

TOPICS



Street Smart in Japan ストリート・スマート・イン・ジャパン

～「なぜ？」と思うことについて調べてみた！～

★street smart (ストリート・スマート) とは、生き抜くための知識のこと。世渡り上手という意味。

Why does it all end with Beethoven's Ninth? なぜ日本では年末にベートーベンの「第九」がよく演奏されるのか？



Why Beethoven?

After Christmas eve, the performances of the Ode to Joy from the 4th movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony is played all over Japan. It is a tradition before the New Year period. Many people even feel like they can't properly welcome in the New Year without having been to this performance. But how did this Beethoven symphony become a tradition in Japan?

Expressions

- the Ode to Joy from the 4th movement
第4章「歓喜の歌」
- Beethoven's 9th Symphony
ベートーベンの交響曲第9番 (第九)
- even feel like they can't properly welcome in the New Year
きちんと新年を迎えられないような気さえる

There are two main theories. The story behind the first theory begins with the conscription of students into military during WWII. At a concert given in 1943 by the Tokyo School of music (currently the Tokyo University of Fine Arts) in honor of students who were conscripted the following year. The program included the 4th movement of this 9th Symphony.

And after that on December in 1947, another concert was held at Hibiya Auditorium dedicated to the memory of students fallen in the war, with this symphony again. After that, performing this symphony around the end of the year became a custom.

Expressions

- two main theories 有力な2つの説
- WWII 第二次世界大戦
- the Tokyo University of Fine Arts 東京芸術大学
- Hibiya Auditorium 日比谷公会堂

The other theory goes back to the former Nippon Symphony Philharmonic, currently the NHK Symphony, which started performing in 1947. The reason for this was to help the symphony members earn extra cash for the New Year holidays.

After WWII, the musicians were very poorly paid and life was tough. Beethoven is very well known and his 9th Symphony was already very popular among Japanese people, so they were sure to attract a large audience. The programming also required a large number of performers. This gave them enough extra income to be able to celebrate New Year's. As this continued year after year, the "Ode to Joy" 4th movement of the 9th Symphony became an end-of-the-year custom in Japan.

Expressions

- the musicians were very poorly paid 演奏家たちは満足な支払いを受けられなかった
- attract a large audiences 多くの集客が得られる
- an end-of-the-year custom 年末の恒例行事

As trivia, Japan's first performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony in 1918 was given by German prisoners of war being held in Tokushima prefecture. This symphony is great and often played in big festivals around the world, but in most other countries it is not repeatedly played around the end of December like in Japan.

It seems that Japan is one of few countries with this year-end tradition.

Expressions

- As trivia ひとつの豆知識として
- German prisoners ドイツ人捕虜たち
- Tokushima prefecture 徳島県



年末、ベートーヴェンの「第九」を頻繁に演奏するのは日本だけってホント？

クリスマス過ぎたとたん、おなじみの「第九」があちこちで流れ出します。正式には、「交響曲第九番二短調作品125」《賛歌「歓喜」による終末合唱を持つ交響曲》という曲名で、素晴らしい曲ですが、なぜ年末によく演奏されるのでしょうか？

◆欧米では12月以外の祝典や行事に演奏される

実はこの曲は新年を迎える前の定番というわけではありません。アメリカやヨーロッパでは、「ハレルヤ」コーラスで有名なオラトリオ『メサイヤ(救世主)』の方がむしろよく演奏されます。

◆年末恒例の演奏は、どのように始まったのか？

最初に日本で「第九」を演奏したのは、1918年に徳島県の収容所にいた、第1次世界大戦で日本軍の捕虜になったドイツ兵たちでした。収容所の捕虜に対する人道的



な対応や、捕虜と地元民との心温まる交流が伝えられています。「第九」の中の『歓喜の歌』が、世界平和を謳っているのも、ぴったりだったわけです。

◆年末恒例になった由来は2説あり

1) 学徒出陣した生徒の追悼のため
生徒達が戦場に出向く前に「第九」を演奏し、生還して再びこの曲を演奏したので定着したという説。

2) オーケストラ団員の年末ボーナスのため
戦後はオーケストラ団員たちも生活が非常に苦しかったので、臨時収入を得るためだとする説。ベートーヴェンの「第九」はもともと日本人に人気があったので、集客しやすいとして選ばれた。

実際は1)と2)の両方でしょうが、「第九」の華やかな雰囲気、年末にお正月を待ち望む雰囲気にあっているというのも理由でしょう。

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