standing style in response to budget-minded customers who want four-star meals at reasonable prices.

The Tsukiji Hachimaki Tasuke restaurant opened its first standing-only outlet in Tokyo's Okachimachi district at the end of April.

The outlet offers sushi made using fresh, high-quality fish delivered directly from Tokyo's Tsukiji wholesale fish market as well as ports in Kagoshima, southern Japan, for around the same as or slightly more than conveyor belt sushi bars.

After having lunch at the
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Reasonable Prices

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