



The Kaji Aso Composers Prize 2008

Human spirit, its development, and its expression through different art forms was a main focus in the life of Mr. Kaji Aso. It is our wish to recognize and memorialize this spirit through the second annual Kaji Aso Composers Prize. This award is established to inspire composers, musicians, and audiences to remember the contributions made by Mr. Aso to the music and culture of Boston, and to celebrate his legacy with new music. Mr. Aso established the Kaji Aso Studio Institute for the Arts in 1973. The Studio provides courses and programs in fine art and music as well as a series of concerts, "Opera Cabaret," and other musical events. Mr. Aso was himself a tenor and also composed several original pieces based on his own poetry.

Please visit the Kaji Aso Studio web site at www.kajiasostudio.com
Please visit the web site of Mr. Kaji Aso at www.kajiaso.com for more information about Mr. Aso and his life work.

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Rules and Requirements:

1 - For this competition the composer is to use the theme of "Tanabata" for his/her work. The legend of "Tanabata" as well as poems by Kaji Aso written on the theme of Tanabata can be seen below, with additional materials available at the Kaji Aso Studio web site.

2 - The piece should be 4 to 15 minutes in length and arranged and recorded for soloist or small ensemble of no more than 5 instruments and/or voice.

3 - A composer may submit more than one work.

4 - Each work must be submitted on a CD along with a written description of each piece. A \$10 fee and a stamped self addressed envelope should accompany each submission.

Submissions must be received by **June 15, 2008**.

5 - The winning composition remains the property of the composer with limited performance rights granted to Kaji Aso Studio.

6 - A Grand Prize of **\$1,000** will be awarded to the winning composer at the Kaji Aso Studio, July 12, 2008.

7 - The work will be premiered at the Kaji Aso Studio Summer Symposium "Tanabata" Saturday, July 12, 2008.

8 - Compositions are to be judged by the members of the Kaji Aso Studio Music Program.

Members and Faculty of Kaji Aso Studio are prohibited from submitting to this competition.

If you have questions, please contact the Kaji Aso Studio by email

At administrator@kajiasostudio.com

TANABATA, THE STAR FESTIVAL

On the eastern bank of Heaven's River lived the daughter of the Master of Heaven. Night and day her shuttle flew across the loom as she wove the beautiful cloth that was worn by the gods who lived in her father's palace. So diligent was she that she was called Shokujo, Weaving Girl.

When Shokujo came of age, her father chose a husband for her. Her betrothed tended oxen on the western bank of Heaven's River. He, too, was diligent at his work and was called Kengyû, OxHerd Boy.

At their first meeting Shokujo and Kengyû fell deeply in love. After their wedding they went on a honeymoon which lasted so long that Kengyû's herds wandered and the gods' clothes began to fade. Still the bride and groom did not return. Kengyû's oxen grew thin and the gods' clothes grew worn. Where were Shokujo and Kengyû? Finally, the Master of Heaven became so angry that he condemned the young couple to be separated forever by Heaven's River. But eventually he relented, allowing them to meet one day each year, on the seventh night of the seventh month.

On July 7, the Weaving Girl star (Vega) and the OxHerd

Boy star (Altair) meet across

the Silver River (the Milky Way). The Japanese say that she rides a cucumber horse and he an eggplant cow. Each year, dew drops are gathered to make ink to write wishes and to write poems honoring the two lovers. These are written on strips of paper that are hung with colored threads upon bamboo branches. Other decorative streamers are also hung on the branches for good luck.

In the old tradition children took the bamboo branches to the nearest stream to be carried away by the currents so that their wishes might come true

Poems by Kaji Aso

After hot day,
how nice to have thundershower:
purple light,
purple sky,
turbulent here and there.
After all this, clouds scatter,
anger of heaven is gone.
Now, hear the sigh ...
everyone waiting for this moment:
heaven came to heaven ...
heaven came to the whole world!
On the earth
children are cutting paper
to write wishes
and hang them on bamboo branches.
Listening for gallop of horse and cow;
moonlight
reflecting off head of little boy.

dew sparkling
on the lotus leaf
last night's starlight

* * *

dragon across the sky
leaving
sparkling stars

Star Festival

Riding on cucumber horse,
Riding on eggplant cow,
Stepping on stardust
With slight anxiety,
Leaving aroma behind Moonlight
adding another color of light.
Ah, weaving princess,
as beautiful as peony ...
Ah, cowman prince,
as strong as iron ...
They are just crossing the Silver River.
We know the story.
We know what is going on there now,
Yet, we cannot see it;
We see only beautiful stars.
But, on the grass, caterpillar is seeing it Stretching
head up
Twisting his body and seeing it.
He is dreaming ...
When I get wings,

I will fly over there,
I will fly over there by myself.
I will not need a ride Starlight
reflecting on my wings,
Moonlight adding another color of light,
My love and I will be beautiful stars.

Silver River

Cool breeze from heaven.
Who will reach the bridge to heaven ...?
I wish to walk in that glittering light.
Tail of shooting star in July night.
If I follow that blue light,
If I step on that blue light,
Will I reach the Silver River ...?
Like weaving princess,
Like cowman prince ...?
But, who would be waiting for me
At Silver River's bank?