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On the acceptance of *Messiah* in Japan

In modern Japan, *Messiah* is one of the most frequently played large-scale works by orchestra and vocal music, and it is also an important work that has become a feature of the Christmas season. But the historical process of its acceptance is not always widely known. Therefore, focusing on its relationship with Christmas culture I studied the process of acceptance and establishment in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan, where this work is performed particularly frequently. As a result of the research, judging from the situation of the performance movement of this work by the choirs, the way of acceptance in Japan was as follows.

- (1) Performances of all of *Messiah* were started by some music groups shortly after World War II, and the performance movement spread throughout the country within 10 to 20 years.
- (2) It was the affiliated organizations of educational institutions, mainly universities, that played a central role in the performance activities.
- (3) Especially in local cities, the citizen choirs mainly spread performance movement.
- (4) Most of the concerts were held in December or just before that, and were associated with Christmas, year-end events, and charitable activities.

Thus respect to with Japan, *Messiah* was introduced mainly by the active willingness of vocalists (senders) to perform, while the audience (receivers) accepted it as a cheerful tradition at Christmas and the end of the year.

Although there is a difference in the attitude of the Japanese general public toward Christmas from that of Christian countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, it is common that this work has been popularized and accepted in a form deeply linked to the big event that represents the end of the year, namely Christmas. After all, 'Christmas when it comes to *Messiah*' may be the global standard of the classical music world.