



The 19th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition 2026

19 March - 22 March 2026
Fukushima, Japan



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The 19th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition 2026

“Inspiring singing voices, Resonating to the true skies”

19 March – 22 March 2026 Fukushima, Japan

The Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition is the largest choral competition for small vocal ensemble groups (2-16 singers) in Japan. Every year we invite more than 120 top level choirs selected from all over Japan as well as all around the world to share the joy of singing.

Fukushima is known as the “Kingdom of Choirs” in Japan, which has a large population of music fans and award-winning choirs. You are cordially invited to experience the fascinating atmosphere of our music cities, and let your singing voices ring out together under the sky that a 19th century poet once described as the “True Sky.”

Organised by • Fukushima Prefecture
• Fukushima Prefectural Board of Education
• Executive Committee of the Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition

Co-Organised by Japan Choral Association, Japan Choral Association Tohoku Branch, Fukushima Chorus League, Fukushima City, Fukushima City Board of Education, Fukushin Yume no Ongakudo (Fukushin Dream Ongakudo, or Fukushima City Music Hall)

Sponsored by Agency for Cultural Affairs, All Japan Senior High School Cultural Federation, Fukushima Prefecture Senior High School Cultural Federation, Fukushima Prefectural Association of Junior High School Principals, Fukushima Prefectural Association of Elementary School Principals, Fukushima International Association, Fukushima-Minpo Co., Ltd., The Fukushima Minyu, The Asahi Shimbun Fukushima General Bureau, The Mainichi Newspapers Fukushima Bureau, The Yomiuri Shimbun Fukushima Bureau, Sankei Shimbun Co., Ltd., Fukushima Branch Office, The Kahoku Shimpō, Nikkei Inc. Fukushima Bureau, Jiji Press Ltd., Fukushima Bureau, Kyodo News Fukushima Bureau, NHK Fukushima, Radio Fukushima, Fukushima Television Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Fukushima Central Television Co., Ltd., KFB (Fukushima Broadcasting Co., Ltd.), TV-U Fukushima Co., Ltd., FM Fukushima Co., Ltd.

Venue Fukushin Yume no Ongakudo (Fukushima Dream Ongakudo, or Fukushima City Music Hall), Large Hall
1-1 Irie-cho, Fukushima City, Fukushima 960-8117 Japan

Tentative Schedule	Time	Wed., 18 Mar.	Thu., 19Mar.	Fri., 20 Mar.	Sat., 21 Mar.	Sun., 22 Mar.
			Competition			
	10:00		Category I	Category II	Category III	Grand Champion Competition
	12:00				Award Ceremony	
	14:00				Category IV	
	16:00					Award Ceremony
	18:00				Award Ceremony	Award Ceremony
	20:00	(Hall Visit)	(Hall Visit)	(Hall Visit)	(Meeting for tomorrow)	

*Open at 9:30 a.m. Start at 10:00 a.m. on 19-22 March / This schedule is subject to change by the committee.

Programme • Category Competition
• Grand Champion Competition
Competed by Gold titled choirs in each Category
• Special Programme

*Overseas choirs will be asked to perform at the Category Competition.

- Category**
- Category I : Ages 12-15
 - Category II : Ages 15-18
 - Category III : Ages 6-12 (up to 18)
 - Category IV : Other than Category I, II and III

*Ages are determined as the age of the participant on the day of 22 March 2026

*Participants of ages 12-15 (Category I) and ages 15-18 (Category II) may participate in Category III, provided that the majority of the singers of the choir shall be of ages 6-12.

*The participants of ages 12-15 (Category I) and ages 15-18 (Category II) must sing as a children's choir when in Category III.

- Entry Qualification**
- a. The number of singers should be 2-16 (no fewer than 2 and no more than 16) and member changes between musical pieces will be permitted only among those registered at the time of application.
 - b. No singer shall compete as a member of more than one choir, regardless of the categories. This restriction does not apply to conductors and accompanists.
 - c. Each category can only accept a single choir from the same group.
 - d. No qualification is required for conductors or accompanists.
 - e. Conductors and accompanists will be considered singers when they sing as a part of the choir.
 - f. The Gold titled choirs in each category shall proceed to the Grand Champion Competition on 22 March.
 - g. In principle, singers who have not registered in the Category Competition may not perform in the Grand Champion Competition.

- Performance**
- a. There is no compulsory piece in any category. All music pieces performed will be determined by the choir. Any change will not be allowed after registration.
 - b. For the Category Competition, the total performance time from the beginning of the first piece until the end of the last piece (including time between songs) must not exceed 9 minutes.
 - c. For the Grand Champion Competition, the total performance time from the beginning of the first piece to the end of the last piece (including time between pieces) must not exceed 15 minutes.
 - d. Tuning musical instruments on stage is included in the performance time.
 - e. Failure to comply with the above rules will result in disqualification.

- Order of Performance**
- a. The Category-III performance will take place in the first half of the event on 21 March, followed by the Category-IV performance in the second half.
 - b. The order of performance in the Category Competition will be determined by a random lottery conducted by the Executive Committee Office in February 2026.
 - c. The timetable will be posted on the [ENTRIES/SCHEDULE] page of the official website in late February, as shown below.
 - d. The order of performance for the Grand Champion Competition will be posted on the [ENTRIES/SCHEDULE] page of the official website in mid-November, as shown below.
URL : <https://www.vocalensemble.fukushima.jp/en/entries&schedule.html>

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- Accompaniment**
- The instruments and style of accompaniment are at the discretion of each choir.
 - A piano (Steinway & Sons), a positive organ and a pipe organ (Marcussen & Søn) will be provided by the Organiser. The pitch of the piano will be A=442Hz.
 - If a choir uses musical instruments other than the above, they must bring them on their own and be responsible for all associated expenses.
 - If a choir requires a page-turner, they shall make appropriate arrangements.
- Judging and Evaluation**
- The following judges will evaluate the competition:
Avip Priatna (Conductor), Ichiro Uenishi(Conductor),
Tetsuro Hanai (early music performer), Kazuhiro Fukunaga (Conductor),
Tsutomu Matsumura (Conductor), Yuta Miyake (Composer),
Hideki Motoyama (Conductor)
 - The evaluation of each competition will be conducted using a round-robin system specified separately.
 - Results of the Category Competition and judges' comments will be mailed to each participating choir after the competition.
- Prizes and Awards**
- The competition will be evaluated for each category, and Gold, Silver, Bronze or Excellence prizes will be awarded to every participating choir in each category.
 - In the Category Competition, Gold Prizes will be awarded to the top 5 choirs in each of the respective categories, I, II and IV, and to the top choir in Category III.
 - In the Grand Champion Competition, JPY 500,000 will be awarded to the best choir, JPY 300,000 to the 2nd-place winner, JPY 100,000 to the 3rd-place winner and JPY 30,000 to each of the other finalists.
 - In addition, an extra prize will be awarded to top-ranking choirs in the Grand Champion Competition.
- Rehearsal**
- Each choir will have at least one rehearsal slot at the venue on the day of the performance.
 - Also, the authorized travel agency will book a rehearsal room in the city for the choirs.
 - Up to 2 members of each choir may inspect the competition hall on the day before the performance.
- Copyright**
- Copyright royalties for works managed by the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers (JASRAC) or NexTone Inc. will be paid by the Organiser. For other songs, the choirs must obtain permission from the copyright holder by themselves.
 - If the choir partially edit or arrange the work, they must obtain prior approval from the copyright holder and submit a written proof of permission to the Organiser. Negotiations with copyright holders must be handled by the competitors.
 - If problems arise between a choir and the copyright holder for a song that requires copyright procedures, it must be handled solely under the responsibility of the choir.
- Use of Information**
- The information provided by the participating choirs may be used for purposes related to the organisation of the competition, such as posting on websites, printing in publications, recording to CDs or DVDs, and provided to the mass media and parties involved in the management of the competition.
 - The Organiser or the authorized entities may use pictures, audio and video recordings on the Internet, in publications and broadcast, and provide the information to the mass media. The authorised entities may also sell pictures and recordings in the form of photos, CDs or DVDs.

Preliminary Screening Choirs must pass the Preliminary Screening in order to be eligible for the competition. Some choirs may be qualified on the recommendation of the Organiser.

Applications for the Preliminary Screening:

- a. An Application form written in English
- b. A recent audio recording of the choir recorded by 2-16 intended singers, after April 2025.
 - *The screening process will be conducted anonymously. Therefore, the choir's name and any other sounds except for the performance must not be recorded.
 - *The performance time shall be within 9 minutes, and the choral pieces may be different from those to be performed in the competition. Each piece must be recorded on a separate track.
 - *The mixing of recorded sound is prohibited for the fair screening.
 - *The recording media shall be a CD (CD-DA format). DVDs are not acceptable. The recording media will not be returned.
- c. One digital photo showing the choir

Application Deadline: 30 September 2025

*The result of the Preliminary Screening will be announced by 31 October 2025 at the latest.

Registration Qualified Choirs must submit the following documents.

Registration Documents:

- a. Fully completed registration forms.
- b. A bank cheque or proof of bank transfer covering the participation fee (only if bank transfer is selected).
- c. 7 original scores for the Category Competition

Registration Deadline: a. & b. 1 December 2025 / c. 23 December 2025

*The mailing address will be announced later.

Immigration Upon entering the country, it is necessary to follow the entry procedures specified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Participation Fee For participation in the competition, a non-refundable participation fee of JPY 30,000 must be paid per choir after passing the Preliminary Screening.

The participation fee of JPY 30,000 covers;

- a. Admission tickets to the competitions for all choir members including conductors and accompanists
- b. Programme booklet and Commemorative gift (clear folder) for all choir member
- c. CDs and DVDs recorded by the authorised agent
- d. Photos taken by the authorised agent
- e. Rehearsal room fee
- f. English guide

Payment Methods;

- a. Credit card
- b. Bank transfer *The bank details will be notified later.
- c. Bank cheque

Payment Deadline: 1 December 2025

Accommodation/ Meals / Transportation The participating choirs will be responsible for their own expenses of travel and accommodation.
[Accommodation fees]

*The hotel room prices fluctuate and may vary depending on the date.

NO.	Package	Room	3 nights per person	Additional day per person
1	Economy Hotel	Twin	JPY 37,000	JPY 11,000
2	Deluxe Hotel	Twin	JPY 43,000	JPY 13,000
3		Single	JPY 49,000	JPY 15,000

This package includes:

- a. Accommodation for 3 nights
- b. 7 Meals
3 breakfasts, 4 lunches

*Meal charges are not included for additional days.

[Transportation expenses]

Daily cost per group: JPY 132,000

*Transportation within the city to the hotel, competition venue, practice venues, and pick-up at JR Fukushima Station.

*One bus for 25 people

Payment Methods:

- a. Credit card
- b. Bank transfer *The bank details will be notified later.

Payment Deadline: 15 January 2026

Financial Assistance Choirs selected for the Grand Champion Competition will receive financial assistance of up to JPY 7,000 per hotel stay after being selected for the finals for each choir member, including the conductor and the accompanist.

Admission/ Application of Visa

- a. Please note that all applicants will be admitted as a participant and obtain visa-related documents issued by the Organiser only after fully completed registration forms and payments have been received.
- b. The authorised travel agency will, upon request, arrange accommodations for non-performers and issue documents for visa applications as a tourist, but only when fully completed applications and payments have been received.

Contact Address

The Executive Committee of the Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition
(Cultural Promotion Division of Fukushima Prefectural Government)
2-16 Sugitsuma-cho, Fukushima City
Fukushima 960-8670 Japan

URL <https://www.vocalensemble.fukushima.jp/en/>
E-mail v-ensemble@pref.fukushima.lg.jp

The 19th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition 2026
PRELIMINARY SCREENING APPLICATION FORM

Fill in the form using block letters and put ✓ mark in the chosen boxes.

Choir

Choir Name in English

Choir Name in Chinese or Korean (if any)

Address

Country

E-mail

Phone

Fax

Country code / Area code / Number

Country code / Area code / Number

Website

Contact Person

☐ Mr. ☐ Ms. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐ Prof.

Name in English

First Name

Last Name

Name in Chinese or Korean (if any)

First Name

Last Name

Address

Country

E-mail

Phone

Fax

Country code / Area code / Number

Country code / Area code / Number

Participating In

☐ Category I (ages 12–15) ☐ Category II (ages 15–18) ☐ Category III (ages 6–12 / up to 18) ☐ Category IV (others)

List of Choral Pieces – Recording (Max.9min.)

No.	Title	Composer	Duration
	Example	W.A. Mozart	3:00
1.			
2.			
3.			

Number of Singers in the Recording

	Male		Female		Total (2–16 singers)
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	+	<input type="text"/>

Date of Recording

Date	Month	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Profile of the Choir

Year of Establishment

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Main Annual Activities and Highlights

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Award History

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Questionnaire – How did you hear about the competition?

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List of Documents

Put ✓ mark in the column if the document has been enclosed and fill in the number of copies of the document.

✓	Document	Number of Copies
	Application Form (with signature)	
	A Separate CD Sound Recording (2–16 singers scheduled to perform/ recorded after Apr. 2025 / Max 9 min.)	
	Digital Photo of the Choir	

All the documents should be submitted no later than 30 September 2025 to:

The Executive Committee of the Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition

(Cultural Promotion Division of the Fukushima Prefectural Government)

2-16 Sugitsuma-cho, Fukushima City, Fukushima 960-8670 Japan

E-mail v-ensemble@pref.fukushima.lg.jp

Agreement

We hereby declare that the information given in this form is correct. We also understand and agree to the competition rules and conditions of participation.

Date

Month

Year

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Signature

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Name

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Position

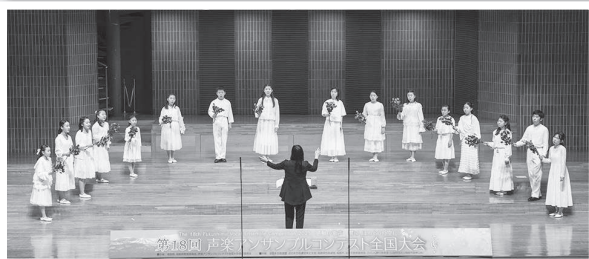
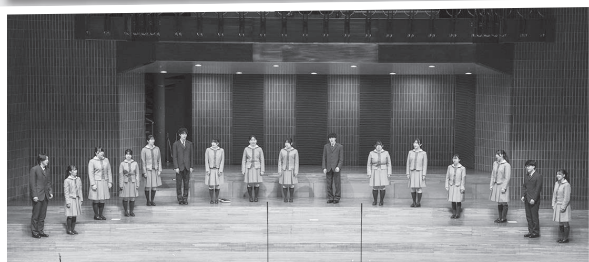
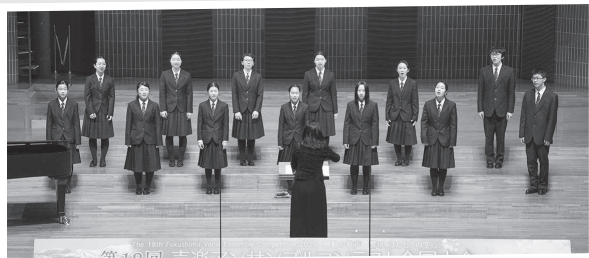
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福島 Fukushima

Fukushima is located in the Tohoku (northeastern) Region of Japan and is approximately 200km, 100 min. by Shinkansen (Bullet Train) from Tokyo. It is called the “Kingdom of Choirs” in Japan, which has a large population of music fans and award-winning choirs. Along with its unique music friendly culture, there you can find abundant natural beauty and traditional samurai culture, which is still being passed down over generations. You can enjoy renowned hot spring resorts and historical samurai sites before/after the competition. All true music lovers seeking to experience the real Japan are welcome to Fukushima.

Thanks to the support and encouragement from all over the world, Japan has steadily been recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. The Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition has also received plenty of messages to encourage people in Fukushima. We will never forget the warm and heart-felt moments that we have shared with participants of the competition.

Now we are sure music has the power to get people together and bring about hope and encouragement. The Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition will keep going on to convey the joy of singing together.



Fukushima Prefecture

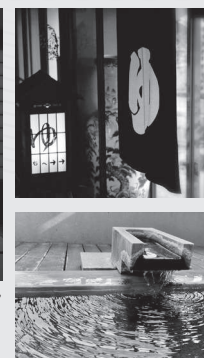
福島県



Aizuwakamatsu, which used to be a castle town from the Edo Period (1603-1867)



Fukushima is an "onsen" (hot spring) kingdom.



From Fukushima Airport

Approx. 75 min. to the hotel in Fukushima city by taxi

From Narita Airport

Route
1

Narita Airport

Tokyo Station

Approx. 1 hr-1 hr 30 min. by "Narita Express"

Tokyo Station

Fukushima Station

Approx. 1 hr 30 min. by Express Train "Tohoku Shinkansen"

Route
2

Narita Airport

Keisei Ueno Station

Approx. 45 min.-1 hr 50 min. by Keisei Electric Railway

Keisei Ueno Station

JR Ueno Station

Approx. 5 min. on foot

JR Ueno Station

Fukushima Station

Approx. 1hr 25 min. by Express Train "Tohoku Shinkansen"

From Haneda Airport

Route
1

Haneda Airport

Hamamatsucho Station

Approx. 15 min-20 min. by "Tokyo Monorail"

Hamamatsucho Station

Tokyo Station

Approx. 5 min. by "Keihin-Tohoku Line", or "Keihin-Tohoku/Negishi Line"

Tokyo Station

Fukushima Station

Approx. 1 hr 30 min. by Express Train "Tohoku Shinkansen"

Route
2

Haneda Airport

Shinagawa Station

Approx. 15 min. by "Keikyu Airport Line"

Shinagawa Station

Tokyo Station

Approx. 10 min. by "JR Yokosuka Line" or "JR Ueno-Tokyo Line"

Tokyo Station

Fukushima Station

Approx. 1 hr 30 min. by Express Train "Tohoku Shinkansen"

The 20th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition is scheduled to be held in Fukushima City from 19 to 22 March 2027.

Details will be announced in the summer of 2026.



The 19th
Fukushima
Vocal Ensemble
Competition 2026

