

Wanting to introduce Norwegian culture

Hardanger violinist Rio Yamase

Rio Yamase, who is the recognised authority on Hardanger violin, a Norwegian folk instrument, in Japan is introducing about Scandinavia and is doing cultural exchange through music. From this autumn there will be held a scholarship audition for a special lesson in Norway. She is putting a great deal of effort to training Hardanger violin players and teachers.

Scholarship selection

There had been a scholarship audition at the Norwegian embassy on 7th November. Hanae Karasawa, Sayuri Yano and Kristina Shizuka Yamase passed the first audition this day. A CD of the students will be sent to a Norwegian Hardanger violin player, and the students going to Norway will be selected.

Rio says, "It takes long time to train people so I wanted to organise chances to the next generation. It is important for the players to feel the atmosphere in Norway and to experience directly the culture."

She met Hardanger violin by her sister marrying a Norwegian. This instrument comes from Hardanger in west Norway. It looks similar to a classical violin, but it has strings under the strings you play, and this makes the peculiar sound.

Rio Yamase was a student of the late Halvard Kvaale. She is active as a Hardanger violin player and at the same time she introduces about Norway.

"Norway has strong image of nature such as Northern lights and fjords but the culture isn't known at all in Japan. I found out that culture and national character of Norwegian is very familiar to that of Japanese. I wanted to spread this in Japan and have cultural exchanges."

Last year, Rio Yamase founded Japan Hardanger Club corporation. Hardanger embroidery and cooking class are also being held.

"Scandinavian Christmas dinner is similar to Osechi in Japan. Life-style and custom are also wonderful. Beginning with welfare system, we have a lot to learn from Norway. I want to introduce these fascinating life-style."

As a musician, Rio Yamase is planning to open Edvard Grieg contest in Asia and to write a music practise book of Hardanger violin.

"Of course I was happy only with classical violin, but with Hardanger violin, 1+1 became 10 or even more for me. I could be an only one player in Japan, but I am more happy to share this wonderful and valuable culture with many people" she says with her eyes sparkling.