



SUSTAINABLE LITTLE TOKYO

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: NIKKEI MUSIC RECLAMATION PROJECT 2020

Accepting Applications: February 13–March 9, 2020
Application Deadline: March 9, 2020 by 11:59 PM PST

Apply Online Here: <https://forms.gle/12ay9GKMPDfzzAQf7>
or email your application to soshima@jaccc.org.

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC) and Sustainable Little Tokyo (SLT) invite musicians with strong connections to Little Tokyo to submit proposals for the Nikkei Music Reclamation Project — an effort to continue the legacy of cultural reclamation of Japanese American musical heritage. We seek creative visions for the future of Nikkei music and for First Street North—a block critical to the past, present, and future of Little Tokyo (see Overview for more information).

We envision that the Nikkei Music Reclamation Project will advance Sustainable Little Tokyo's goal of sustaining the historic and cultural roots of this resilient 136-year old neighborhood, and further the community campaign for First Street North (FSN). With the displacement of our Japanese American community here in Los Angeles, as well as the passing of our issei (and many nisei) who have been our primary connection to our immigrant history, the Nikkei Music Reclamation Project calls on Nikkei musicians to reclaim and expand Nikkei musical culture, and to envision a future for our historic, 136-year-old Japanese American neighborhood. Learn more about Nikkei Music Reclamation Project's launch as a part of ART@341FSN at www.sustainablelittletokyo.org/341.

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1971, **Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC)** is one of the largest ethnic arts and cultural centers of its kind in the United States. A hub for Japanese and Japanese American arts and culture and a community gathering place for the diverse voices it inspires – Japanese American Cultural & Community Center connects traditional and contemporary; community participants and creative professionals; Southern California and the world beyond. jaccc.org

Sustainable Little Tokyo (SLT) is a community-driven initiative working to ensure a healthy, equitable, and culturally rich Little Tokyo for generations to come. SLT began in 2013 as a multi-day community vision effort and has evolved into a holistic, neighborhood-wide campaign to promote the environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability of Little Tokyo. A coalition between JACCC, Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC), and Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC). sustainablelittletokyo.org

First Street North (FSN) is a block critical to the past, present, and future of the Little Tokyo neighborhood. Located behind Far Bar, Suehiro, Fugetsu-Do, FSN is one of the last three remaining pieces of public land that can be controlled by the community—but it could be sold to the highest bidder if the city does not hear our voice. FSN is home to some of our most important cultural institutions, legacy businesses, and historic sites, but many are at risk due to rising rents and gentrification. Our community envisions FSN as an anchor for our historic



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community through the development of affordable housing, affordable commercial space, community/cultural space, and open/green space. SLT's **#MyFSN campaign** seeks to control the development of the FSN block—for and by the community—and stop the displacement and erasure of our historic neighborhood. For more information, see Kenji Liu, “Fate of Little Tokyo’s First Street North to Be Determined This Year,” Rafu Shimpo, <http://www.rafu.com/2019/03/fate-of-little-tokyos-first-street-north-to-be-determined-this-year/>, or visit: sustainablelittletokyo.org/fsn.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The **Nikkei Music Reclamation Project** aims to (re)imagine Nikkei (Japanese American) musical identities and to examine pre- and post-WWII Japanese American political history and music. In resistance to the attempted erasure of Nikkei heritage during and after WWII, many Little Tokyo/Los Angeles-based sansei (third generation Japanese American) musicians and ensembles revitalized cultural connections to Nikkei immigrant history, particularly through music. The goal of the Nikkei Music Reclamation Project is to bring together multiple generations of musicians in extending this legacy and envisioning new directions for Nikkei musical culture in Little Tokyo.

Mentorship:

Selected musicians will receive mentorship and guidance by a selected sensei – a Nikkei musician with expertise in various styles of Japanese music and Japanese American political and musical history. The sensei will guide selected musicians as they develop, refine, and perform their musical work. Prior experience with Japanese music/instruments is not required, but should be mentioned in the Artist Statement (see “APPLICATION” section below).

Commission & Performances:

The selected songwriters/composers/arrangers will be commissioned to reimagine Japanese songs for Western and Japanese instruments, integrating the sensei and their musical practices when possible. The final product should total 10–15 minutes of music, divided at the musician’s discretion (e.g. two or three 5-min songs, one 12-min song, etc.).

Selected musicians will perform their commissioned songs/arrangements on two dates: July (TBD), 2020 at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC) and August 11, 2020 at the Blue Whale Jazz Club in Little Tokyo. Selected musicians must be available to perform in Little Tokyo on both of these dates.

All production, tech-related, and marketing expenses will be covered by JACCC and SLT (excluding performer fees, which will be covered by the project budget; see Artist Fee information below).



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Commission & Performances (cont'd):

Images of performance venues:

JACCC



Blue Whale Jazz Club



Selection Process:

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee of Little Tokyo community stakeholders. Three (3) to four (4) musicians will be selected and given options for mentorship based on the proposal.

Proposal Requirements:

Proposals for musical works must engage with Little Tokyo, the theme of the future for First Street North, and Nikkei musical heritage. In addition, the music should reflect one or more of the following elements:

- Little Tokyo's Japanese/Japanese American community spaces, businesses/institutions, and/or cultural traditions
- Little Tokyo's historically multi-ethnic, multi-generational neighborhood

While we encourage all forms of artistic expression, we recommend culturally-sensitive representations. We recommend avoiding stereotypical representations when possible. Please note the historical context and resources provided in the "LITTLE TOKYO HISTORY" and "RESOURCES" sections below.

Artist Fee:

Selected musicians will receive a total of up to \$1,000 artist fee for both the commission and performances: \$500 commission upon completion of all Milestones (see Schedule below), and a \$500 maximum project budget for the two (2) performances.



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Schedule

March 13–23	Selected artists informed
April 13–20	Deadline for Milestone 1: Meet with assigned sensei
May 18	Deadline for Milestone 2: First draft (50% completion)
June 8	Deadline for Milestone 3: Final draft (100% completion)
June–July	Rehearsals
July TBD	Performance at JACCC
July–August	Additional rehearsals, if needed
August 11	Performance at Blue Whale Jazz Club
August 31	Deadline for Milestone 4: Debrief with sensei



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APPLICATION

Required Materials

1. Artist Information (DOC or PDF)
2. Work Samples, 2–5 links or file uploads (MP3, MP4)
3. Artist Statements (DOC or PDF)
4. Proposal Draft (DOC or PDF)

1. Artist Information (DOC or PDF)

- Name
- Mailing address
- Email address
- Phone number
- Website (optional)

2. Work Samples

Please submit 2–5 samples of your musical work (audio or video) via file uploader/transfer or links.. Any samples longer than 2 minutes, please add a note to cue times for listening (e.g. 0:15–2:10). Applicants will not be judged by the quality of the recordings.

3. Artist Statements (DOC or PDF)

1. Artist Statement (200 words/1000 characters max): Please describe your music or musical practice, including the following:
 - a. What kind of music do you make and *why*?
 - b. What instrument(s) do you work with?
 - c. How long have you been writing and performing music?
 - d. How did you learn to make music (school, mentorship, self-taught, etc.)?
2. Statement of intent: Why are you interested in Nikkei music? What do you hope to gain from participating in this project? What will you contribute to it? (200 words max)
3. Little Tokyo Statement: Please describe your connection to Little Tokyo and any specific experiences in Little Tokyo which might inform your work. (200 words max)
4. Commission Description: How would your music represent the people, places and practices of Little Tokyo? How would your music represent the past, present and future of First Street North? (500 words max)
5. Performance Description: What instruments would you like to include in your final performance? Do you plan to include any props, costumes, or other effects? (100 word max)



LITTLE TOKYO HISTORY

Little Tokyo is a 136-year old Japanese American community and the second oldest neighborhood in Los Angeles. It is one of three remaining historic, recognized Japantowns left in the nation, and one of fourteen of the inaugural CA Cultural Districts. Little Tokyo formed because of racial covenants and redlining, and was one of the few places in Los Angeles where Japanese Americans could live and own property and businesses. Yet the neighborhood grew to become the home to Southern California Japanese and Japanese American community, culture, businesses, food, and spiritual institutions.

At 150 acres, Little Tokyo is one-quarter the size it was historically. Three waves of redevelopment and displacement have reshaped the community: the forced incarceration of people of Japanese descent during WWII from 1942-46; the Civic Center expansion and loss of an entire block through eminent domain from 1952-53; and mass evictions and redevelopment by the Community Redevelopment Agency and Japanese investors in the 1970-80s. While Little Tokyo has been shaped by various outside forces, it also has a long history of community organizing for self-determination: labor and housing rights organizing, the Redress Movement for WWII reparations, the creation of Little Tokyo Service Center for culturally-specific social services and low-income housing, and more.

Little Tokyo has historically been and continues to be the center for Japanese American culture, art, history, food, and spiritual institutions in Southern California, as well as a hub for the greater Asian Pacific Islander communities. We also acknowledge and celebrate our history as a multi-ethnic, multi-generational neighborhood, with strong ties to Latino/Chicano and African American communities. As the community faces cultural, economic, and environmental changes with the Metro Regional Connector, the Metro West Santa Ana Branch, and the new Civic Center expansion, Little Tokyo is continuing decades of community work to sustain its history and culture as a home for the Japanese American community.

For more information, see:

- Little Tokyo Historical Society, *Los Angeles' Little Tokyo* (South Carolina: Arcadia Publisher, 2010)
- Kelly Simpson, "Three Waves of Little Tokyo Redevelopment," *KCET Departures*, July 31, 2012, <https://www.kcet.org/shows/departures/three-waves-of-little-tokyo-redevelopment>.

For more information on First Street North, see:

- Kenji Liu, "Fate of Little Tokyo's First Street North to Be Determined This Year," *Rafu Shimpo*, March 4, 2019, www.rafu.com/2019/03/fate-of-little-tokyos-first-street-north-to-be-determined-this-year/.
- www.sustainablelittletokyo.org/fsn



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RESOURCES

Community and Culture

Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation

revpeterhata@gmail.com

The Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation is comprised of eight temples with the common goal of sharing the timeless teachings of the Buddha. The mission has its roots in the history of the Japanese American community of Southern California. At the beginning of the 20th century, large numbers of Japanese immigrants began to settle in the Los Angeles area and Buddhist temples were built to serve the spiritual needs of the community. The first Buddhist temple was founded in 1904 in present-day Little Tokyo, and many others followed. Though the temples were often of various denominations, they joined together every year to hold joint Hanamatsuri services (the "flower festival" which celebrates the Buddha's birthday on April 8) and Bodhi Day services ("enlightenment" day which celebrates the Buddha's awakening on December 8). This twice-a-year cooperative effort was the foundation for the present Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation. In 1966, the Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation was incorporated as a non-profit religious organization under the laws of the State of California.

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center

www.jaccc.org | info@jaccc.org | (213) 628-2725

Founded in 1971, Japanese American Cultural & Community Center is one of the largest ethnic arts and cultural centers of its kind in the United States. A hub for Japanese and Japanese American arts and culture and a community gathering place for the diverse voices it inspires – Japanese American Cultural & Community Center connects traditional and contemporary; community participants and creative professionals; Southern California and the world beyond.

Little Tokyo Community Council

www.littletokyola.org | info@littletokyola.org | (213) 293-5822

The Little Tokyo Community Council is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) with membership representing the business, residential, organizational, and religious stakeholders in Little Tokyo as well as other vested interests. LTCC advocates on behalf of the Little Tokyo community, and provides an inclusive space for a broad range of stakeholders where key community issues can be discussed and the community can speak forcefully with one voice to affect positive change for Little Tokyo.

Little Tokyo Service Center

<http://www.ltsc.org> | communications@ltsc.org | (213) 473-3030

LTSC CDC collaborates with other nonprofit, community-based organizations to help them build multifamily affordable housing projects that serve their communities, and increase the capacity of the organizations to engage in broad neighborhood-based community building work including affordable housing.

Sustainable Little Tokyo

www.sustainablelittletokyo.org | sustainable@littletokyola.org | 213-268-2727 ext.107

Sustainable Little Tokyo is a community initiative that envisions a healthy, prosperous Little Tokyo that maintains



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its historic and cultural roots for future generations. Its mission is to develop a dynamic community-driven future for Little Tokyo through green initiatives, small business development, and cultural and arts programming that perpetuates its historic character for generations to come.

Visual Communications

www.vconline.org | info@vconline.org | 213-680-4462

Visual Communications' mission is to develop and support the voices of Asian American and Pacific Islander filmmakers and media artists who empower communities and challenge perspectives. Visual Communications (VC) is the first non-profit organization in the nation dedicated to the honest and accurate portrayals of the Asian Pacific American peoples, communities, and heritage through the media arts. VC was created with the understanding that media and the arts are important vehicles to organize and empower communities, build connections between peoples and generations through the development of AAPI film, video, and media. The organization has created award-winning productions, nurtured and given voice to our youth and seniors, promoted new artistic talent, presented new cinema, and preserved our visual history.

Small Business and Property

Little Tokyo Business Association

<http://www.visitlittletokyo.com/> | (213) 880-6875

Founded in 1959, the Little Tokyo Business Association (LTBA) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization dedicated to the growth and development of Little Tokyo as a vibrant, diverse and multi-faceted district of Downtown Los Angeles

(Also Little Tokyo Service Center)

History

Little Tokyo Historical Society

<http://www.littletokyohs.org/> | littletokyohs@gmail.com

The Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS) focuses on researching and discovering the historical resources, stories, and connections of sites, buildings, and events related to Little Tokyo as an ethnic heritage neighborhood. LTHS is committed to documenting and verifying history of locales, sites, and buildings, as well as preserving and sharing the history and personal stories of Little Tokyo and its residents.

Japanese American National Museum

<http://www.janm.org> | info@janm.org | (213) 625.0414

The Japanese American National Museum is the largest museum in the United States dedicated to sharing the experience of Americans of Japanese ancestry. The mission of the Japanese American National Museum is to promote understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Japanese American experience.

Go For Broke National Education Center



<http://www.goforbroke.org/> | info@goforbroke.org | (310) 328-0907

Go For Broke's mission is to educate and inspire character and equality through the virtue and valor of our World War II American veterans of Japanese ancestry. Founded in 1989, GFB built the Go For Broke Monument in 1999 and the National Education Center in 2016—both located in Little Tokyo. GFB has trained over 3,000 teachers, collected more than 1,180 oral history interviews, and opened a one-of-a-kind history exhibition. And much more.