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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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**Artists in Action for Japan Presents  
Benefit Concert for Japan at The Church-in-the-Gardens on Saturday, May 21st**

Forest Hills, NY –May 7, 2011- An artist-based not-for-profit project, Artists in Action for Japan (AAJ) will be hosting a unique fundraising Benefit Concert for Japan, to raise funds for the Japanese Earthquake Relief Effort. The concert will be held at The Church-in-the-Gardens on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 6 PM - 8 PM. A reception will follow after the concert at the Lounge in the church. The Church-in-the-Gardens is located at 50 Ascan Avenue, Forest Hills, NY. The doors open at 5:30 PM. This event is supported by the Consulate General of Japan in New York, the Japan Center for International Exchange (<http://www.jcie.org>), and Sake One.

This charitable event is not just a typical music event focusing on raising funds for Japanese quake victims, but it is also a unique community-based event introducing traditional Japanese cultural activities to other local communities. The concert will feature artists living in or associated with the Forest Hills area. Performers will be sopranos Nanae Soma and Naoko Nakagawa, contemporary dancer and poet Mana Hashimoto, and composer Satoshi Kanazawa. Ms. Hashimoto will premiere a theatrical piece based on her poetry, which she will perform with Mr. Kanazawa, and Daniel Abse, an actor and voiceover artist based in Manhattan. A performance by students from local elementary schools P.S.101 and P.S.196 will open the concert. Most notably, legendary jazz saxophonist Oliver Lake will perform live with pianist Yoichi Uzeki of York College. As a showcase of traditional Japanese culture, Japanese flower arrangement called Ikebana/Kado will be displayed in the church by Ikebana master Mai Saeki and the NY Flower Design School, and traditional Japanese tea will also be served at a reception after the concert by Forest Hills Friends with Tea.

Suggested donations for the concert are \$20 for adults, \$15 for senior and students, and free for kids, ages 12 and under. Donations of any amount are welcome. All profits from the sales of tickets will be donated to Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA). The funds raised will be used in order to both support Japanese Non-Profit Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NPOs/NGOs) currently working in the devastated areas in Northeastern Japan struck by the massive earthquake and tsunami on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Proceeds from this concert will provide immediate disaster relief and establish a separate fund to support organizations engaged in long-term reconstruction effort.

Artists in Action for Japan (AAJ) is an artist-based not-for-profit project founded by New York-based composer Satoshi Kanazawa, in response to the disaster in Japan to help the victims recover from catastrophic damages. According to a recent Japanese media report, casualties include 14,517 people dead, with 11,432 people still missing. Moreover, 130,229 people are forced to stay in multiple emergency evacuation shelters.

AAJ's mission is not only to set up public events to raise funds, but also build and enhance bridges of communication through the arts between both artistic and non-artistic communities in both the United States and Japan. Increasing demands for relief effort is expected to continue for years to come, and AAJ aims to continue promoting long-term support and contributions for at least five years or longer, until the communities in Tohoku and Kanto areas in Japan are restored.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.artistactionjapan.org>

<http://www.jcie.org/earthquake>