

ALL GENRES

Violinist Furusawa finds new wave of sound beyond borders



The Yomiuri Shimbun

Iwao Furusawa talks about playing with the Philharmonic Virtuosi Berlin.

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By Eriko Fuchigami / Yomiuri Shimbun Staff Writer

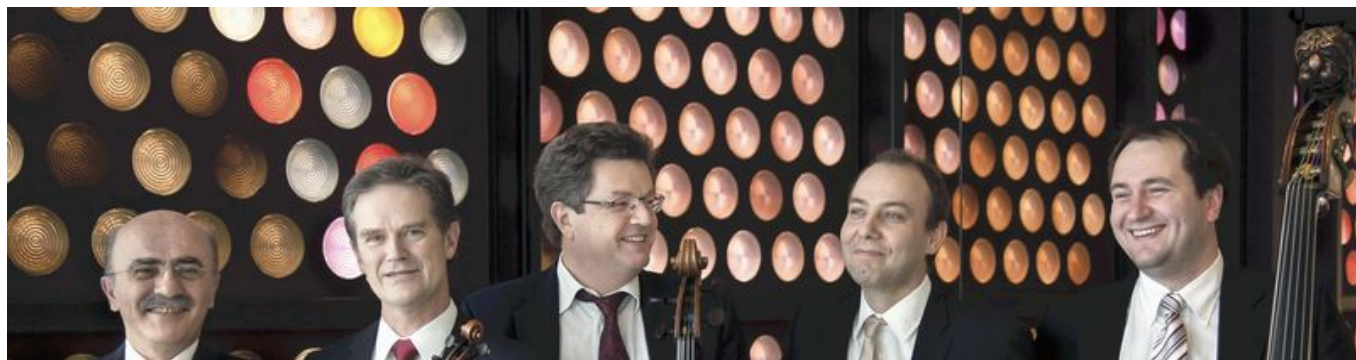
Violinist Iwao Furusawa, who pursues original sounds by combining elements of pop music with classical music, has been playing with a string quintet made up of members of the Berlin Philharmonic since last year.

As part of a mini-tour, the quintet, the Philharmonic Virtuosi Berlin, will perform with Furusawa in Japan in December.

Although Furusawa is an orthodox classical musician, having won first prize in the Music Competition of Japan, he has also taken on tango and Irish music.

He has also performed with Hideki Togi, who plays gagaku ancient court music.

Described by popular violinist Taro Hakase as “God’s violinist,” Furusawa has dramatically expanded his range of expression, as he effortlessly shifts back and forth between different kinds of music.



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The Philharmonic Virtuosi Berlin

“I’ve been able to overcome the sense of discomfort of an Asian playing Western music. National borders have disappeared inside me, and I feel that music is a means of communication,” Furusawa said.

Past experience has enabled him to “converse” through music on even ground with the Philharmonic Virtuosi Berlin, made up of members of one of the world’s most famous orchestras.

“They’re telling me that the way I perceive phrases is unique,” he said. “Although it’s said that the interpretation of classical music widely varies, after playing pop music, I realized there is an inevitability in the way a melody reaches the climax. The others gradually began to imitate my way of playing.”

Conversely, Furusawa is stimulated by world-class technique. “They have one-of-a-kind colors and powers because they’re a group of super-musicians. It’s fun because when I make an ‘inquiry’ through music, they respond to it properly,” he said with a smile.

Besides standard music such as Monti’s “Csardas” and Sarasate’s “Zigeunerweisen,” Roberto Di Marino’s Violin Concerto No. 2 will be a major attraction at the concert.

Di Marino is a modern Italian composer. Furusawa met him through a member of the Berlin Philharmonic, and was enchanted by his mellow, spectacular music. Following the recording of his Concerto No. 1 last year, Furusawa made the world’s first recording of Concerto No. 2 this year.

“Di Marino’s music makes the violin sound so wonderful, so it’s challenging and rewarding,” Furusawa said. “I’m sure his music will go down in history and become a treasure around the world.”

Furusawa and the Philharmonic Virtuosi Berlin will perform on Dec. 11 at Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo, and Dec. 18 at The Symphony Hall in Osaka. Call (0570) 550-799 for the Tokyo performance and (0570) 200-888 for the Osaka performance.