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Conductor Hideaki Hirai



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Complete artist information including video, audio and interviews are available at www.pricerubin.com

Hideaki Hirai – Biography

HIDEAKI HIRAI, who has “a talent deeply ingrained in his genes” (The Den), is one of the most gifted young conductors from Japan. He belongs to the Hirai family, famous in the classical music field in Japan. In 2013, “Maestro Hirai made a remarkable Carnegie Hall debut” (The New York Culture Examiner) with rave reviews such as “especially impressive, dynamic, confident, justly deserving of the standing ovation” (The New York Concert Review), conducting from the memory the Beethoven 9th Symphony with New York Festival Orchestra (NYFO). Upon a great success, NYFO has appointed him Music Director and Conductor, starting from 2014/15 season. In May, 2017, Maestro Hirai made a highly praised debut at prestigious Wiener Konzerthaus with Ensemble Wien Klang. In October, he will have such a rare honor to conduct his own “Ave Maria” in the official mass at St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City. Since 1998, as a Co-founder, he frequently conducts the Czech Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, now serving as Principal Guest Conductor.

Highlights in the 2012/13 season include his sensational debut at the Wiener Staatsoper, immediately followed by a successful return during 2013/14 season, and his successful debut in Salzburg for the Austrian premiere of his own acclaimed opera, “Princess from the Moon”, which has been performed more than 30 times in such cities as Canberra, Prague, Anif, Los Angeles and many cities in Japan. Besides, Maestro Hirai has written two other operas: “True Love of Komachi” and “The White Fox” which have also become very popular to enjoy many performances in Japan. In 1997 he was the first prize-winner of the Sixth International Conducting Competition in Hradec Kralove (Czech Republic). In 2001 Mr. Hirai was chosen by Lorin Maazel as one of the ten promising conductors in Asia.

He has conducted many leading orchestras including the Cadaques Chamber Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, Croatian Radio-TV Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Wien Klang, Finnish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Janacek Philharmonic, Karlsbad Symphony Orchestra, Moravian Philharmonic, Pleven Philharmonic, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Silesian Philharmonic, Sofia Sinfonietta and most of the major orchestras in Japan such as New Japan Philharmonic, Tokyo

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Hideaki Hirai – Biography

Philharmonic Orchestra, and Tokyo Symphony Orchestra as well as appeared at such festivals as Martinu Festival, Young Prague Music Festival (Czech Rep.), Japan Festival (U.S.A.) and Martha Argerich Music Festival (Beppu, Japan).

Acknowledged as opera conductor, Maestro Hirai has been a frequent guest with the prestigious New National Theatre, Tokyo. Following his successful debut with *Mitridate* and *Lucio Silla* (Mozart) in November 2003, Maestro Hirai was immediately offered re-engagements with *Marriage of Figaro* in April 2005 and with *Serse* (Handel) in January 2006. His recent opera performances include productions of *La Boheme*, *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly*, and *La Traviata*.

Mr. Hirai, born into a celebrated musical family, studied piano, violin and composition with his grandfather, eminent composer Kozaburo Hirai and cello with his father, Takeichiro Hirai (www.takeichiro-hirai.com), noted cellist whom Pablo Casals designated as his successor. Hideaki Hirai graduated from the University of Rochester (New York) with a Bachelor's degree in political science, where he studied conducting under David Effron at the Eastman School of Music. He completed his Master's degree in conducting at the Peabody Conservatory of the John's Hopkins University under Frederik Prausnitz, followed by further studies under Otakar Trhlik at the Janacek Academy of Music (Czech Republic) and his mentor Sir Colin Davis in London.

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Hideaki Hirai – Conducting Reviews

“..a talent deeply ingrained in his genes...”

– DEN, (CZECH REPUBLIC)

“...an exuberant musicality...”

– ONGAKU-GENDAI, (JAPAN)

“...an inborn opera conductor....animating, fresh and truly the best... Mozart: “Marriage of Figaro” (New National Theatre Tokyo, Japan) ONGAKU-GENDAI, (JAPAN)

...His life has been a total musical experience...for him, music is as natural as breathing!”

– MONTGOMERY TIMES, (U.S.A.)

“...a sensitive feeling for resonance. His music-making is convincing due to his fine attention to the style for the Mozart’s early works.

Mozart: “Mitridate” & “Lucio Silla” (New National Theatre Tokyo, Japan)”

– NIKKEI NEWSPAPER, (JAPAN)

“A promising and multi-talented musician, HIDEAKI HIRAI, as conductor, gave such a pleasant performance.”

– KARLOVARSKÉ NOVINY, (CZECH REP.)

“With a larger range of internal contrasts and more liveliness, HIRAI presented the Mozart Symphony in E-flat Major, and also the spontaneous conductor emotionally felt the classic style.”

– ROVNOST, (CZECH REP.)

“...an extremely vivid conducting... his conducting looked as natural as fish in the water....truly confident and majestic manner.....His explosive and joyful opening among all represented his passionate, agile and fresh performance....In addition to his sincere and sensitive music-making, the climax was thrilling.”

– ONGAKU-GENDAI, (JAPAN)

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Hideaki Hirai – Conducting Reviews

New York Festival Orchestra – Carnegie Hall December 26, 2013

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

“The New York Festival Orchestra, consisting of players from throughout the United States, was specially formed for this concert.

...the playing overall was polished and the ensemble remarkably unified, as if they had been together for a long period of time.

Maestro Hirai was especially impressive. Conducting from memory, he demonstrated his deep knowledge of the score with unflagging energy and intense concentration. He was dynamic, confident, and completely engaged for the entire 75 minutes. It was especially interesting to me that he “sang” along with the chorus with evident joy on his face.

It was among the best of the live performances I have heard of this work and justly deserving of the standing ovation it was accorded. Bravo to all!”

– New York Concert Review (January 3, 2014) Jeffrey Williams

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Hideaki Hirai – Conducting Reviews



©Stanley Abraham

"With the highly expressive and lively presence of the orchestra, and especially its conductor, Maestro Hirai, the concert quickly reached and maintained a high energy level. The end of this concert part was followed with a very long and emotional reaction on the part of the audience. Much of it was directed to Maestro Hirai for his masterful interpretation and intimate knowledge of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, which he conducted from memory. Maestro Hirai made a remarkable Carnegie Hall debut in front of an audience of about 3000 people who recognized his outstanding job with the New York Festival Orchestra."

– Robertaonthearts (January 10, 2014) Dr. Roberta E. Zlokower, Publisher

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Hideaki Hirai – Composer Reviews

OPERA, “PRINCESS FROM THE MOON”
(KAGUYA-HIME) in 2 Acts/ in Japanese
Music and Libretto by HIDEAKI HIRAI



“Puccini Japanese style”

“constantly melodious and warmly harmonic”
– THE CANBERRA TIMES (AUSTRALIA)

“filled with delightfully melodic and, at times movingly beautiful music...melodious and colorfully evocative”
– OPERA~OPERA (AUSTRALIA)

“beautiful melodies and soul-shaking music”
– ZPRAVODAJ (CZECH REP.)

“impressed by the the birth of a fascinating Japanese national opera”
“full of beautiful melodies”
– ONGAKU-NO-TOMO (JAPAN)

“a great potential to exceed [the famous Japanese opera], ‘Yuhzuru’
– ONGAKU GENDAI (JAPAN)

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Hideaki Hirai – Composer Reviews

OPERA, “TRUE LOVE OF KOMACHI”

In 3 Acts/ in Japanese

Music and Libretto by HIDEAKI HIRAI



“profound writing...a grand opera”

“a great spectacle...dynamic and bewitching ballet”

“a truly touching climax”

– ONGAKU GENDAI (JAPAN)

“intoxicated with touching music...resonance to connect the hearts and minds”

“the power of love to exceed the time”

“love duet called the thunderous applause”

“impressive arias set on the Japanese traditional poem, Tanka/Waka”

– IBARAKI TIMES (JAPAN)

“shared the excitement throughout the venue with endless curtain calls”

– JOYO TIMES (JAPAN)

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Hideaki Hirai – Composer Reviews

OPERA, “THE WHITE FOX”

in 3 Acts/ in Japanese

Translation, Music and Libretto by HIDEAKI HIRAI

Original libretto in English by TENSHIN (KAKUZO) OKAKURA



“music is convincing and exhilarating”

– HANNA (JAPAN)

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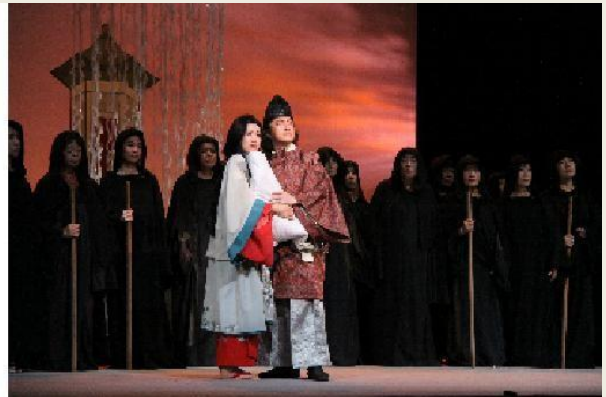
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Hideaki Hirai – Composer Reviews



“Perfection of Hirai’s 3rd opera is extremely high, beautiful harmony and a sense of melody overflowing from work everywhere deserve special mention.”

– HANNA (JAPAN)



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Hideaki Hirai – References

Mr. David Efron

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Conductor Laureate Brevard Music Center Tel: +1-(812)855-4752

E-mail: deffron@indiana.edu

Sir Colin Davis

Conductor

President, London Symphony Orchestra Conductor Laureate, Dresden

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Mr. Thomas Novohradsky Former Artistic Director, Opera New National Theatre

Tokyo Former Head of Production

Vienna State Opera House (Wiener Staatsoper) E-mail: thno1959@yahoo.com

Mr. Saburo Kurematsu Former Executive Trustee Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra

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HIDEAKI HIRAI, *conductor & composer*

◆Positions:

- 2014 – Present: **Music Director and Conductor, New York Festival Orchestra**
- 1998 – Present: **Principal Guest Conductor and Co-founder, Czech Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra**
- 2012 – 2013: **Music Director, All Japan Youth Orchestra**
- 2008 – Present: **Music Director, Hideaki Hirai Opera Chorus**
- 2006 – Present: **Conductor, Tokyo Opera Production**
- 2002 – Present: **Guest Conductor, Kagawa Junior New Philharmonic Orchestra (Japan)**
- 2006 – 2007: **Music Director and Conductor, Tokyo Opera Experimental Theatre**
- 2004 – 2005: **Conductor, Tokyo New City Orchestra**
- 1992 – 1996: **Music Director and Conductor, Capital Young Artists Orchestra (Washington, D. C.)**

◆Organizations:

- 2002 – Present: **President, “Music Project to Foster Children”**

◆Major Orchestras Conducted:

Cadaques Chamber Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, Croatian Radio-TV Symphony Orchestra, Czech Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Wien Klang, Finnish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Janacek Philharmonic, Karlsbad Symphony Orchestra, Moravian Philharmonic, Pleven Philharmonic, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Silesian Philharmonic, Sofia Sinfonietta, New Japan Philharmonic, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, and Tokyo Symphony Orchestra among many others.

◆Honors and Awards:

- Nominated among 10 promising conductors in Asia by **Lorin Maazel** at the 1st Maazer-Villar International Conducting Competition (2001)
- **First Prize, Hradec Kralove International Conducting Competition** in 1997 (Czech Rep.)

◆Major Performances:

- May, 2017: **Conducting debut** at the **Vienna Konzerthaus** with the **Ensemble Wien Klang**
- August, 2015: **U. S. premiere** of his own **Opera, "Princess from the Moon"** in Los Angeles
- June, 2014: **Conducting debut** in Bulgaria with the **Sofia Sinfonietta**
- December, 2013: **Conducting debut** at the **Carnegie Hall** with the **New York Festival Orchestra**, conducting **Beethoven's 9th Symphony**
- August, 2013: Conducting at the **Vienna State Opera House (Wiener Staatsoper)** as a result of a sensational debut in August, 2012
- May, 2013: Mozart Hall of the Czech National Opera Brno (**Janacek Opera House, Czech Rep.**)
- August, 2012: **Conducting debut** at the **Vienna State Opera House (Wiener Staatsoper)** with the **Czech Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra**
- August, 2012: **Conducting debut in Salzburg** with the Austrian premiere of his own **Opera, "Princess from the Moon"**
- April, 2009: **Smetana Hall** in Prague with the Czech premiere of his own **Opera, "Princess from the Moon"**
- Nov, 2008: World premiere of **his own Opera, "True Love of Komachi"**, commissioned by the National Cultural Festival (Japan)
- June, 2006: **Australian premiere of his own Opera, "Princess from the Moon"** to commemorate the “2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange”
- 2003 – 2006: **Conducting debut, immediately followed by guest appearances** at the prestigious **New National Theatre Tokyo**: "Marriage of Figaro", "Re di Ponto, Mitridate" and "Lucio Silla" by Mozart and "Serse" by Handel.
- 2002: Nominated among the **Stars of Tomorrow in Japan** to conduct the **All-Tokyo Symphony Orchestra** (all-star members from the top orchestras in Tokyo including **NHK Symphony Orchestra**)

HIDEAKI HIRAI, *conductor & composer*

◆Publications/Compositions:

▪ *Opera, “Princess from the Moon” (Kaguya-hime) in 2 Acts :*

-performed over 30 cities both in Japan (Tokyo, Saitama, Ibaraki, Niigata, Okayama, Kagawa, Tokushima, etc.) and abroad (Anif, Canberra, Los Angeles, Prague and Salzburg) since its World Premiere in 2003

-listed among the celebrated Japanese Opera Masterworks as the youngest composer by the Chopin Press (Japan)

▪ *Opera, “True Love of Komachi” in 3 Acts :*

-commissioned by the 23rd National Cultural Festival (Japan)

-already performed in 6 cities in Japan (Tokyo, Tsukuba, Ushiku, Mito, Ishioka, Tsuchiura) since its World Premiere in 2008

▪ *Opera, “The White Fox” in 3 Acts :*

-based on the original libretto in English by a legendary art master TENSIN OKAKURA, it was translated into Japanese, libretto and music were written by Hideaki Hirai

-World Premiere took place in Myoko-City, Niigata, Japan in 2013, followed by several new productions in Tokyo, Ibaraki, etc.

▪ *Children's Operetta, “Akkun and Magical Toothbrush”:*

-increasingly being popular among children and families,

-already performed over 20 times in Tokyo and other prefectures (Niigata, Ehime, etc.)

◆Significant collaborations:

Wolfgang Brendel (Baritone), Maurizio Muraro (Baritone), Emily Magee (Soprano), Constance Hauman (Soprano), Michelle Breedt (Mezzo Soprano), Brigitte Pinter (Soprano), Paula Almerares (Soprano), Takeichiro Hirai (Cello), etc.

◆Education :

1999 – 2000: Private mentorship under Sir Colin Davis

1996 – 1998: Janacek Academy of Music
Conducting Study under Otakar Trhlik

1994 – 1996: Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University: Master of Music in Conducting
Conducting Study under Frederik Prausnitz

1991 – 1994: Eastman School of Music
Conducting Study under David Effron

1990 – 1994: University of Rochester: B. A. in Political Science

◆Instruments:

cello, piano and violin

-Private cello study under his father, Takeichiro HIRAI, a noted cellist, the last pupil of Pablo Casals, who designated him as his successor at Press Conference in New York City

◆Special Skills:

Composition and arrangement

-Private composition study under his grandfather, Kozaburo HIRAI, an eminent composer with many popular works in Japan, a pupil of Klaus Pringsheim, who was the primary pupil of Gustav Mahler

◆Languages:

Japanese, English (fluent)
Czech, Spanish, Italian and German (moderate)



7 Highbury Terrace London N5 1UP

27 March 2000

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I met Aki Hirai while he was at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. He is a very serious musician and, having seen some videos of his conducting, it is evident that he is able to get a good performance from his musicians. I recommend him to you.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Davis

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SHIBUYA-KU
TOKYO 151-0071 JAPAN



Artistic Director, Opera
Thomas Novohradsky

Tokyo 2006/01/31

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mo. Hirai worked at the NNT with very good success in 3 productions from 2003 till 2005. He won great respect for his work by the artists and the audience.

His first production was a collage of Lucio Silla and Mitridate at the Pit of NNTT. I was not only impressed by his conducting, but also by his ability to arrange those two pieces for this production.

The success of this production convinced me to invite Mo Hirai for the revival of Le Nozze di Figaro 2005 in our main house with a cast of world class artists (Wolfgang Brendel, Emily Magee, Maurizio Muraro, Michelle Breedt etc) He fulfilled the high expectations, not only by his deep musical knowledge, but also his natural authority to work with those top artists and create with them a convincing interpretation..

For 2006 I invited Mo Hirai for the new production of Serse. Again he demonstrated that he has the heart and the technique of a leading maestro.

I am deeply convinced that Mo Hirai has an outstanding future as an opera conductor and I am very much looking forward to continue working with him..

Sincerely yours



Thomas Novohradsky

Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra
Tokyo Opera City Tower 8 F
Nishi Shinjuku3-20-2 Shinjuku-ku Tokyo 163-1408 Japan
Tel.+81-3-5353-9521 Fax. +81-3-5353-9523

11 March, 2009

To whom it may concern,

This is Saburo Kurematsu, Executive Trustee of the TOKYO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA. I am so delighted to introduce Maestro HIDEAKI HIRAI to you, with my great confidence and utmost admiration for his artistry.

Maestro HIRAI is regarded as one of the most gifted young conductors in Japan, having accomplished numerous successes both as symphonic and opera conductor. Since his official debut in 2000, which I supported entirely as Executive Director of the Japan Shinsei Symphony Orchestra, he has established himself as one of the sought-after conductors in Japan.

In 2003, Maestro HIRAI made his debut, perhaps as a youngest Japanese conductor, at the New National Theatre, Tokyo (Mozart: "Mitridate" and "Lucio Silla"), which was followed by immediate return engagements to conduct various productions (Mozart: "Marriage of Figaro" and Handel: "Serse (Xerxes)"), where Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra performed under his leadership.

Besides, I must mention his wonderful talent as opera composer. His own opera, "PRINCESS FROM THE MOON" (Kaguya-hime) has become extremely popular in Japan, and has subsequently begun to attract artistic presenters worldwide. In 2006, the Opera was performed in Canberra, Australia and future productions have been planned in Prague (18.04.2009), Sydney Opera House, Germany, U.S.A., etc. Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra has also shared a great success with Maestro HIRAI at one of the sold-out performances.

In 2008, such his achievements have won a coveted commission from the 23rd National Cultural Festival to write his new opera, "TRUE LOVE OF KOMACHI". Its world premiere took place in Japan, and its sensational success has already resulted in future productions during the next seasons.

Finally, I believe that his natural talent, which derives from the tradition of his notably celebrated musical family, and his proven successes, with Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, surely bring you delightful and beneficial collaborations in the future.

I would strongly recommend Maestro HIDEAKI HIRAI to you.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Saburo Kurematsu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Saburo" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Kurematsu".

Saburo Kurematsu, Executive Trustee
Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra

Prof. PhDr. OTAKAR TRHLÍK
Bohuslava Martinů 26
602 00 BRNO
Czech Republic
Tel.: 05/ 43 24 50 79 or 0501/ 47 14 18

Brno, April 26, 1999

A LETTER OF REFERENCE

Following is a brief characteristic of

MR. HIDEAKI HIRAI

who studied privately in my Master class at the Janacek Academy of the Performing Arts in Brno, Czech Republic.


During his two years of intensive studies /October, 1996 – May, 1998/ he proved to be a very talented musician with the best ability for successful conducting. He possesses fine ears and good feeling for rhythm, his gesture is expressive and eloquent, with great appreciation for orchestral sound. These features he convincingly proved by preparations of the orchestral concerts with the Symphony Orchestra of the Janacek Academy (Programs: J. Brahms - Tragic Overture, F. Schubert - Unfinished Symphony, F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy - Symphony No. 5 "Reformation", L. v. Beethoven - Symphony No. 5 among many others). He has also conducted, with great successes, the world premiere performances of the Czech opera, "Varta" by J. F. Fischer, a concert with the Stuttgart Hochschule Chamber Ensemble, at the Martinu Festival, and various Czech orchestras such as Czech Virtuosi (Program: A. Dvorak: Czech Suite, W. A. Mozart: Symphony No. 39, etc.), Hradec Kralove Philharmonic (Program: L. Janacek: Sinfonietta, A. Dvorak: Symphony No. 5) and, having shown an excellent ability for accompaniment, Moravian Philharmonic (Program: S. Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini). During the above mentioned period, I taught him numerous Czech repertoire with the Czech traditional interpretations.

In June, 1997, he was the 1st prize winner at the 6th Hradec Kralove International Conducting Competition held in the Czech Republic.

Ever since his study here, he has been very successful in conducting various orchestras in Europe, U.S.A., Asia as well as in his native Japan (e.g., Japan Shinsei Symphony Orchestra, Kanagawa Philharmonic, etc.)

I can personally recommend Mr. Hideaki HIRAI to you.

Sincerely,



Prof. PhDr. Otakar Trhlik
Head of the Conducting Department
of the Janacek Academy

EMBASSY OF JAPAN

112 EMPIRE CIRCUIT
YARRALUMLA, A.C.T. 2600

TEL: (02) 6273 3244
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Thursday, 15 February 2007

To whom this may concern,

I am writing this letter of reference in support of the critically acclaimed Japanese conductor Mr Hideaki Hirai. Mr Hirai has received much international recognition, including winning a 1st prize at the 6th Hradec Kralove International Conducting Competition (*Czech Republic*). Mr Hirai is an established composer as well and even assumes triple roles as conductor, composer and librettist in his own opera "Princess from the Moon".

Mr Hirai visited Australia in 2006 to conduct "Princess from the Moon" in Canberra to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Australia Japan Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation as part of the 2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange celebrations. The opera was a collaborative event which involved approximately 250 people including Japanese and Australian soloists, Woden Valley Youth Choir, Canberra Choral Society and Canberra Symphony Orchestra. The opera was conducted entirely in Japanese and Australian soloists and choristers accomplished this difficult task under Mr Hirai's comprehensive leadership. This unique opera was embraced by the audience in Canberra and attracted praises from the media.

Following this success, Mr Hirai is hoping to introduce this opera to a wider audience across Australia. He believes that he will be able to contribute to deepening the understanding and friendship between Australia and Japan by staging this opera.

I was fortunate enough to experience Mr Hirai's opera first-hand in 2006 in Canberra and I witnessed the profound cooperation and friendship between the Japanese and Australian staff involved in the production. I therefore strongly support his endeavour.

I would be delighted if you would consider showing your support of Mr Hirai and of his opera "Princess from the Moon".

Yours sincerely,



Hideaki Ueda
Ambassador of Japan to Australia