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# Orgues

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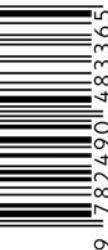
## NOUVELLES

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A JOURNEY TO  
**JAPAN**

ORGANS  
ORGAN BUILDING  
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Organ class at the Conservatory of Poitiers

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Thursday 16 July / 7 p.m.

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Thursday 23 July / 7 p.m.

Michel BOURCIER

Thursday 30 July / 7 p.m.

Véronique LE GUEN

Thursday 6 August / 7 p.m.

Nathan LAUBE

Thursday 13 August / 7 p.m.

Louis ALIX, harpsichord and organ

Thursday 20 August / 7 p.m.

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Thursday 27 August / 7 p.m.

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## Yes, the wheel keeps turning!

After four years of dedicated service to the association, Michel Alabau has decided to step down as president so that he can devote himself more fully to one of his passions: video production. We would like to thank him warmly for the years he has spent with us and for his constant commitment, which has kept the magazine on a solid footing.

Where there is a 'departure', there is an 'arrival'... And it is with immense joy that we can now recruit Benjamin François, well known in the music world for his long-standing involvement with Radio France's music programmes. Whilst he is a radio producer and presenter (notably for programmes such as *Le Jardin des critiques*, *Sacrées Musiques*, and the unforgettable *Organo Pleno* on 'France Musique'), Benjamin François is also a passionate organist. His experience, charisma, dynamism, and enthusiasm mark a new beginning in this collective venture. The whole team is delighted by this generous collaboration, which will undoubtedly breathe new life into the future of our journal. This reshuffle provides an opportunity to introduce you to the team members who work with consistency and dedication to bring you a new issue every quarter.

The news section is courtesy of Michel Roubinet (Infos en Montre) and Pierre Méa (Swell Box); the CD and website management courtesy of Michel Trémoulhac; and the various communications with you all and the advertisements courtesy of Rémy Fombon.

An important role in any magazine, often as discreet as it is indispensable: proofreading. This is handled by Jean-Paul Pirard and Thierry Croisat, who hunt down the slightest error - be it grammatical, typographical, or even, at times, of content - with feverish zeal. Another essential link: the graphic design, carried out with care by the talented Thierry Dubreil.

All this, of course, without forgetting the members of the association, whose countless daily efforts make the production of each issue possible; in particular A nne-Françoise Brenton (who is specifically responsible for the English version), Viviane Loriaut, and Uriel Valadeau.

Without this wonderful team, the journal could not exist.

And it is thanks to these combined skills that we can now take you to Japan, on a journey guided by the expert pen of Jean-Philippe Merckaert. A change of scenery guaranteed!

Happy exploring and have a great summer, everyone!



Benjamin François.

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PASCAL ROUET  
Managing Editor



# A JOURNEY TO JAPAN

# 日本へ

ISSUE EDITED BY  
JEAN-PHILIPPE  
MERCKAERT

Japan has developed a unique relationship with cultures from around the world, straddling tradition and modernity. Introduced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Western music was adopted remarkably quickly and rigorously, flourishing in educational institutions and concert halls.

In barely a century, the archipelago became one of the organ's primary homes.

The journey from the first instruments arriving from Europe and America to the emergence of an entire organ movement in Japan has been a long one. The challenge now is to ensure the organ's enduring presence. Japan is forging its own organ-playing tradition and enshrining the instrument in a history that is now its own.



# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGAN IN JAPAN

In modern Japanese, the ‘organ’ is written オルガン, which can be romanised as *orugan*<sup>1</sup>. More often, however, the term パイプオルガン (*paipu orugan*) is used to distinguish the pipe organ from the reed organ (harmonium). This hybrid term almost single-handedly tells the story of the organ in Japan.

Firstly, the choice of the *katakana* writing system<sup>2</sup>, out of the two syllabaries of the Japanese language, indicates the likelihood of linguistic borrowing. Secondly, whilst the English word ‘pipe’ is clearly recognisable, the second part is not based on ‘organ’ - which would have yielded オーガン (*ōgan*), a spelling occasionally used between 1910 and 1930 - but on the Portuguese ‘*orgão*’. Thus, the simple lexical composition パイプオルガン encapsulates the story of the organ’s introduction to Japan, in two stages.

## First introduction

Upon landing in Kagoshima (in the south of the country) in 1543, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to come into contact with the Japanese. Alongside the development of trade relations, Jesuit missionaries (led by Saint Francis Xavier) introduced the Catholic faith. Portuguese then became, after Chinese, the main source of foreign loanwords in the Japanese language, prior to the period of isolation.

In 1579, the Italian Jesuit Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) arrived in Japan as a missionary visitor to the Province of India (which at that time also encompassed China and Japan). He brought two organs from Goa, likely small portable instruments with one or two stops, which were greatly admired. The following year, he celebrated Mass *com órgãos* (‘with organs’) in the private chapel of the *daimyō*<sup>3</sup> Ōtomo Sōrin, a fervent supporter of the Christians. He also installed an organ at the seminary he founded in Azuchi, near Kyoto; and there are other recorded instances where their sounds had a strong effect on the population.

1. Pronunciation: *orugan*/ (International Phonetic Alphabet).  
 2. The Japanese language uses two main sets of characters: *kanji* (characters of Chinese origin) and *kana* (derived from *kanji*). The latter are divided into two syllabic scripts with codified usage: *hiragana* and *katakana*. *Katakana* is used in particular to transcribe words of foreign origin.  
 3. A provincial governor, from the military class.



JEAN-PHILIPPE MERCKAERT

Jean-Philippe Merckaert began his musical studies in Mons, Belgium, before continuing his training with Jean-Philippe Fetzer in Nancy and at the CNSMD in Paris, where he studied with Michel Bouvard and Olivier Latry and was awarded a postgraduate diploma in 2005. He also graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Mons (composition) and the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels (organ). During the 2003–04 season, he was the Kitara Concert Hall’s organist-in-residence in Sapporo. He has been based in Tokyo since 2007 and is currently the organist at both the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre and the Nasunogahara Harmony Hall. He recently served as artistic advisor for the construction of the new organ at the Kirishima Concert Hall in Kagoshima.



Four young ambassadors, accompanied by their tutor and interpreter Diogo de Mesquita, in 1586.

## THE TENSHŌ EMBASSY

To provide Rome with evidence of the success of the Jesuit mission in Japan, Valignano sent four young converted samurai, aged between twelve and fourteen, to Europe. Many fascinating details of their expedition have been preserved in contemporary sources. Setting out from Nagasaki on 20 February 1582, the delegation undertook a long journey via Macao and India, then rounded the tip of Africa before reaching Lisbon on 11 August 1584. From there, they were taken to Évora, where two of them were able to play the cathedral’s new organ. Continuing their journey through Spain, they entered Italy and visited Venice, where Giovanni Gabrieli played for them. At the Vatican, they had an audience with the ailing Pope Gregory XIII, then witnessed the installation of his successor, Sixtus V. In April 1586, they left Lisbon and did not return to their point of departure until four years later, after many vicissitudes.

Subsequently, further organs arrived from Europe and spread throughout the west of the country. Around 1600, several large instruments were made locally using bamboo pipes; contemporary sources indicate that their sound was comparable to, or even superior to, that of tin instruments.

The persecution of Christians began in 1587 and gradually intensified, with the first executions taking place in Nagasaki in 1597. When Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) founded the Edo shogunate<sup>4</sup>, policy hardened further, culminating in the ban on Christianity in 1614, followed by *sakoku*<sup>5</sup> (‘the closing of the country’). All missionary institutions were then abolished, organs destroyed, and sheet music burned. Thus, in Japan, Western music disappeared

4. During the Edo period (1600–1868), Japan was ruled by a dynasty of *shōguns* (‘generals’). *Edo* (‘river gate’) is the former name of *Tokyo* (‘Eastern capital’), which the shogunate had chosen as its seat of power, whilst the emperor was merely the *de jure* ruler and remained in *Kyoto* (‘capital city’).  
 5. *Sakoku* was a policy of isolationism introduced in Japan in 1639, which strictly limited trade and diplomatic relations. It was broken by the arrival of four American warships in Edo Bay on 8 July 1853. They demonstrated the power of their cannons and demanded that Japan open trade relations with the United States.



## The Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre

LEFT: The historicist façade.

RIGHT: The modern façade.



### ON73 Playlist

- S. van Soldt, *Almande de amour*
  - F. Couperin, *Dialogue sur les Grands jeux (Messe pour les Paroisses)*
  - E. Gigout, *Toccata*
- E. Garnier (Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre)

Opened in October 1990, the *Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre (Tōkyō Geijutsu Gekijō*, colloquially known as *Geigeki*) is the largest cultural complex in the Japanese capital. Designed and funded by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, its mission is to promote culture and the arts to the local public, whilst fostering international exchange.

The building comprises several halls with distinct functions: a large auditorium with 1,999 seats dedicated to classical music and equipped with a pipe organ, a medium-sized hall with 834 seats dedicated to theatre and dance, two smaller halls, as well as four exhibition spaces, meeting rooms, and rehearsal studios.

In 2009, the director Hideki Noda was appointed as the first artistic director; since 2026, this role has been held by Toshiki Okada for the performing arts, and by the conductor Kazuki Yamada<sup>1</sup> for the musical arts. The theatre is managed by the *Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture*.

### The organ: origins and design

The organ at the *Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre* is world-renowned for its rotating mechanism, which allows three instruments to be presented

1. He is currently Artistic and Musical Director of the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director of the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

to the audience across two façades, covering four musical styles: a Renaissance-style organ (III/P, 26 stops; Netherlands, early 17<sup>th</sup> century; A = 467 Hz, mean-tone temperament); a Baroque organ (III/P, 37 stops; Central Germany, 18<sup>th</sup> century; A = 415 Hz, Baroque temperament); a modern French-inspired, classical and symphonic organ (V/P, 63 stops; A = 442 Hz, tuning close to equal temperament).

This system, which is utterly unique, offers performers a vast palette of timbres, which come as close as possible to the corresponding historical instruments.

In September 1986, a committee of six experts was formed to define the instrument's overall concept. This document set out three key principles: the organ must possess a musical character worthy of a major public concert hall; it must be capable of doing justice to the entire repertoire, across all eras and traditions, whilst remaining open to contemporary composition; and its visual aesthetics must blend harmoniously with the hall's architecture.

Several proposals were considered, and the choice ultimately fell on the French workshop of Marc Garnier, whose design took into account Japan's specific cultural context and met the requirements set out.

### A rich and continuous musical life

Completed in May 1991, the *Geigeki* organ has welcomed many internationally renowned organists, including Marie-Claire Alain, Gustav Leonhardt, Ton Koopman, Edgar Krapp, Michel Chapuis, Olivier Latry, and Thierry Escaich.

Keen to make organ music accessible to as many people as possible, the institution organises regular concerts. Under the impetus of organist Hideyuki Kobayashi (titular organist from 1995, and now artistic advisor), the *Lunch Time* concerts (around six events a year) were launched in 2000, followed by lectures on the organ's workings and history in 2004.

During the theatre's complete renovation in 2011, the instrument underwent a major restoration, which took nearly two years. Since the reopening, a series of *Night Time* concerts has complemented the musical programme, alongside major recitals and occasional concerts (Christmas, etc.).

The programme highlights the distinctive features of the three instruments, focusing on works from the repertoire, but also through the regular commissioning of new compositions. Through these initiatives, the *Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre* plays a major role in the development and promotion of organ culture in Japan.

Even during times of crisis, notably following the 2011 earthquake and during the 2020 pandemic, organ concerts were among the first to resume, reflecting the symbolic importance of this instrument for the institution and its audience.

Since 2023, Megumi Tokuoka and Jean-Philippe Merckaert have been the theatre's organists-in-residence and are continuing this momentum through new artistic projects. ●

Maya Somiya 曾宮麻矢



### MAYA SOMIYA

Following her initial experience at the Saitama Arts Theatre, Maya Sōmiya joined the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, where she is now responsible for programming, musical production, and organ-related activities. She is committed to promoting this instrument to an ever-wider audience and to developing nationwide collaborations with organists.



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Vue du mont Fuji depuis les vergers de Shirane.



**YASUKO HIRAI**

Yasuko Hirai is a graduate of the Tokyo University of the Arts. She served as assistant organist at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre from 1995 to 2023, teaches at the *Maison Saint-Grégoire*, and has been organist at the *Tōgen Bunka Kaikan* since 1994.

# The Aubertin organ in Shirane and its summer academy

About a two-hour drive from Tokyo, the town of Shirane (which has just under 20,000 inhabitants), now a part of the Minami-Alps<sup>1</sup>, lies at the heart of a landscape of orchards (cherry, peach, and vineyards), dominated by the majestic silhouette of Mount Fuji. It was in this peaceful setting, renowned for its grape and wine production, that a grand organ by the Bernard Aubertin workshop was installed in 1993.

The conditions set by the organ builder were relatively simple: a space with sufficient height and depth. For its part, the local council had formulated its expectations in rather broad terms: *'an exceptional organ, the best in the world'*.<sup>1</sup> The organ in the concert hall of the *Tōgen Bunka Kaikan*<sup>2</sup>, with a capacity of around 700 seats and a reverberation time of three seconds when empty, was completed in 1993 and inaugurated shortly afterwards by Michel Chapuis. Designed in a classical style, using materials and craftsmanship from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, it features 48 stops distributed across three manuals and a pedalboard. Its case, made entirely of oak, is very beautiful. In terms of sound, each tone is remarkably distinct; the attacks are clear and precise, and one cannot help but be captivated by the brilliance of the French reeds. The composition is partly inspired by the stop combinations described by Marin Mersenne<sup>3</sup>.

Following this concert, Michel Chapuis accepted the title of Honorary Director of the *Tōgen Bunka Kaikan*, thereby cementing his lasting connection with Shirane.

1. Literally 'Southern Alps'. Founded in 2003 through the merger of six municipalities, it is now, with a population of around 70,000, the third-largest city in Yamanashi Prefecture.

2. *Tōgen* refers to the *Tōgenkyō*, an idyllic utopia derived from the Chinese tale *The Peach Blossom Spring* by Tao Yuanming (c. 365–427). The original expression *Buryō Tōgen* refers to this mythical place, which is timeless and in harmony with nature.

3. Marin Mersenne (1588–1648) was a French monk of the Order of Minims, a scholar, physicist, mathematician, musicologist, and philosopher.

## A cultural and educational initiative

From the outset, the local council launched a series of initiatives centred on this instrument, activities which continued after the 2003 local government reorganisation: every year, second-year secondary school pupils from the town are invited to visit the hall. They learn about the history of the organ, how it works, and view documents and films made during its installation, before attending a 30-minute concert. This activity, which has been running continuously since 1994, has reached an entire generation: all residents of Shirane born after 1980 have thus been able to attend these educational sessions. In a region where Christianity has little presence and opportunities to hear an organ are rare, this experience holds particular cultural significance. Every year, as Christmas approaches, a concert is organised featuring a renowned organist and one or more musical partners. Although only one such event is held annually, its promotion is prepared with meticulous care, and the hall is almost always full. The success is such that a coach is chartered from Tokyo to bring music lovers especially for the occasion.

## A training programme for young organists

The concert hall also offers a training programme for ten students, selected by audition. They have regular access to the instrument and receive individual lessons from Yasuko Hirai, the organist

in residence. The maximum duration of the programme is four years, and dropouts are rare.

Four places are specifically reserved for a *junior* category (from primary school to sixth form). Recently, one of these young musicians, who began in Year 6, joined the organ department at Tokyo University of the Arts and plans to continue her studies in France later on.

## The Shirane Summer Academies

As per the initiative of the local council, a summer course was established centred on the figure of Michel Chapuis. The aim was ambitious: to make this small provincial town a centre for the promotion and dissemination, on a national scale, of French classical organ music, through in-depth theoretical and practical study.

Each year, ten active students and fifty auditors were officially admitted, but applications often exceeded seventy. Including the organisers and day visitors, there were sometimes nearly a hundred people present, to the point where the town's only hotel (which accommodated them) was quickly filled to capacity. The Japanese translation was provided by Hisao Mabuchi, while the physicist and organ builder Toshiyuki Mitsuhashi gave supplementary lectures that were particularly well received. The administrative organisation was coordinated by Yoshiko Ueda, a pioneer in Japan in the rediscovery of North German organ music thanks to the work of Harald Vogel. This gathering of experts

# The Garnier Family: Two Generations of Organ Builders in Japan



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Boris, Matthieu and Marc Garnier.

Having lived in Japan for many years with two of his sons, [Matthieu and Boris](#), [Marc Garnier](#) has built instruments there ranging from positive organs to large concert organs. Here, he looks back on his career and the circumstances that led him to settle in the archipelago.

**First, could you tell us about your training and your early days in organ building?**

MARC GARNIER: Coming from Alsatian families, I was born in Belfort after the Second World War. My first steps into music were with the accordion at the age of seven. When I started at technical college, I had the chance to study many practical subjects (carpentry, mechanics, metalwork, artistic, and industrial design), whilst developing a passion for electricity and electronics.

It was then that I met a classmate who was the organist at one of the city's major Catholic churches. Whenever possible, he and I - though I am Lutheran - would go inside that large electrically-powered instrument

to admire the superb wiring, the electromagnets, the valves, the swell boxes, and the pipes. He would accompany the hymns and I would improvise the entrance or communion music. In our spare time, we would cycle around the region, sometimes as far as Alsace, to admire the organs.

After our final apprenticeship exams, this friend left school and I continued my studies to become an electrical technician. After several months without contact, he told me he'd been hired by the Schwenkedel organ workshop in Strasbourg, which really captivated me. After some difficult negotiations with my father, I managed to get permission to follow the same path: at eighteen, I joined Schwenkedel as an apprentice.

Over the course of four years, I was involved in a wide range of tasks: designing consoles, building action mechanisms, and manufacturing mechanical parts; these were also my first field assignments as the assistant holding down certain notes during voicing. Very soon, I began building my first organ in a village in the Haut-Doubs, with the help of the parish priest.

Eager to see something different I then went to Northern Germany, where the instruments had made a strong impression on me, and secured a

position at the Beckerath firm in Hamburg. This allowed me to attend many services and discover the instruments in the surrounding villages. At the workshop, I worked on the electrical wiring of consoles, made 'Schnitger' style reeds, and took my first steps in voicing. I also helped with the maintenance and restoration of certain historic instruments. I am deeply grateful to my teacher, Rudolf von Beckerath, who gave me access to this rich tradition of Northern organ building.

**When did you decide to set up your own workshop?**

M.G.: First, I felt the need to reflect on all these experiences and put organ building on hold. I was then hired as a technician by the harpsichord maker Schütze in Heidelberg, an instrument whose music I have always loved. It was an interesting addition to my experience, and it was there that I met my future wife Elisabeth, a graduate in piano from the Sofia Conservatoire and in harpsichord from the Paris Conservatoire, who was doing an internship in the workshop. I finally set up my own business in the Haut-Doubs in 1972, and Elisabeth began playing the organ.

# Yasuko Uyama-Bouvard

## FROM JAPAN TO FRANCE



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A long-standing teacher of harpsichord, pianoforte and basso continuo at the Toulouse Regional National Conservatoire, Yasuko Uyama-Bouvard is the titular organist of the historic organ at the Church of Saint-Pierre-des-Chartreux. Here she talks about her studies in Japan, her early years in France, and her dual cultural background.

**Is it right that you are originally from Kyoto, the former imperial capital of Japan?**

YASUKO UYAMA-BOUVARD: Yes, I was born in Kyoto and grew up there until I finished secondary school. Next to my home was a large private school run by

Protestants. I only attended the nursery there, but I still remember there being a pipe organ in one of the rooms.

**Tell us about your early days in music.**

Y.B.: I started playing the piano at the age of four. My mother had studied the piano herself; the war put a stop to everything, but we had an upright piano at home. It was a German instrument, carved, with candelabrams, a bit old, but with a magnificent sound.

When I was about six or seven, I saw a film at the cinema about the *Vienna Boys' Choir*. I still remember the views of the cathedral, as well as the sound of the organ. I told my mother I'd like to play it, but for her, the piano was more important. So I put that idea aside for the time being.

**And when did you start playing the organ?**

Y.B.: At the end of secondary school, I was unfortunately unable to get into

the *Geidai* High School<sup>1</sup> to study piano. However, at *Dōshisha* High School in Kyoto, one of the teachers had studied the organ at Musashino University<sup>2</sup>. So I began working with him on the school's pedal harmonium.

I worked on August Reinhard's harmonium études and Julius Schneider's pedal études, for example; it was very much the German school. I would practise on the school's harmonium, and then, at home, we bought a *Kuroda Tone* electronic instrument<sup>3</sup>.

**So this teacher prepared you for the *Geidai* entrance exam?**

Y.B.: The tradition was to go and work with a university professor in the year before starting. So I took the *Shinkansen*<sup>4</sup> once a month to take private lessons in Tokyo with Mr Akimoto. Also, during the 1970 Osaka World Expo, my teacher from Kyoto was presenting a small organ with a few bamboo pipes<sup>5</sup>; I would sometimes go there to help him.

**Can you tell us about your years of study in Tokyo?**

Y.B.: I studied for three years in Mr Akimoto's class. In my fourth year, I asked to take lessons with Mr Hirono<sup>6</sup>, who had just returned from Germany and was then an assistant. At the time, he regularly played the new organ at *NHK Hall* and the students would assist him with the stop action. He was at the forefront of what was happening in Europe and very approachable. We were also asked to introduce the organ to children, or to play for about ten minutes as a prelude to major concerts.

1. The *Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku* University of the Arts operates three integrated levels of education: junior high school, senior high school, and university.

2. *Musashino Academia Musicae* is a private music university in Tokyo, founded in 1929.

3. The *Kuroda tone* was manufactured and sold in Japan between 1955 and 1985. Trained in electronics, Ichirō Kuroda earned a living after the Second World War by repairing radios and televisions. He was occasionally called upon to work on Hammond organs, which gave him the idea of manufacturing electronic organs, which were less expensive than imported ones.

4. Japanese high-speed train. Japan's (and the world's) first line, linking Tokyo to Osaka with a stop in Kyoto, was inaugurated for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.

5. Instrument on display in the Christianity Pavilion, produced in collaboration between *Nippon Gakki* (now *Yamaha Corporation*) and *Klais Orgelbau*. It is now housed in the *Mozart Hall* at Musashino University.

6. See his article on Japanese music, p. 40-41.

# Organ teaching at the Tokyo University of the Arts

Women in kimonos playing three free-reed instruments: harmonium (*fūkin*), mechanical organ (*shikōkin*) and accordion (*tefūkin*, lit. 'hand organ'). Illustration taken from *Tefūkin dokumanabi* (Self-Taught Accordion), by Arai Shōgorō, 1896.



## LEARNING THE ORGAN IN JAPAN

*Learning to play the organ in Japan varies greatly depending on geographical factors: whilst Tokyo now offers a wide range of courses, some prefectures have very few organs, or indeed none, accessible to the public. In this context, training opportunities are organised around several types of institutions.*

Some concert halls equipped with a large organ offer courses for amateurs. These initiatives play an important role in building a regular audience for concerts and sometimes inspire people to take up the instrument.

Furthermore, a few churches with organs organise lessons, usually on a private basis. However, access to these instruments generally remains more restricted than in Europe. As the funding of churches in Japan relies largely on their members, the use of the organ is frequently reserved for the congregation alone.

Some Christian secondary schools or universities also offer organ tuition to their students, often with a focus on liturgy.

However, this does not, in itself, constitute a comprehensive professional training.

Outside these institutional settings, basic training on the instrument often relies on private lessons, the availability of which depends on the local presence of qualified organists

Higher education in Japan is also facing significant demographic changes: the falling birth rate is leading to a decline in student numbers, directly affecting certain disciplines, including music. Several private universities that once boasted thriving organ classes and significant instruments on their campuses are now tending to develop more flexible training - short courses or non-degree programmes - in order to maintain activity and make the most of their instruments.

Within this landscape, the Tokyo University of the Arts now occupies a central position. It is home to the country's largest organ class in terms of student numbers and remains the main training centre for students aiming for a professional career.

The Tokyo music school was founded in 1887; in 1949, it merged with the school of fine art to form the Tokyo University of the Arts<sup>1</sup>, commonly known as *Geidai*. Its organ class dates back to the institution's origins.

Since 1879, a body under the Ministry of Education had been conducting research with a view to integrating music - primarily Western music - as a fully-fledged subject within the school curriculum. With the establishment of the Tokyo School of Music, the organ was introduced into the curriculum under the name *fūkin* (reed organ). Its teaching remained closely linked to school singing: the main objective was to accompany and perform the *Song-books for Primary Schools*<sup>2</sup>. Students were introduced to keyboard practice using methods such as the exercises by Ernst Felix Benda or the harmonium anthologies by Rudolf Bibl.

### The emergence of a teaching approach

The arrival of the Austrian teacher Rudolf Dittrich (1861–1919) marked a decisive turning point. Trained at the Vienna Conservatoire, he was sent to Japan on the recommendation of his director, and taught at the music school from 1888 to 1894.

Although he taught singing, violin, *fūkin* (organ), *yōkin* (piano) and harmony, his influence was felt most strongly in the organ field, where he introduced the study of the repertoire. The school

1. Tokyo University of the Arts, commonly known as *Geidai*.

2. The *Shōgaku shōka-shū* formed the basis of music education in the Meiji era (1868–1912).

# A Look at the Sapporo Organist Residency

À la mémoire de Yanis Dubois  
(1993-2026), 23<sup>e</sup> organiste résident<sup>1</sup>

The citizens of Sapporo chose the nickname 'Kitara' for their concert hall, a fusion of 'kita', meaning 'north', and the ancient instrument 'kithara', Apollo's lyre. A municipal institution both rooted in its local community as well as being open to the dissemination of a universal heritage, in which the organ has found a unique home. Every year, the *Sapporo Concert Hall Kitara* hosts an organist in residence recruited from the organ classes at the CNSMDs in Paris and Lyon, a scheme launched in late 1998 by Pascal Marsault. A look back at nearly 30 years of adventure and sharing: the second resident, Yves Lafargue, talks with Koji Iijima, from *Kitara's* management, and then with Fanny Cousseau and Luca Akaeda Santesson, the two latest recruits.

## « BOYS, BE AMBITIOUS ! »

**Completed in 1997, the Sapporo Concert Hall Kitara will soon celebrate its 30th anniversary. What makes it unique?**

KOJI IIJIMA: At the heart of a metropolis of two million inhabitants, *Kitara* is Hokkaido's largest concert hall. To begin with, we prioritise the experience: going to a concert is not merely about the time spent inside the hall. To reach us, visitors first walk through a large park.

**This pre-concert walk struck me. I wanted to evoke it in *Kitara fantasia*, a commission I received for the hall's 10th anniversary (see insert).**

K.I.: Yes, the walk is part of the ritual. Inside, the main hall (2,008 seats) and the smaller hall (453 seats) host over 300 events each year. The season covers a broad spectrum, from educational programmes – a key focus – to international recitals. The designers wanted an arena-style hall, with carefully engineered acoustics, but also clear and spacious circulation areas. The well-being of the users is part of the project. The availability of land in Hokkaido made this scale possible, something impossible in the major cities of central Japan.

1. Yanis passed away whilst this issue was being prepared. His passing is a terrible loss to the organ world. A tribute to him can be found in the news section of this issue.

**Where did the idea for the residence come from?**

K.I.: Let me take you back in time: in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hokkaido was a wild frontier. Its climate made traditional rice cultivation difficult. The government called upon American experts, notably Dr Clark<sup>2</sup>, whose influence on Japanese agriculture and education remains profound.

**His motto, 'Boys, be ambitious!', still symbolises the pioneering spirit that shaped the island.**

K.I.: In the same way, today we are visited by experts from Europe, the cradle of organ music, who engage with our audience.

**One could say it all began with the construction of the Daniel Kern organ, with Michel Chapuis as consultant, before continuing with the organist-in-residence programme. What role does the organ play in *Kitara's* image?**

K.I.: The organ case is a visual symbol of the hall. We regard this instrument as an asset for Sapporo: it reinforces its image as a city of culture. The resident organists give recitals, take part in both guided tours and educational concerts, and contribute to the musical life of the region.

2. William Smith Clark (1826–1886), a chemist, botanist, and zoologist, was notably involved in the founding of the Sapporo Agricultural College (1867), which later became Hokkaido University.

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UP: Main entrance to the *Kitara Concert Hall* in Sapporo.  
DOWN: Alfred Kern & Sons organ (1997) in the main hall.

松居直美

Naomi  
Matsui

“You must go...”

Since the early 1990s, Naomi Matsui has been a leading figure in the world of the Japanese organ. In addition to her work as a concert performer and lecturer at *Seitoku* University, she has worked for several concert halls across the country. Today, she is artistic advisor to the MUZA concert hall in Kawasaki and chair of the executive committee of the Musashino-Tokyo International Organ Competition.

#### How did your vocation as an organist come about?

NAOMI MATSUI: It all began at Higashi-Nakano Church in Tokyo, home to the second organ built by *Tsuji Organ*. There, I heard a sound coming down from the gallery that was completely new to me, and I asked myself: ‘*What on earth is that?*’.

#### What was your musical journey in Japan?

N.M.: At the time, the church was lending its premises to a Christian music school, and the pastor encouraged me to enrol. At the time, I was attending a private school covering all levels of education, with a system of internal progression to university that didn’t really appeal to me. As I had started playing the organ during services, I wanted to pursue it more seriously. The pastor then introduced me to Minoru Yoshida, whom he had known for a long time, and I enrolled at Kunitachi University<sup>1</sup>. At the time, there was hardly any information available and, of course, no internet. You didn’t really choose your own path; you followed the recommendations.

Mr Yoshida wanted to develop the class he had created. So he encouraged his students to study abroad and take part in competitions. For my part, I was hesitant: going abroad at my own expense with no guarantee of success seemed risky to me. So I decided to enter the national organ competition. It was a way of gauging where I stood: if I failed, I would give up. But I won first prize... That made the situation complicated, because my teacher became even more enthusiastic: “*You must go, you must go!*”

After refusing, I went through a period of uncertainty. I started doing odd jobs unrelated to music (I was a typist), but a concert by Hannes Kästner at ICU University changed everything. I had never seen such an imposing instrument before: until then, I had only known a small Bosch organ with a dozen stops. The ICU organ, with its three keyboards, 16’ manual stops and a very rich pedal section, opened the doors to the European world for

1. Kunitachi College of Music is a private conservatoire located approximately 40 km from central Tokyo.

me. So I went back to apologise to Mr Yoshida. He replied: “*Right, then go on.*”

#### So you continued your studies abroad?

N.M.: Of course, I had no contacts in Europe, and the idea of going to meet teachers didn’t come naturally to me. Above all, I wanted to experience the world of the organ first-hand. Mr Yoshida then directed me towards Zsigmond Szathmáry, in Freiburg (Germany). Although I left without a structured career plan and hadn’t chosen my teacher, looking back, it was a very important encounter. At that time, the profession of ‘concert organist’ didn’t yet exist in Japan, and concerts were rare. I had no idea what lay ahead of me.

#### How did your return go?

N.M.: Everything had changed here: Japan was in the midst of the economic bubble, and the opening of *Suntory Hall* in Tokyo in 1986 had transformed the musical landscape. This new type of venue, with its ‘vineyard-style layout’<sup>2</sup>, didn’t exist before. In the past, concert halls had a stage curtain. *Suntory Hall* was a luxurious venue, with red carpets and a grand hotel nearby where the audience could dine after the concert. And people wondered: ‘*But what on earth is that shiny instrument over there at the back?*’

For a few years, the craze was phenomenal: all you had to do was programme Saint-Saëns’s *Symphony with Organ*, even with a little-known orchestra, to fill the hall. People would sometimes travel from far and wide, simply to hear the organ. I was swept up in this wave without being prepared for it. Requests poured in, I found myself playing Saint-Saëns constantly, and I felt as though things were slipping out of my control. The media took an interest in me, and I even appeared in a magazine, which greatly annoyed Mr Yoshida!

That period was trying. The media attention, which is unusual for an organist, added a certain pressure. The programmes became repetitive and I eventually felt deeply exhausted, both

2. This term refers to a hall layout in which the stage is placed in the centre and the audience is arranged in tiers, inspired by the shape of vineyard terraces. This type of hall was strongly promoted by Herbert von Karajan.

# It was a revelation!

## Rencontre avec Munetaka Yokota

横田宗隆

**Munetaka Yokota** (born 1952) is a Japanese organ builder, best known for his involvement in the *Göteborg Organ Art Center (GOArt)* project. Since 2015, he has been based in the Kanagawa Prefecture, from where he oversees construction, restoration, and reconstruction projects across the country and abroad. This year, he is completing a large organ (III/P, 50 stops) in the style of Adam Gottlob Casparini, for the *Yamazaki Baking LLC Hall*<sup>1</sup> near Tokyo.



### How did you become interested in the organ?

Munetaka Yokota: As a child, whilst studying the piano, I learnt a few pieces by Bach. I immediately felt that this was the sort of music for me. But, upon discovering that Bach had never played the piano - perhaps only once or twice in Potsdam<sup>2</sup> - I began to take an interest in the harpsichord.

I was thirteen at the time and had just enough money to buy a record. In a shop near my home, I came across a recording of harpsichord concertos by Gustav Leonhardt. I listened to it every day for a whole year.

The following Christmas, with the money I'd saved, I went back to look for another volume in that collection, but the shopkeeper had none left. Determined not to leave empty-handed, I chose a record from the same series, *Das Alte Werk*, containing excerpts from *Clavier-Übung III*, performed by Fritz Heitmann on the Arp Schnitger organ at Charlottenburg Palace in Berlin<sup>3</sup>.

And voila, it was a revelation: the sound was extraordinary! I was deeply moved and immediately fell in love with the organ. In the booklet, one remark struck me deeply: 'Without such

instruments, Bach's music could not have existed.'

Adolescence is often a difficult time. I feel that Bach kept me on the right path. So I wanted, in one way or another, to be connected to the organ, even without playing it myself. In a sense, it all started with that record.

### How did you train as an organ builder?

M.Y: My family was in the world of finance, and it would have been natural to follow that path. But during my studies, I began to feel the urge to do something that truly suited me. As I had always loved designing and making things, the idea of becoming an organ builder gradually took hold.

In my third year at university, I visited Mr Tsuji. At first, he didn't take me seriously and advised me to go to Europe - to Flentrop, for example. He also warned me that it would take at least ten years to learn the trade. But seeing my determination, he finally agreed to train me, on condition, however, that I finished my studies.

To be honest, economics wasn't my thing at all. I mainly took the courses that interested me: philosophy, engineering, physics... But I still managed to graduate and so became an apprentice, on a very low wage, which didn't matter much.

My apprenticeship was an exceptional experience. Tsuji had a unique approach to organ building. It was also a pivotal time: the neo-baroque movement was beginning to run out of steam, and we were entering a post-neo-baroque period.

### Then you went to Europe?

M.Y: Around my third year of apprenticeship, I took part in the North German Academy, led by Harald Vogel. I also had the chance to visit many instruments in France and the Netherlands and realised that new organs didn't really interest me.

I then visited Jürgen Ahrend and told him straight out: "I'd like to work for you, but only on restorations." He replied: "Impossible!" I was, of course, very naive: restoration requires extensive experience and a comprehensive understanding of organ culture. It is generally entrusted only to a small team of specialists.

Harald Vogel then advised me to go and work for John Brombaugh in the United States. Brombaugh had studied early organs in depth and applied their techniques directly to his instruments, without seeking to develop a personal style.

I stayed there for five years and was mainly involved in pipe-making and voicing. For the meantone organ at the Oberlin Conservatory (Ohio), I built a regal which was very well received. Gustav Leonhardt, who came to see the organ, improvised at length in front of us and was very enthusiastic. I was very proud! After that, he became a sort of mentor to me.

Looking back, my training was based on two very different approaches: Tsuji was an organist, and he had a very intuitive admiration for the European tradition, with, ultimately, little documentation to back it up. Brombaugh, on the other hand, repre-

1. A Japanese food company specialising in the production of bread and bakery products. *LLC Hall* ('Life, Love & Culture') is a cultural complex dedicated to promoting the arts as part of its sponsorship activities.

2. It was in fact the pianoforte, the precursor to the modern piano.

3. The organ was built in 1706 (II/P, 26 stops), dismantled in 1943 and moved to the cellars of Berlin Palace, where it was destroyed during the bombing on 3 February 1945. The recording (78 rpm) dates from 1938 and is the only sound recording of this organ. It was converted to LP in 1955.

## Maison Saint-Grégoire, an institute of sacred music in Tokyo

Located approximately 24 kilometres north-west of central Tokyo, in the city of Higashikurume, *Maison Saint-Grégoire* was founded in 1979 by the German Franciscan friar Gereon Goldmann (Order of Friars Minor, 1916-2003) and by the church musician Veronika Chikako Hashimoto (1937-2024).

Noting the gradual decline of Gregorian chant, despite its status as a treasure of the Roman liturgy, Father Goldmann felt the need to establish an institute in Japan dedicated to the preservation of this heritage, as well as to the development of a musical repertoire suited to the local context. Founded forty-seven years ago, the *Maison Saint-Grégoire* is built on three pillars: liturgy, research, and teaching. Since then, it has played an essential role in the training of church musicians in Japan, and to date has produced around 180 graduates who serve in churches across the archipelago, across all Christian denominations.

In 2005, a partnership was established with the *Hochschule für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik* in Regensburg (Germany), thereby strengt-

### GEREON GOLDMAN IN JAPAN

Gereon Goldmann recounted in his autobiography, translated into seventeen languages (including French), the eventful life he led before his arrival in Japan: his conscription during the Second World War and his involvement in the German resistance to the Nazi regime, his captivity in Algeria, and his ordination to the priesthood in a prisoner-of-war camp, amongst other things. Sent as a missionary in 1954 by the Diocese of Fulda, he served for twenty-four years as rector of St Elizabeth's Parish in Tokyo.

hening the curriculum and the certification system. Students follow a three-year course centred on Gregorian chant, as well as classes in organ, singing, choral conducting, keyboard harmony, music history, and liturgy. They may then proceed to a specialised programme.

### An inspiring environment

The stone building invites contemplation and prayer. Surrounded by unspoilt nature, this site was once occupied by an Anglican monastery. The teaching facilities, comprising classrooms, dormitories and a music al library, are connected to the chapel by a cloister. Since its inception, the schola has sung the Gregorian chant of the day during Sunday Mass, and a Jürgen Ahrend organ was installed there in 1986.

### An instrument at the crossroad of cultures

In accordance with the builder's wishes, the ornamentation on the case illustrates the meeting of North German Baroque style and Japanese culture. To design this decorative ensemble, the sculptor Yasuomi Hashimoto drew inspiration from the *Hakuhō* (645-710) and *Tenpyō* (729-749) periods, corresponding to the first cultural contacts between Japan and the West, notably through the reliefs of the *Yakushi-ji* temple in Nara and the Phoenix Pavilion of the *Byōdō-in* temple in Uji (near Kyoto). The *Brustwerk* panels, inspired by the *tennyō* (celestial musicians) figures on the three-storey pagoda at *Yakushi-ji*, were created by the ceramicist Tamiko Hashimoto using the *yūsen shippō* (cloisonné enamel) technique on copper plates.



ST. GREGORY'S HOUSE

Although modest in size, this magnificent instrument occupies an important place in the Japanese organ landscape: it has hosted numerous foreign organists for recitals and masterclasses, and was notably used during the *Musashino-Tokyo International Organ Competition*.

### A welcome diversity

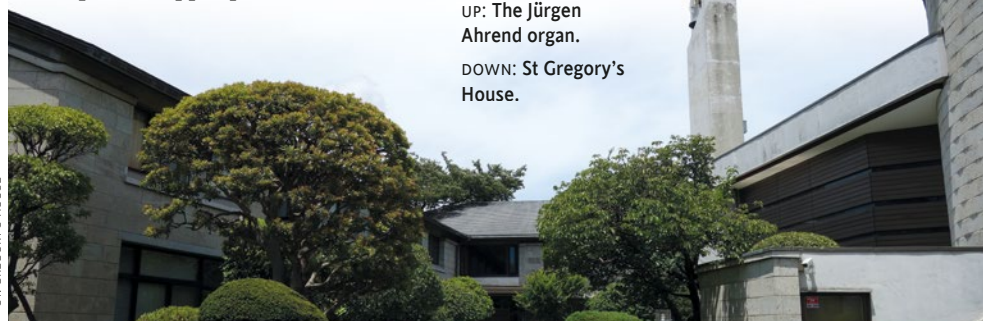
*Maison Saint-Grégoire* also has several practice organs, harpsichords, and harmoniums, which are used daily. In addition to the Church Music Department, a wide range of courses is offered for amateurs: piano, singing, harpsichord, basso continuo, etc. Choral music workshops, organ courses and lectures are organised on a regular basis and attract many participants.

It is with great pleasure that we introduce this small Japanese institute of sacred music, home to such a beautiful instrument. ●

Mamiko Iwasaki

岩崎真実子

UP: The Jürgen Ahrend organ.  
DOWN: St Gregory's House.



ST. GREGORY'S HOUSE



MAMIKO IWASAKI

Mamiko Iwasaki is a graduate of the Tokyo University of the Arts and the *New England Conservatory of Music* (Boston). She is currently director of the *Maison Saint-Grégoire* and president of the *Japan Association of Organists*.



### ON73 Playlist

Ψ. Kakinuma,  
*Das Glasperlenspiel*

- *Senza tempo*
- *Burlesca*
- *Canon a 3*
- *Moto perpetuo*

J.-P. Merckaert  
(St. G - Grégoire,  
Tokyo).



## 0073 Playlist

- T. Kondo, *Song of Flowers*  
M. Katsuyama (Musashino Civic Cultural Hall, Tokyo)
  - T. Hosokawa, *Cloudscape*  
J.-P. Merckaert (*Muza Kawasaki Symphony Hall*)
  - J.-P. Deleuze, *Quatre Haïku, Poetic Evocations*
  - *Surrounded by stars I'm isolated at sea, And the moon is mine.*
  - *A summer shower A sound falls, sudden and loud Above the forest.*
  - *Snow falls, luminous, Upon a mandarin duck. Stillness settles soft.*
  - *The sea is raging Over there, beyond Sado, Is the Milky Way.*  
M. Tokuoka (*Toyota City Concert Hall*)  
With nōkan improvisations by M. Takeichi
- Others**
- T. Kondo, *Variations on the theme 'Ah ! vous dirai-je maman'*
  - Prologue
  - Principaux
  - Flûtes
  - Gambes
  - Intermezzo
  - Anches
- H. Miura (*Yokohama Minato Mirai Hall*)

## Japanese organ music

After its invention by the Greek Ctesibius in antiquity, for nearly a thousand years the organ remained a secular instrument, intended for the entertainment of the elite. Medieval Europe gradually introduced it into churches, where it found a lasting home.

Nearly a millennium later, it reached Japan, where its development took a different direction: in a society where Christianity remains marginal, organ music became an art form intended primarily for concert halls.

The history of the organ and its repertoire is, in fact, inextricably linked to the cultural and geographical contexts in which the instrument developed. In Japan, the majority of works written for this instrument were not intended for churches or temples, but for concert halls – particularly from the 1970s onwards, with the construction of large auditoriums such as the new *NHK Hall*. Commissions from these institutions or competition organisers – such as the Musashino City Competition – have also encouraged the creation of new works.

### Educational context

From the founding of the Tokyo Music School in 1887, teaching relied heavily on European musicians, mainly from the German-speaking world. This influence continued into the next generation: Akatarō Shimazaki (1875–1933), for example, the first Japanese professor of the organ class from 1894, had continued his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory between 1902 and 1905. He composed, among other works, a short fugue that is rarely performed today.

The first Japanese person to study at the Paris Conservatoire was Tomojirō Ikenouchi (1906–1991), a pupil of Henri Büsser. On his return to Japan, he trained numerous composers in Tokyo, several of whom went on to study in France and were influenced by French aesthetics.

Composition for the organ in Japan is not, however, limited to this Franco-German lineage, and the various musical approaches of the 20<sup>th</sup> century permeated the Japanese world: works employing cluster techniques, graphic notation, or even languages specific to each composer thus emerged.

### Composition and legacy

In Europe, and particularly in France, the tradition of the composer-organist has endured since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In Japan, this type of musician remains extremely rare: the conditions necessary for regular contact with the instrument and daily exposure to its sound are difficult to achieve. Whilst the situation in Japan is therefore not as favourable as in Europe or North America for encouraging composition, it is also free from the weight of a centuries-old tradition. It is perhaps precisely in this situation that the possibility of a unique originality lies. The future will tell how this singularity might assert itself.

The CD features three Japanese works worth discovering, including the following listening tips:

### 山内忠「簫師の楽」 Tadashi Yamanouchi (1935–2000), *L'Art du shōshi pour grand orgue*

Born in Hyogo Prefecture, Tadashi Yamanouchi studied at the Tokyo University of the Arts, notably under Tomojirō Ikenouchi. Composed in 1981, *The Art of the Shōshi* was premiered at St Mary's Cathedral in Tokyo.

The *shō*, whose title refers to the performer (the *shōshi*), is a Japanese free-reed mouth organ consisting of seventeen slender bamboo pipes. It is traditionally used in *gagaku*, the ancient court music of Japan.

The *œuvre* opens with the delicate sound of a solitary flute. Gradually, the texture thickens and the music gains in intensity. After a powerful central section, the atmosphere gradually returns to its initial serenity. The piece ends with a flute sound, like an echo of the beginning.

### A GREAT DIVERSITY

*The published works for organ by Japanese composers bear witness to this diversity of situations and aesthetics. Notable examples include:*

- Minao Shibata (1916–1996)  
*Vinaya, Op. 55* (1977)
- Hifumi Shimoyama (1930–2023)  
*Kaicho*, for organ and 4 percussionists (1982)  
*Landscape* (1983)
- Tadashi Yamanouchi (1935–2000)  
*Six Poems for organ* (1972)  
*The Art of Shōshi for Grand Organ* (1981)
- Shin'ichirō Ikebe (b. 1943)  
*Dimorphism*, for organ and orchestra (1974)  
*Ricercata* (1988)
- Atsutada Otaka (1944–2021)  
*Essai* (1973)  
*Fantasy*, for organ and orchestra (1999)
- Jō Kondō (b. 1947)  
*Dance(s)* (1986)  
*Vox Humana* (1988)
- Takashi Sakai (1948–2019)  
*Sasurai, Op. 17* (1993)
- Akira Nishimura (1953–2023)  
*Meditation of Vishnu* (1985)  
*Prelude 'Vision in Flames'* (1996)
- Toshio Hosokawa (b. 1955)  
*Sen IV* (1990)  
*Cloudscape* (2000)
- Yui Kakinuma (b. 1960)  
*Lotus*, for mesotonic organ (2006)  
*Winds of Pilgrimage* (2010)
- Atsuhiko Gondai (b. 1965)  
*Litany, Op. 14* (1991)  
*Shangri-La* (200)



Guy Bovet at the Fisk organ in Minato Mirai Hall (Yokohama) in 2013.

“with a few exceptions, the organ is a recent and foreign phenomenon.”

none other than a copy of one of the two organs in Salamanca Cathedral, the original of which he had restored. He added a small expressive manual to the instrument, in which he did not dare to include swell reeds. Here we see the entire history of organ building in the country: it goes hand in hand with that of the performers: step by step.

A touching tale: in the early 2000s, a Swiss organ builder (Richard Nicole) fell in love with Japan. He learnt the language and built small instruments, which are played whilst sitting on the floor or on one’s knees, just as Japanese women do when playing the *koto*. Back home, he made around ten organs in the Vallée de Joux region. But they are normally played on a bench, rather than sitting on a milking stool, which has only one leg. ●

Guy Bovet ギ・ボヴェ

# The founding of an organ movement in Japan

The testimony of Guy Bovet



**ON73 Playlist**

G. Bovet, *Rêve aux cerises*  
M. Harada (*Maison St-Grégoire de Tokyo*)



**ON73 Scores**

G. Bovet, *Rêve aux cerises*

I could say that, in my lifetime, I have witnessed the birth of an organ movement in Japan. In reality, that is not entirely true, as there were, after all, a few female musicians who devoted themselves to our instrument quite early on: the most important is undoubtedly Yuko Hayashi, who had a distinguished career as a teacher in Boston; we might also mention Kei Koito, who taught at the Lausanne Conservatoire. Others followed; strangely enough, mostly women, but few or no male musicians (apart from Masaaki Suzuki, who is better known as a conductor specialising in Bach). All of them were trained in Europe: with a few exceptions, the organ is a recent and foreign phenomenon.

It is interesting to observe the evolution of a nation from the mid-20th century to the present day. A similar pattern could be observed a few decades earlier with the organ in the USA, starting from a school of English symphonic style, then the discovery of a Germanic genre in its two aspects – classical and Dutch ‘baroque’ – and fi-

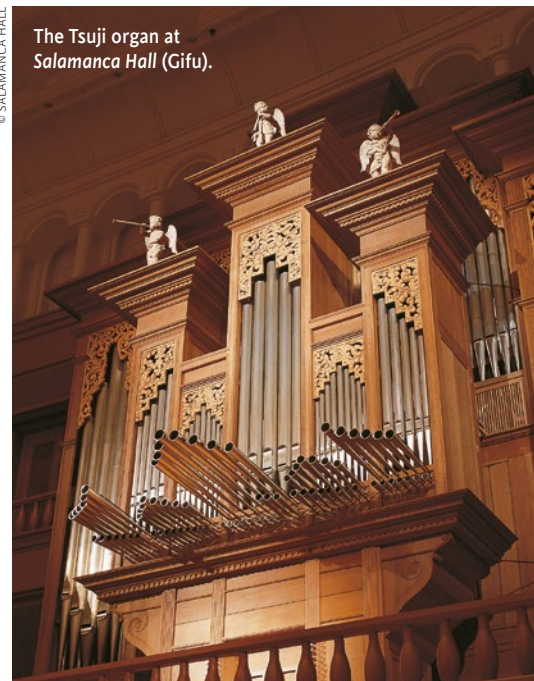
nally the conquest, with the arrival of French virtuosos, of a spectacular style that rejected all European influence after once adoring it. One could almost draw a parallel with current politics.

The evolution is even more profound among the Japanese, for it is not merely a matter of playing styles: it is far more fundamental and touches upon the entire mindset, way of thinking, civilisation, and language. Over the decades spent with students from Japan, I have seen first their explorations through imitation, then, after having listened to and experienced our music for years, the slow emergence of a cultural foundation that eventually gives them the means to invent musical creation for themselves.

There are many instruments: most come from the great organ builders of Europe or America and encompass every variety and every musical language. The most ardent ‘organ enthusiasts’ will be amazed by Marc Garnier’s double-sided organ at Tokyo Metropolitan Concert Hall, which contains three instruments in one, and rotates on its axis to perform early music, Romantic music, or modern music. The most important Japanese organ builder, Hiroshi Tsuji (1933–2005), drew inspiration from his many travels (and a restoration project) involving Italian and then Spanish organs. His most significant work (1994, *Salamanca Hall* in Gifu) combines a majestic German Great Organ with a separate Positive, which is

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The Tsuji organ at Salamanca Hall (Gifu).

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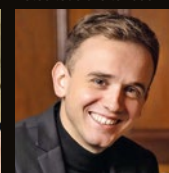
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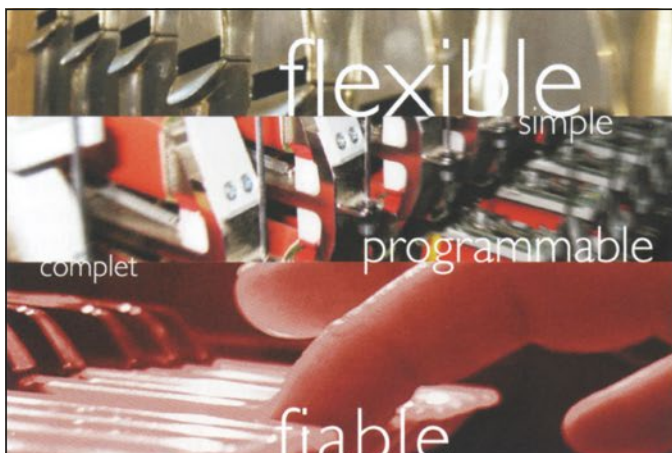
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By Michel Roubinet

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Due to the success of this section and the amount of work involved, *Orgues Nouvelles* is obliged to be selective. As the magazine relies on its subscribers and advertisers for survival, priority will be given to the latter.



You will find more detailed comments by Michel Roubinet on the "Sorties CD" page of our website.

## DISCS



• **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)**  
**Goldberg Variations BWV 988**  
Dirk Luijmes, Mustel harmonium (1878)

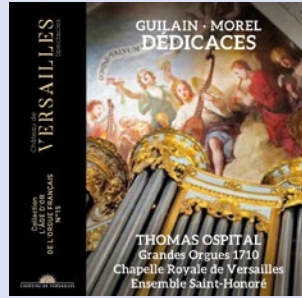
Whilst recordings of the *Goldberg Variations* are common on the harpsichord, piano, or organ, this version on a Mustel concert harmonium, equipped with every technical and expressive refinement (expression, double expression, percussion), is an absolute rarity. Dirk Luijmes brings out the richness of the cycle, foregoing reprises to enhance the overall structure, and refining each variation through the instrument's palette with subtle adjustments that adapt the work to the single keyboard. An original and poetic interpretation that invites listeners to rediscover a world-famous work.

• ENGLISH / DUTCH BOOKLET  
DURATION: 51' 35"  
CD ETCETERA KTC 1859, 2025

• **Jean Adam Guilain (c. 1680–fl. 1739)**  
**Organ pieces for the Magnificat (1)**  
**Jacques Morel (1680/1700–c. 1740)**  
**First Book of Pieces for the Viola da Gamba, excerpts (2)**

Thomas Ospital, Boisseau-Cattiaux organ (1995), chapel of the Palace of Versailles (1) Ensemble Saint-Honoré (2)

Continuing to explore the French repertoire at the Royal Chapel, *Château de Versailles Spectacles* juxtaposes the organ and the viola da gamba, which share certain musical forms, including bass



recitations (tierce, cromorne, trompette, archet). Guilain is complemented by the viola da gamba book by Jacques Morel, a fervent admirer of Marin Marais. Thomas Ospital demonstrates a keen sensitivity to the style, with both grandeur and vivacity, as well as rigour and freedom. *The Ensemble Saint-Honoré* offers an invigorating alternation, chamber music which echoes that of a chapel.

• BOOKLET IN FRENCH ENGLISH / GERMAN  
DURATION: 1H 18' 24"  
CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES CVS 148, 2025

• **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)**  
**The 18 Leipzig Chorales & Canonical Variations**

Martin Gester, Thomas organ (2023), Saint-Loup de Namur, Belgium

On an organ of captivating presence and clarity, Martin Gester presents the *Leipzig Chorales*, blending inspired energy, musical commitment and supreme mastery. The generously proclaimed chorales are met by the vivid illumination of the accompaniment parts, a balancing act at the crossroads of the vertical (harmonic) writing of the voices and the horizontal (melodic) line of the singing, with phrasing and breath tirelessly synergised.



The *Canonical Variations* are a confidently inspired and purposeful interpretation of shimmering clarity.

• FRENCH TEXT  
DURATION: 1H 32", 48' 46"  
PARATY 2025005, 2025



• **LAMENTO E TRIONFO**

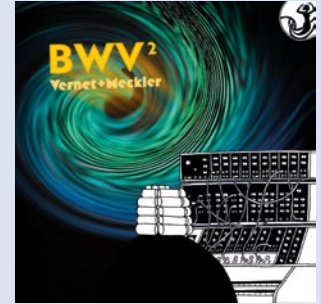
**Franz Liszt (1811–1886)**  
**Ad nos; Évocation; Weinen, Klagen; B.A.C.H.; Am Grabe**  
**Richard Wagner's**

**Richard Wagner (1813–1883)**  
**Preludes and excerpts: Meistersinger, Parsifal, Tristan and Isolde, Der fliegende Holländer**

Stéphane Mottoul, Geisler-Haas-Kuhn organ (1650–1862–1977/2001/2015), *Hofkirche*, Lucerne, Switzerland

A dual portrait: Liszt's organ works are complemented by Wagner's orchestral pieces, arranged by Edwin Lemare (1865–1934), a master of this genre, and Stéphane Mottoul, the outstanding performer on this magnificent album. At the Liszt-Wagner junction, the former's tribute to his son-in-law, who had passed away a few months earlier, concludes with the ringing of *Sennschellen* (or cowbells – a set of tubular bells): one of the surprises of this superb Kuhn organ (104 stops distributed across various locations). The organ and the performance rise to the challenge, offering a musical and sensory immersion of striking grandeur and poetry.

• ENGLISH / GERMAN TEXT  
DURATION: 1H 21' 52", 1H 06' 20"  
AEOLUS 2 CD/SACD AE-11481, 2025



• **Vernet-Meckler Duo**  
**BWV «squared»**  
**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)**

(Details of the works on the ON website)

Olivier Vernet and Cédric Meckler, 'virtual' and 'real' organs, synthesizers

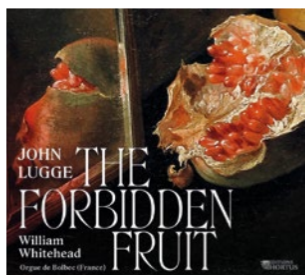
In keeping with his solo discography, Olivier Vernet has formed a highly original duo with Cédric Meckler since their Mozart and Mendelssohn recordings (2006–2007), followed by albums that reinvent the four-hand approach: *Pasión*, *BACH(s)*, transcriptions of Rameau, French symphonies... To celebrate their twentieth anniversary, the duo presents an 'expanded version' of Bach through an 'imaginary' dialogue between historic organs located in various places (the Netherlands, Germany), digitally sampled and controlled via digital consoles. Added to this is the presence of two synthesizers, stunning in their intensity and versatility. And it's well worth the journey!

• TEXT IN FRENCH / ENGLISH  
DURATION: 1H 19' 31"  
LIGIA DIGITAL CD LIGIA-R999, 2025 (DISTRIBUTED BY SOCADISC)

• **The Forbidden Fruit**  
**John Luge (1580-fl. 1647)**  
**Works for keyboard**

William Whitehead, on the Lesselier-Lefebvre-Cattiaux organ (1630–1730–1999) in Bolbec (Seine-Maritime)

Collections of the *Virginal Book* type have handed down to us many English (and Flemish) pieces from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, based on plainchant or free compositions. Whilst Byrd, Bull, Tomkins, and Gibbons are well documented (without being



the subjects of extensive discographies), John Lugge remained the less-researched contemporary. William Whitehead does justice to this organist of Exeter Cathedral with a complete collection of modest, but magnificent, scope (that which has been preserved or rediscovered) - a keyboard virtuoso who was inventive, inspired, and of vivid formal and poetic intensity. Contemporary with Lugge in its oldest parts, the Bolbec organ is the ideal vehicle for this learned and lively music, thanks to the grace of winged fingers. A truly beautiful discovery.

• ENGLISH / FRENCH TEXT  
DURATION: 45' 59"  
HORTUS 273, 2025

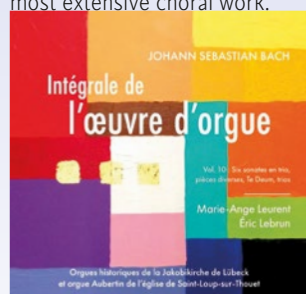
**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)**  
**Complete Works for Organ, Vol. X**

**Trio Sonatas & Trios**

(Details of the works on the ON website)

Marie-Ange Leurent and Éric Lebrun, Great Organ and Small Organ of the *Jakobikirche* in Lübeck, Germany; Organ of Saint-Loup-sur-Thouet, Deux-Sèvres

Preceded by *The Art of Fugue* for four hands, the complete Bach cycle undertaken in 2015 by Marie-Ange Leurent and Éric Lebrun draws to a magnificent close with the *Trio Sonatas* and the isolated *Trios*, supplemented (Aubertin de Saint-Loup) by rare pieces including the *Te Deum* BWV 725, the young Bach's most extensive choral work.



For the trio pieces, the historic organs of St James's Church in Lübeck were chosen. Following the example of the *Schübler* sonatas in Vol. 9, the musicians present a version with continuo: the organ is doubled, creating a dizzying *mise en abyme* of texts unfolding in an expanded perspective, with the harmonic enrichment counterpointing Bach's naturally intact text, in the spirit of the chamber sonata of the period. A bold culmination for a fresh listening experience, brimming with life, colour, and structural and instrumental richness.

• FRENCH BOOKLET  
DURATION: 57' 12", 1H 04' 15"  
2 CDS CHANTELOUP MUSIQUE  
CMCD80 1/2, 2025 (DISTRIBUTED BY SOCADISC)

**Maurice Duruflé (1902–1986)**

**Mass 'Cum jubilo' Op. 11**  
**Suite for organ, Op. 5**

Les Chantres de Paris  
Johann Vexo, Cavaillé-Coll organ (1880) at Saint-François-de-Sales, Lyon

A flexible ensemble of soloists forming a choir, *Les Chantres de Paris* have chosen for their first CD Maurice Duruflé's *Mass 'Cum*

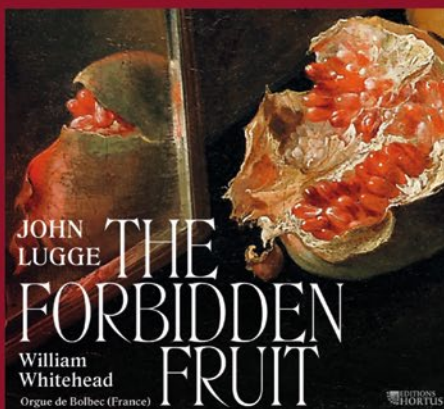


*jubilo'* (1966), set within an ideal Marian service punctuated by the three pieces of the *Suite*, Op. 5 (1932), an impressive and demanding masterpiece. With a singular dynamic presence, the five voices offer a passionate and determined approach, whether performing Duruflé or the rich, purely Gregorian sections that respond to him, whilst respecting a thoroughly researched and revitalised Gregorian chant. Johann Vexo demonstrates a fruitful mutual listening between the voices and offers a balanced version of Opus 5, as virtuosic as it is fully intelligible, with brilliantly channelled lyricism and energy.

• FRENCH / ENGLISH BOOKLET  
DURATION: 1H 03' 38"  
CD PSALMUS PSAL 050, 2025  
(DISTRIBUTED BY SOCADISC)

**HORTUS PRESENTS**

John LUGGE  
(1580- after 1647)  
**THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT**



Réf. Hortus 273

William Whitehead plays the Lesselier organ of St Michel, Bolbec (France)

A late-Elizabethan composer, writing in similar styles to Bull or Byrd, John Lugge may also have been a hidden Catholic.

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vendredi 5 juin 20h30

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Direction : Johanna Unterpertinger  
en partenariat avec le CNSMD de Lyon

« Un voyage à Venise en 1730 »

Œuvres de Antonio Vivaldi, Antonio Lotti,  
Domenico Scarlatti, Johann Adolph Hasse,  
Nicola Antonio Porpora

samedi 6 juin 20h30

François **MÉNISSIER**

« In stile francese »

Œuvres de Johann Sebastian Bach, André Raison,  
François Couperin, Nicolas de Grigny

dimanche 7 juin 17h00

ENSEMBLE **LES MESLANGES**

Direction : Thomas Van Essen & Volny Hostiou  
Orgue : Freddy Eichelberger

« Titelouze, Bournonville... »

Messes et motets du Siècle de Louis XIII »

Œuvres de Jehan Titelouze, Guillaume Bouzignac,  
Jean de Bournonville

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dimanche 20 septembre 17h00

Jean-Luc HO

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Johann Sebastian Bach

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dimanche 6 décembre 17h00

Camille FRITSCH voix

Daniela RIVERA CORREDOR voix

Tiago SIMAS FREIRE flûte à bec et cornet

Dorine LEPETIER-KOVACS violoncelle

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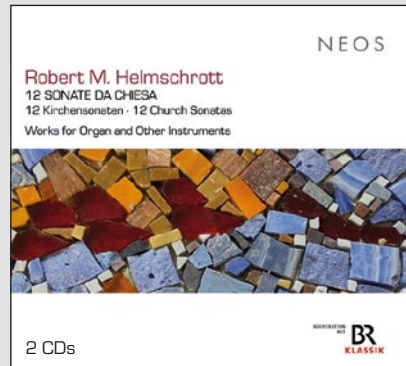


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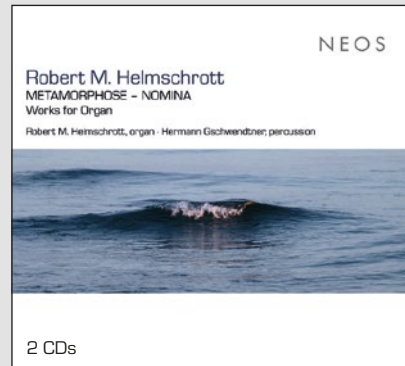
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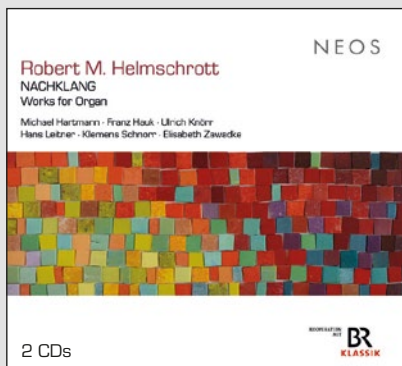
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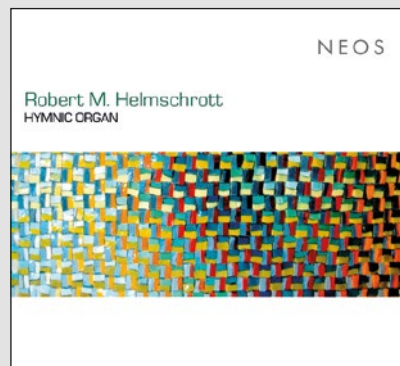
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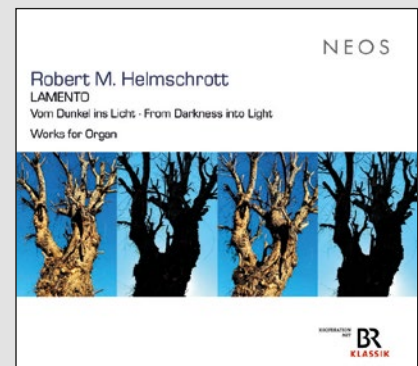
**Metamorphose** for organ and percussion  
**Nomina** Seven Works for Organ



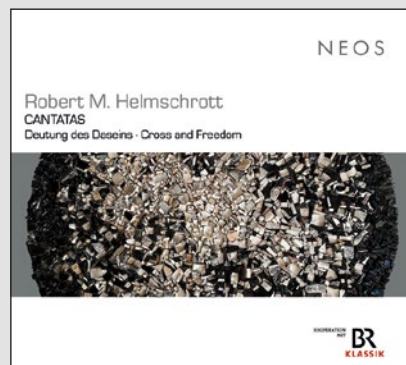
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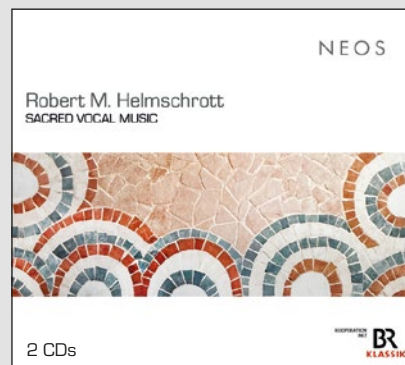
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for four positive organs  
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## Playlist CD 73

1. Manuscript by Susanne van Soldt  
**Almande de amour** 1'05  
(Renaissance organ)

2. François Couperin  
**Dialogue sur les Grands Jeux (Agnus  
Dei de la Messe pour les Paroisses)** 2'19

3. Eugène Gigout, **Toccata** 3'35  
(French organ)

performed by Élisabeth Garnier on the  
organ at the *Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre*

4. Johann Sebastian Bach, **Prelude  
and Fugue in C minor BWV 549** 5'28

performed by Élisabeth Garnier on the  
organ at *Tokyo University of the Arts (Geidai)*

5. Takeshi Kondo  
**Song of Flowers** **PREMIERE** 4'30

performed by Masayo Katsuyama  
on the organ at the *Musashino Civic Cultural  
Hall (Tokyo)*

Yui Kakinuma **UNRELEASED**  
**Das Glasperlenspiel**

6. Senza tempo 1'11

7. Bulerasca 0'36

8. Canon a 3 1'03

9. Moto perpetuo 1'34

performed by Jean-Philippe Merckaert on  
the organ at *Maison Saint-Grégoire (Tokyo)*

10. Toshio Hosokawa  
**Cloudscape** **UNPUBLISHED** 7'38

by Jean-Philippe Merckaert on the  
organ at *Muza Kawasaki Symphony Hall*  
Recorded live on 7 March 2015

11. Guy Bovet  
**Dream of Cherry** **PREMIERE** 3'12

performed by Mayu Harada on the organ  
at *Maison Saint-Grégoire (Tokyo)*



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12. Yves Lafargue, **Kitara fantasia** 7'47  
by the composer on the organ

at *Sapporo Concert Hall Kitara*  
Recorded live on 9 February 2008

Jean-Pierre Deleuze

**PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED**

**Four Haiku, Poetic Evocations**

13. **Hundreds of frosty stars. Alone in  
this boat, I have the moon all to myself.** 3'55

14. **Summer shower. A sudden,  
loud sound above the forest.** 2'33

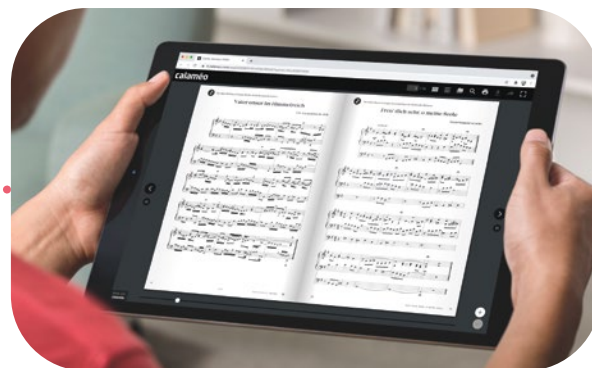
15. **Snow falls, luminous, on the wings  
of the mandarin duck. Calm stillness.** 3'57

16. **The raging sea. And over there,  
beyond Sado, the Milky Way.** 6'06

by Megumi Tokuoka at the *Toyota City  
Concert Hall* – With improvisations on the  
*nōkan* by Manabu Takeichi  
Recorded live on 12 October 2013

17. Claude Debussy, **L'Isle joyeuse** 7'37  
(transcription : Fanny Cousseau)

by Fanny Cousseau on the organ  
at *Sapporo Concert Hall Kitara*



TEXTS

• Concert hall organs in Japan  
– chronological list.

• Yves Lafargue :26 organists in residence at the Sapporo Concert Hall Kitara.

SCORES

• Yui Kakinuma :  
*Glasperlenspiel*

• Jean-Pierre Deleuze :  
*Four Haïku, Poetic Evocations*  
With the kind permission of the library of the Royal Conservatoire of Music in Brussels.

AUDIO

• Akataro Shimazaki  
*Three excerpts from the Organ Method* **UNPUBLISHED**  
n° 34, n° 35, n° 40

• Marc Garnier  
*Variations on the chorale 'Vater unser'*  
– Verse 5  
– Verse 7

performed by Megumi Tokuoka on the organ at Katakura Church (Tokyo).

• Takeshi Kondo  
*Variations on the theme 'Ah! Vous dirai-je maman'*  
– Prologue  
– Main  
– Flutes  
– Viols  
– Intermezzo  
– Reeds

by Hatsumi Miura on the organ in the hall of Yokohama Minato Mirai Hall.

• Tadashi Yamanouchi  
*The Art of the Shōshi*  
performed by Tsuguo Hirono on the organ at ICU University (Tokyo).

• Michel Chapuis  
*Improvised French Suite on the theme of the Magnificat*  
on the Bernard Aubertin organ at Shirane (Japan).

*The Art of Organ Improvisation (1994)*

1. Full game
2. Fugue
3. The Tale of Cromorne and Cornet
4. Organ accompaniment
5. Duo
6. Trio and Quartet
7. Bass and high trumpet
8. Two-part cromorne in alto
9. Flutes
10. Voix humaine
11. Tenor
12. Narration by Nazard
13. Quartet
14. Dialogue on the Great Games

• Jean-Pierre Deleuze  
*Four Haiku, Poetic Evocations*  
– Hundreds of frosty stars.  
*Alone in this boat, I have the moon all to myself.*

– Summer shower.

*A sudden, loud sound above the forest.*

– Snow falls, luminous, on the wings of the mandarin duck. *Calm stillness.*

– The raging sea. *And over there, beyond Sado, the Milky Way.*

by Jean-Philippe Merckaert à l'orgue du Sapporo Concert Hall Kitara.

VIDÉO

• Takeshi Kondo  
*Song of Flowers*  
performed by Masayo Katsuyama on the organ at the Musashino Civic Cultural Hall (Tokyo).

• Rotation of Marc Garnier's double-faced organ, at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre.

©Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre

• Johann Sebastian Bach  
*Prelude in E major, BWV 566*

• Flor Peeters, *Elegy op. 38*  
performed by Megumi Tokuoka on the organ at Toyota City Concert Hall.

## 28<sup>e</sup> Rencontres de Musique Ancienne de Seurre

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*Les Traversées baroques*

Dimanche 28 juin / 18h00

Gevrey-Chambertin (église Saint-Aignan)  
Martin Gester, orgue  
Pasquale Mourey, soprano (alternance / mélodies de chorals)

Samedi 11 juillet / 18h00

Seurre (église Saint-Martin)  
Yves Lafargue, orgue

Dimanche 30 août / 18h00

Dijon (église Saint-Pierre)  
Jean Tubéry, cornet à bouquin  
Jan Willem Jansen, orgue

Samedi 12 septembre / 18h00

Seurre (église Saint-Martin)  
*Le Concert Tribut / Louis Nicolas Clérambault / 350<sup>e</sup> anniversaire / Les Dames de Pontigny*  
Monique Zanetti dessus I, Julia Wischniewski dessus II, Pasquale Mourey dessus III, Laurent Beyhurst, orgue

Samedi 19 septembre / 18h00

Nuits-Saint-Georges (église Saint-Symphorien)  
Jean-Charles Ablitzer, orgue

Dimanche 11 octobre / 17h00

Nuits-Saint-Georges (église Saint-Denis)  
*Le Concert Tribut / Musique sacrée du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle*  
Julia Wischniewski soprano, Pasquale Mourey soprano, Sharman Plesner violon, Laurent Beyhurst, orgue

Samedi 17 octobre / 17h00

Seurre (église Saint-Martin)  
Lionel Avot, orgue

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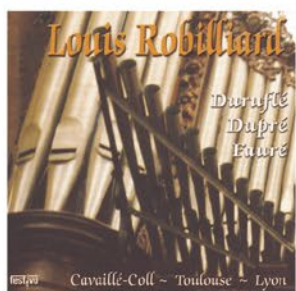
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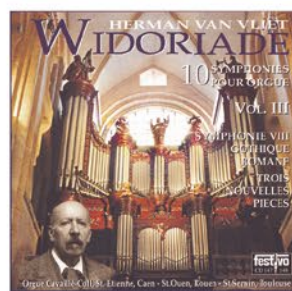
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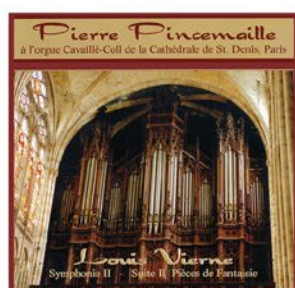
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