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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 25, 2005

Contact: Sarah Andrew Wilson
202-364-7272
swilson@monkinstitute.org

**JAPAN'S JUNKO MORIYA WINS
PRESTIGIOUS THELONIOUS MONK
INTERNATIONAL COMPOSERS COMPETITION
SPONSORED BY BMI**

Washington, DC – The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz is pleased to announce that Junko Moriya, a composer from Kanagawa, Japan, has won the 2005 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Composers Competition, sponsored by BMI. The \$10,000 Composers Award is presented annually to the young, aspiring composer who best demonstrates originality, creativity, and excellence in jazz composition. This year's Composers Competition is devoted to compositions featuring creativity in jazz guitar. BMI is the world's largest performing rights organization, representing the work of Thelonious Monk and hundreds of thousands of other composers of all genres of music.

Moriya's winning composition, "Playground," was chosen out of 51 submissions from around the world. Written for a sextet of tenor saxophone, trumpet, guitar, piano, bass, and drums, "Playground" will be performed with the composer on piano at the 2005 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Guitar Competition in Washington, DC on September 19, 2005 at the Kennedy Center.

About Junko Moriya

Junko Moriya began studying classical piano when she was five years old. By age 18, she was studying jazz piano and performing in the Waseda University High Society Orchestra, one of the most famous student big bands in Tokyo. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Waseda University, Moriya lived in New York, where she studied with Harold Danko and received a master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music. During this time, she performed at numerous jazz clubs in New York and in Europe. Since returning to Japan in 1993, Moriya has performed at jazz clubs, concert halls, and jazz festivals throughout Japan. She is known not only as a pianist, but also as a composer and arranger. Moriya performs with her own big band, the Junko Moriya Orchestra, which plays her original big band charts. Recently, a number of Japanese student big bands have selected her big band charts for their repertoire. Moriya also teaches jazz piano and theory at Shoubi Music University and the Yamano Music School. She directs big bands at junior high and high schools and appears on radio and television programs all across Japan.

About the 2005 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Guitar Competition

Sponsored by General Motors, the 18th annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition will be held in Washington, DC on September 18-19, 2005 and will feature 10 of the world's most outstanding young jazz guitarists who will be competing for major scholarships (1st Place: \$20,000; 2nd Place: \$10,000; 3rd Place: \$5,000).

5225 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 605 • Washington, D.C. 20015 • (202) 364-7272 • Fax (202) 364-0176

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About the 2005 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Guitar Competition (continued)

The Semifinals will be held on Sunday, September 18th at 1:00 p.m. at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History, Baird Auditorium. The Finals will be held on Monday, September 19th at 7:30 p.m. in the Kennedy Center’s Eisenhower Theater, where three finalists will perform and a group of Jazz All-Stars will pay tribute to legendary guitarist George Benson.

The Competition, compared in stature to that of the classical Tchaikovsky and Van Cliburn Competitions, is the most prestigious jazz competition in the world, and is widely known for discovering the jazz stars of tomorrow. It has launched the careers of vocalists Jane Monheit and Tierney Sutton, saxophonist Joshua Redman, and pianists Marcus Roberts and Jacky Terrasson, to name a few. These artists and dozens of others from past competitions have forged successful careers as performing and recording artists as well as music educators. They have earned worldwide respect and media attention while helping to preserve the legacy of jazz.

Each year the Competition shines a spotlight on a different instrument. Past Competitions have featured piano, bass, drums, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, guitar, and vocals. This year’s young aspiring jazz guitarists will be reviewed by an illustrious panel of judges including renowned jazz artists Bill Frisell, Stanley Jordan, Earl Klugh, Russell Malone, Pat Martino, and John Pizzarelli. Accompanying the guitarists will be a jazz combo featuring Chris Potter on tenor saxophone, James Genus on bass, Terri Lyne Carrington on drums, and Bob James on piano, who is also serving as Musical Director.

The Hosts for the evening will include Herbie Hancock and Billy Dee Williams. Following the presentation of the three finalists, the event will feature a performance by this year’s winner of the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Composers Competition, sponsored by BMI. The second half of the event will feature performances by the guitar competition judges. They will be joined by Herbie Hancock, Thelonious Monk, Jr., Terence Blanchard, Wayne Shorter, Clark Terry, Jimmy Heath, Bob James, and others in a celebration of the role of the guitar in jazz. The Institute’s Maria Fisher Founder’s Award will be presented to internationally acclaimed guitarist George Benson for his enormous contributions to jazz guitar.

The competition will be taped as a documentary for Black Entertainment Television and the BET Jazz cable network. The documentary will feature performances by the semifinalists, backstage interviews with the finalists and judges, and footage from the post-competition reception.

About the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz (www.monkinstitute.org) was established in 1986 in memory of the renowned jazz pianist and composer. Its mission is to preserve America’s legacy of jazz through performance and education. The Institute offers the world’s most promising young musicians college level training by America’s jazz masters and presents public school-based jazz education programs for young people around the world. Additionally, the Institute provides scholarships, performance opportunities, and worldwide recognition to gifted young musicians through its many jazz education programs. The Institute’s most recent project is *Jazz in America: The National Jazz Curriculum*, a free Internet-based curriculum for 5th, 8th and 11th grade public school students, located at www.iazzinamerica.org.

For information about tickets, please call the Institute at 202-364-7272.

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