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[[Japanese Version](#)]

Alumni Stage "Pianists' Dream Recitals" Concert at Hitotsubashi University's Kanematsu Hall

by Toshiko Fukuchi

The renovation of Hitotsubashi University's Kanematsu Hall in Kunitachi City (located in the western part of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area) completed in March 2004. Nagata Acoustics participated in the [Kanematsu Hall renovation project](#), which was funded by members of Hitotsubashi U.'s Josuikai Alumni Association who donated generously to renovate and restore the campus' iconic landmark. This past spring, the hall received the donation of a new piano. A concert to celebrate the arrival of the new instrument took place on May 25, 2008.

<< Good Weather Helps Create a Fine Concert Experience >>



Kanematsu Hall's stage with proscenium arch



Kanematsu Hall seen from the stage



Gargoyle details at the top of a column at Kanematsu Hall

The morning of the day of the concert began with inclement, rainy weather. Not only was the weather rainy, but the rain came down in torrents. Luckily, however, in the early afternoon the skies cleared and I, for one, sighed with relief. I had worked directly on the renovation project and remembered that the building's status as a historical landmark and budget constraints had combined to limit the implementation of sound

isolation in the new hall. While the renovation added new heating and cooling equipment, the Hitotsubashi University had opted for turning off the HVAC equipment during concerts in lieu of funding sound isolation measures to reduce the sound of the HVAC equipment in the hall.

At the end of the month of May, Tokyo was not yet as humid and hot as during the summer rainy season, but I knew that when the hall filled with people, the temperature and humidity in the hall would naturally rise. I wished for dry, clear weather to ensure a pleasant environment in the hall during the concert, and I was heartened when the rain stopped.

<< **The "Pianists' Dream Recitals Concert"** >>

The concert organizers named the event "Pianists' Dream Recitals Concert." The concert's four performers, Ikuyo Kamiya, Midori Nohara, Akira Eguchi and Yusuke Kikuchi are all internationally-known talent and span a range of years of experience from veteran to mid-career to fresh and new. Each pianist infused the event's program with a unique and individual artistic style.

The performers played to a nearly full house of patrons seated both in the main floor's audience seating area and in the balcony that rings the side and rear of the hall. At full occupancy, the hall holds slightly more than 1,100 persons. Kanematsu Hall has a total spatial volume of 6,700 cu m (236,608 cu ft) and a reverberation time of 1.4 seconds (at 500 Hz, calculated value at full occupancy), making both its ceiling height and reverberation time more modest than those of recently designed and constructed facilities. However, the pianists' performances revealed the hall's warm and gentle acoustics, and these acoustics combined with the historic visual elements of architect Chuta Ito's design to create a blissful experience that could only happen in this restored Kanematsu Hall. In addition, piano music benefits from a not overly long reverberation time, and the sound volume also seemed to fill the hall well. The arched proscenium created a refined and graceful frame around the piano, showcasing it at center stage. I would surely recommend this hall for other piano recitals and concerts.

<< **The Accomplishments of Hitotsubashi U.'s Alumni and Volunteers** >>

The "Pianists' Dream Recitals Concert" was organized as the 11th concert in the Kunitachi Kanematsu Hall Cornucopia of Music concert series. The Cornucopia of Music Concerts are volunteer-initiated and volunteer-run events. Hitotsubashi University alumni who played in the university orchestra during their student years provide their time, energy and money through an alumni association to make these concerts happen.

When the alumni-funded, Kanematsu Hall renovation project's planning began, the main project objective was to seismically retrofit the building, and restore and repair architectural elements that had deteriorated over many years. However, famous musicians who had performed in the hall spoke out in praise of the hall's acoustics and alumni who had performed in the hall added their voices to urge that the renovation project preserve the hall's original acoustics. As a result, the Hitotsubashi University added concert hall use as a second objective of the renovation project.

Despite this project background and the hall's excellent acoustics, after the renovated Kanematsu Hall's opening concert, for some time no other concerts were held in the hall. The alumni association decided to form a committee to oversee the continuation of concerts at Kanematsu Hall. The concerts were to have an overarching theme and the alumni association decided on "Hitotsubashi Connections" for the theme. Hitotsubashi University is not a music conservatory, but it does have alumni who have attained prominence as classical music performers, including fortepiano musician Yoshio Watanabe and orchestra conductor Yukio Miyagi. The alumni association decided to use these contacts and connections to plan concerts at Kanematsu Hall.

The alumni association assumed that the concerts would not be able to be fully funded from ticket sales. In fact, while not being profitable, the program has needed only small infusions of funding from monetary donations. The alumni who donate their time to planning and holding the concerts recognize and accept that their volunteer hours are necessary to sustain the program.

<< **Kanematsu Hall's New Piano** >>

The piano that was inaugurated at Kanematsu Hall on May 25 was a gift to the university from the alumni association and other volunteers. (The stage risers for orchestra use were also donated to the school.) Prior to the hall's renovation, the hall had a piano, but it was in disrepair. After the renovation completed, each time the alumni association's concert committee organized a concert, a piano needed to be rented, adding extra stress and potentially anxiety-producing coordination tasks to planning and managing a concert at Kanematsu Hall.

The pre-renovation hall piano was a Bechstein, of which there are very few in Japan. When discussion began about a new piano for the renovated hall, some alumni suggested that the same Bechstein brand be purchased and some people recommended choosing a different piano brand. Because of the modest size of the hall, the decision-makers also considered purchasing a semi-concert grand piano. In the end, they selected a full concert grand Steinway D-274 as the hall's piano.

<< **Two Pillars of the Kanematsu Hall Concert Series** >>

In preparation for writing this article, I met with two core members of the concert support committee, Hidetsugu Kawarabayashi (graduated 1965, plays the cello) and Shoji Sato (graduated 1975, plays the French horn). It was easy to see how the combination of Mr. Kawarabayashi's many years of business experience and acumen, and Mr. Sato's expertise as adviser at Kajimoto Concert Management Company meshed perfectly, driving the planning and realization of fine concerts.

It is worth repeating that Hitotsubashi University is not a music conservatory, but a school where students train primarily for careers in finance, other commerce-related fields and the social sciences. Also, it is noteworthy that the Kanematsu Hall concerts, while held on the university campus are not sponsored, funded or organized by the university. These concerts demonstrate the powerful role that dedicated volunteers can play in the classical music community. I hope that that these independent, volunteer-supported concerts in historic Kanematsu Hall will continue for many years in the future. In 2008, there will be two more concerts in Kanematsu Hall. The 12th concert

will be on Sunday, November 9, at 3:00 p.m. and will feature Yoshio Watanabe in a program of piano concertos. The 13th concert will be held on Sunday, December 21, and will feature Maestro Yukio Miyagi conducting the Leningrad National Opera Orchestra.

New Concert Hall Project in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

by Dr. Yasuhisa Toyota



Plaza de la Virgen Blanca in Vitoria-Gasteiz City



Planned project site

The city of Vitoria-Gasteiz is located in northeastern Spain, near the French border. The city's official name combines the Spanish word "Vitoria" with the Basque word "Gasteiz." The city, which has a population of 227,000, is the capital of Spain's Basque Country. Vitoria-Gasteiz may not be large compared with major European metropolises, but its role as a regional capital and its regional prominence both historically and culturally are making it one of a handful of destination cities in the region.

Vitoria-Gasteiz is just an hour's drive from Bilbao, the home of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The Bilbao museum's architecture, designed by Frank Gehry, is known as the design that immediately catapulted Mr. Gehry to worldwide fame and recognition. International visitors to Vitoria-Gasteiz fly to the international airport in Bilbao then travel by car to Vitoria-Gasteiz.

The city of Vitoria-Gasteiz is now in the planning phase of a project to build a complex that will include a 1,500-seat concert hall, a 500-seat chamber music concert hall, a

1,000-person capacity international conference hall and a 6,000-person capacity multipurpose exhibition hall. On April 21, 2008, the city announced the results of the competition to select the project's acoustical consultant, naming Nagata Acoustics as the winning company. Three acoustical consulting firms including Nagata Acoustics had participated in the invitation-only competition.

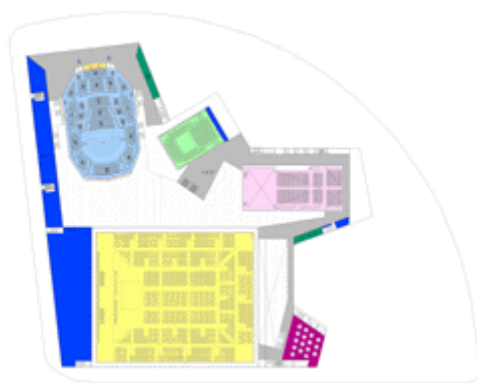
<< **Our Opportunity to Compete for the Project** >>

The course that led to Nagata Acoustics being invited to participate in the Vitoria-Gasteiz project's acoustical consultant competition can be traced to November, 2006 in St. Petersburg, Russia and the opening of the [Mariinsky Concert Hall](#). Nagata Acoustics served as the acoustical consultant on this project. Some time thereafter, a person engaged in artist management in Spain happened to attend a concert at Mariinsky Concert Hall and found the acoustics extraordinarily pleasing. He took it upon himself to contact his friend who is in charge of the Vitoria-Gasteiz project and he recommended Nagata Acoustics for the project's acoustical consulting role.

The city invited three firms to participate in the selection competition for acoustical consultant: New York's Artec Consultants; the locally based Estudi Acoustic H. Arau, of Barcelona, Spain; and Nagata Acoustics. Our opportunity to participate in this competition came about because a listener in the audience of a hall we designed truly enjoyed the hall's acoustics. As an acoustician, nothing could have made me happier than knowing this fact.

<< **The Project Design and Construction Process** >>

This design and construction processes planned for this project have some differences compared to the processes of other projects on which we have participated. The city of Vitoria-Gasteiz began the project by first selecting the Spanish firm IDOM, a multi-disciplinary engineering, architectural, consulting and integrated services group to consult with the city and be in charge of the overall design development for the project.



Layout illustration of the facilities prepared by IDOM

After the conceptual design is completed, a competition will be held to select the architect who will develop all the design phases after this including the design development. IDOM is still expected to support the client for the competition, and then completing their role for the project.

Our experience has been on projects organized into somewhat different phases and processes, but in Spain the process I have outlined above is considered typical for this kind of project. Let me note, by the way, that while I am using the terms "conceptual design" and "construction documents" to explain these two project phases, the content of project phases with these names may vary from country to country. For example, in Japan, there is an early project phase known as the "basic design" phase that includes a different level of detailed content than is included in the Vitoria-Gasteiz project's conceptual design.

According to the project schedule, the next project milestone will be to conduct the architect selection competition before the end of 2008. Then, work will begin on the construction documents in early 2009 and complete within one year. This will allow the start of construction for the project to begin in 2010.

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