

ORGAN RECITAL



# Kazuki Tomita

150 Years of Kobe Union Church  
160 Years of German-Japanese relations



# Kazuki Tomita

Kazuki Tomita was born in Osaka and studied the organ at the Osaka College of Music under Kaoru Dobashi, as well as under Arvid Gast and Hans-Jürgen Schnoor at the Lübeck Academy of Music in Germany. In 2016, he became the first Japanese to win the first prize, as well as the audience award, at the 20th edition of the International Johann-Sebastian-Bach Competition in Leipzig.

He was also awarded the Sakuya Konohana Prize (by the city of Osaka for young artists) and the Music Critic Clubs Prize (Japanese Organisation of Musicians in Kansai). He became known to a wider audience through the TV documentary Jounetsu Tairiku about his studies in Germany (MBS 2016).

Tomita has made a name for himself through his interpretation of baroque organ music and regular guest appearances in and outside of Japan.  
(<http://kazukitomitaorg213.wixsite.com/home>)

## **KUC Organ:**

Orgel with two manuals and pedal, built by Bosch from Germany in 1992

## **Organiser**

Evangelische Kirchengemeinde  
Kobe-Osaka,  
Kobe Union Church

## **Sponsor**

German Consulate General  
Osaka-Kobe

## **Patronage**

Goethe-Institut Osaka Kyoto

## Rev. Musubi Tabuchi, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Kobe Union Protestant Church

The Kobe Union Church started its activities exactly 150 years ago, in 1871, when a church organization was formally established. In 1929, the church moved to Ninomiyacho (today's Freundlieb), and then to its current location, moving from the coast to the upper city and then to the hillside. From the present church, you can see the city of Kobe and trace the footsteps of our church once again. This church was first a church for foreigners visiting and living in Japan, and from that time until today, there have been many languages spoken in the church. In addition to English, German, and Japanese, many people from many other countries have gathered here to pray. It was certainly difficult to communicate with each other, but we were able to overcome the language barrier with music. Christians are often referred to as singing people. Music is also a universal language. I hope that today, united with people from different origins and surrounded by the sound of the organ, which is an essential pillar of church music, we can reflect on the history of our church and spend a fulfilling time together. I would like to thank the organist and the Consulate General of Germany for their support of this event.

## Rev. Andreas Rusterholz, Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Kobe-Osaka Pastor

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to today's organ concert with Mr. Kazuki Tomita. In this way, we would like to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Kobe Union Church and 160 years of official German-Japanese relations.

There is not enough time to personally mention all guests. I am pleased that Mr. Futoshi Yokokawa, Director of the International Relations Division of the Hyōgo Prefectural Government, representing the Governor Motohiko Saitō, Ms. Carolyn Davidson, the British Consul General Osaka, Mr. Ippei Murakami, President of the Board of Trustees of the Kwansei Gakuin University, and Mr. Shōji Machida, Rector of the Kobe-Shōin Women's University, honor us with their presence.

The Kobe Union Church was founded 150 years ago with German participation. Without funding from our English-speaking "brethren" and donations from the U.S. arranged by the American missionaries, the church could hardly have grown and lasted as long. We, the KUC and the EKK benefit from this still today. Receiving also obligates us to give. In the earthquake relief here in Kansai and the aid for the earthquake victims in Tohoku, the KUC has always been at the forefront and has inspired our small German-speaking congregation to become active. Without the KUC, we would not be what we are today. This concert is

also a thank you from the EKK to the Kobe Union Church.

Again, there is not enough time to tell the whole history of our church. Therefore, I would like to refer you to our video on the history primarily of the EKK (Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Kobe-Osaka). There is a German, Japanese, and English version on our homepage.

Our German-speaking congregation is now significantly smaller than in the past but offers space for fellowship with German-speaking people from Europe and with Japanese who speak German. In addition, it is also a contact point for those who are only temporarily staying here in Kansai. In this respect, our small congregation is more important than one might expect from its size. But all this is only possible because God is the foundation on which we can build.

## Mr. Martin Eberts, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany

Dear Parishioners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, I would like to convey to you my heartfelt congratulations on the 150th anniversary of the German Protestant Congregation in Kobe! No other institution in the district of the German Consulate General Osaka-Kobe can enjoy such a great tradition in the context of German-Japanese relations. Your presence in Kobe is a telling sign of the closeness of our two peoples, across the ages and all the vicissitudes of life.

It is more than a happy coincidence that this year we are also celebrating 160 years of our official German-Japanese relationship. These 160 years have been marked by ups and downs, including dramatic and difficult times. But somehow we have always prevailed and this might be regarded like a "common thread" between Germans and Japanese: a deep mutual understanding, respect for both countries achievements and culture, and an honest and deep mutual sympathy.

Perhaps Germans and Japanese - despite all the differences in traditions and cultural expression - are as similar after all as has been repeatedly claimed from the beginning. With all due caution in the choice of words, I like the phrase "elective affinity", describing the relationship between our two peoples. There is something that we find in each other, that appeals to us as closeness; and there is at the same time a counterpart, a difference, that stimulates us and always rekindles our interest in the other culture.

To some observers, this may seem overly philosophical and abstract, but this image of "elective kinship" describes quite well the special respect and esteem with which Germans always speak of Japan and Japanese culture - and how we, on the other hand, also experience it as Germans in Japan. And a look back over 160 years of bilateral relations

quickly reveals the very concrete effects of this privileged friendship between Germans and Japanese.

Today, this special quality is manifesting itself in an impressive breadth of cultural exchange and scientific relations, in business and high technology, in art, literature and music. But over the past seventy years, a deep bond has also developed on the basis of shared values and fundamental political convictions that have made Germany and Japan close allies on the international stage, whenever it comes to defending democracy, freedom and human rights. A telling expression of this community of values is also the German Government's new Indo-Pacific Strategy, in which Japan plays a central role as a trusted anchor of our policies in the region.

So, we have every reason to celebrate. Due to the pandemic, however, we were unable to hold many planned anniversary events in the desired form. Some celebrations had to be cancelled altogether. It is also due to the pandemic that, to my great regret, I am unable to attend the celebratory concert in person today; after returning from Germany, I must comply with the quarantine regulations in force.

But I am pleased that, despite all the difficulties, the 160th anniversary can still be duly celebrated: With lectures and online events, with a film festival and a manga competition, with exhibitions and lectures in various formats, "online", "hybrid" and in person.

In my personal opinion, the friendship and close relationship between our countries and peoples finds its most beautiful expression in the world of art, but especially in music. That is why I am delighted that this beautiful festive concert can take place. Again and again, I am deeply impressed by the reception and interpretation of German music in Japan, something which we cannot find in this depth and intensity in any other country in the world. With Tomita Kazuki, we can experience an outstanding example today.

I am also grateful for the choice of works of Johann Sebastian Bach for the concert, as his oeuvre in its entirety is reflecting the very spirit of the Gospel, which is and will always remain the foundation of the life of the German Congregation in Kobe. In this spirit, I wish you all a fulfilling afternoon and God's rich blessings!

## Introduction to the Organ Recital

Congratulations on the 150th anniversary of Kobe Union Church and the 160th anniversary of Japan-Germany relations. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to play the organ in your church on such a memorable occasion. The program for today's concert will include many works by J.S. Bach, a devout Protestant and an outstanding organist. In addition to the works of J.S. Bach, we will also present religious works by Brahms, Mozart, and Pachelbel, as well as arrangements of Japanese children's songs and rare music from the Middle Ages to commemorate Japanese-German relations.

We hope you will enjoy the variety and different expressions of music today.

J.S. Bach (1685-1750), who was working in central Germany, was born into a musical family and grew up absorbing a variety of musical styles while maintaining his passion for music from an early age. He was also a renowned organist and left behind many organ pieces. The "Prelude and Fugue in E minor" is a piece from his youth, and it shows a glimpse of Bach's talent that was to develop further in the future, with skillful improvisation in the "Prelude" and rhythmic music in the "Fugue" in the latter half. Bach also wrote many religious pieces using the Protestant chorale. In particular, the elegantly beautiful "Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness" is a choral work that gently encourages people not to be crushed by the weight of sin. In "Jesus Christ, Our Savior," Bach uses the fugue form, one of his greatest pieces, to create a complex and artistic polyphonic music.

J. Pachelbel (1653-1706) was an organist and composer active in Austria and southern Germany. It is said that he was a close friend of the Bach family. "What God Ordains Is Always Good" is a piece with nine expressive chorale variations that teaches absolute trust in God's actions. The "Ave Verum Corpus" is popular for its delicate, enveloping sound, and is known as a masterpiece composed by W.A. Mozart (1756-1791) in his later years. In the original version, the chorus and strings are joined by an organ, which is an old-fashioned composition with a Baroque feel, even though it was written in the classical era. "Heartily Do I Request" is a choral prelude by J. Brahms (1833-1897), one of the most famous composers of the German Romantic period. Although it is a short piece, it seeks "death as salvation" through complex harmonies and chromatic melodic movements.

"Estampie l'étrouvée", a medieval work (circa 14th century) of unknown authorship, is known as the oldest keyboard music in the world. The word "estampie" originates from an old dance, and this piece is also characterized by its light and quirky tempo. Shinpei Nakayama (1887-1952), born in Nagano Prefecture, is one of Japan's most famous composers, and has created many popular songs that everyone can sing along to. This time, I will use the melody of "Soap Bubbles," one of his most popular nursery rhymes, and perform it as a small piece arranged in a modern style.

The words to "All Glory be to God on High" correspond to the "Gloria" in the Latin liturgy. In this piece, we will hear a unique style of music, a trio in which a chorale appears in a light and small fugue. The last piece, "Toccatà and Fugue in minor," is a masterpiece of organ music that everyone knows. After the "Toccatà," with its free running melody and surprising harmonies, and the "Fugue," with its zigzagging melodies intricately intertwined with each other, the piece concludes grandly with the free and improvisational "Coda". The profound tone and sound from the pipes must have surprised people of the time.

*Kazuki Tomita*

# Program

## Welcome

Rev. Musubi Tabuchi, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Kobe Union Protestant Church  
Rev. Andreas Rusterholz, Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Kobe-Osaka Pastor

## Greeting

Mr. Martin Eberts, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany

**J.S.Bach:** Prelude and Fugue in E-minor BWV533

**J.S.Bach:** Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness BWV654

**J.S.Bach:** Fugue Jesus Christ, Our Savior BWV689

**J.Pachelbel:** Partita What God Ordains Is Always Good P.379

**W.A.Mozart:** Ave Verum Corpus K.618

**J. Brahms:** Heartily Do I Request Op. 122-9

**Unknown author:** Estampie Retrouve (c. 1320) (from Robertsbridge manuscript)

**S. Nakayama** (arr. K. Tomita): "Soap Bubbles" (a nursery rhyme)

**J.S.Bach:** All Glory be to God on High BWV 675

**J.S.Bach:** Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV 565

## Closing Words

Rvd. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto, Kobe Union Church Lead Pastor







1st Church 1872—Nov 1927, ca 1920

2nd Church 1929—Nov 1992, before 1945?



3rd Church since 1992



150 years of eventful  
history in video format