

My Meeting with Professor Dervaux (an incident during “the Afternoon of a Faun”)

“Stand over there by the door.” Professor Dervaux glared, his face flushed with anger. This was an incident in the morning, rather than in “the Afternoon of a Faun.”

During the first lesson I had with Professor Dervaux at the École Normale de Musique de Paris, besides having been late for the lesson, which was unacceptable, I became a very bad student who did not listen to her teacher.

The composition chosen for the conducting lesson with the orchestra was *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* by Claude Debussy. I had studied this composition in Japan so I knew it confidently. As I began directing the orchestra my own way, I heard Professor Dervaux saying something to me.

“Try to conduct as I have shown you,” he said in a gentle voice.

I responded to him, saying “I understand, but...” And I stubbornly kept conducting in my way. I sensed that the atmosphere in the classroom was becoming tense.

“If you cannot listen to what I say, you do not need to be here. Stand over there by the door”

I did not quite understand what was happening. He said it with a sharp and fast tone in French. I did not know why, but the professor seemed very upset.

“I don’t understand what you are talking about.” I said to him and started conducting again. The professor sat on the desk, his hands in tight fists, teeth clenched, and face red as he fought to control his temper.

When the lesson was over, the members of the orchestra and classmates surrounded me. They said, “Your view and way of conducting are not wrong. But since you spent much effort to come to France, why don’t you listen to your teacher and learn another way?”

These words helped me realize what had been happening. For what purpose did I come all the way to France? Hadn't I been working hard to study French music?

One friend advised me, "Pay attention to what your teacher says first and then you can make your choice later." I was an obedient student in Japan. It was unthinkable that I would argue with my teachers. But in a foreign country I had forced myself to believe that I had to voice my opinions. As a result, I ended up causing trouble. Unless something changed, not only would I be unable to complete my study at the *École Normale*, I would also not be able to apply for the International Besançon Competition for Young Conductors.

After the incident, I spent several days worrying. Then the day for the next lesson came. The composition for the lesson was Brahms' *Third Symphony*. With nervousness, I stood on the podium. Professor Dervaux said nothing, not even a word. Without looking in my direction, he was walking around the orchestra uncomfortably.

"How may I start this composition?" I asked the professor deliberately. He responded by coming toward the podium with smile. "Mademoiselle, this is how you start this composition," said the professor and he taught me in a very gentle manner.

From here, my road to Besançon began. And at this point I did not expect that I would conduct the "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun" in the presence of Professor Dervaux at the Besançon Competition.

Departure

Before I left for France, I had told everyone enthusiastically, “There is no difference between Paris and Tokyo, since they are just towns where people live.” But as I was leaving Narita Airport, I could not stop crying. I was going to study abroad in Paris for one year. It would be for my study of music and for international exchange as the grant recipient from the International Rotary Club.

In those days unlike today, studying abroad was not common. I got inside the airplane with mixed feelings of loneliness because I was leaving Japan for one year, and anxiety for living in Paris not knowing what awaited me there. There was no direct flight to Paris so I had to transfer at Heathrow Airport in London, which made me realize that I had come a long way from home.

The flight arrived at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, my final destination, on June 28th, 1981. But when I disembarked from the plane, something that I had not expected happened. My baggage did not come out of the carousel at the airport. I had already asked for a porter and we were waiting, but my baggage seemed lost somewhere. With my unsure French I spoke with the personal at Baggage Claim, but there was nothing I could do. Then a Japanese, who had come from London on the same flight as mine, told me that sometimes baggage was late due to schedule conflicts at transfer and might arrive on the next flight. I had no choice but to wait at the airport. Happily he was right. There must have been some trouble transferring baggage, because my baggage came on the next flight.

It was the beginning of summer, but it was drizzling and chilly. I headed for the city of Paris by highway. While I was on my way to Paris, I sensed that when I left this city one year later, I would probably miss it. After having had such a difficult experience, I finally arrived in Paris.

Dear Papa and Mama

June 28th, 9 P.M.

It is 9 P.M. but still bright. It is raining and very cold in Paris and everyone is walking in the city wearing coats (some people have duster coats on and others have winter coats). I had had a hard time finding my baggage. I had to go to the baggage claim and explain to them things like what kind of bags I had. So I ended up practicing French conversation unexpectedly.

Because I wrote on the form at the Immigration that I was a conductor, the male immigration officer told me jokingly, "We might see each other again soon." When I was approaching Paris, I felt this city was very interesting. In short, just like Tokyo, Paris is an urban city.

My first impression of Paris was extraordinary. But when I found myself alone in my hotel room, realizing that I had come far away, I felt lonely. Nevertheless, as long as I am in the hotel, I don't feel that I am actually in France. I turn on the TV and all the programs are in French but I feel like I am watching a French movie in Japan. In the hotel or outside, I ask silly things in French. I do it to see if my French is working or not. It is quite fun. I will write you again.

The City of Paris

I came to Paris, the city that I had dreamed about. Before I came, I had had a strong impression of Paris as a fine and sophisticated city, filled with flowers. So I was surprised when I saw the noisiness common to big cities, people from many different nationalities, and the Latin atmosphere of restlessness.

A friend took me downtown to a subway train. I was shocked by how dark and dirty the platform of the subway station was. I became worried as I thought of myself living for one year in Paris: a city that I was not familiar with at all; and a gloomy and depressing city due to bad weather.

My friend also told me about pickpockets, groups of the Romani children and the story of a Japanese student who became mentally ill while studying in the city. This reminded me of the incident, known as “the Sagawa case,” which had just happened in Paris. Heaviness struck me.

I was glad I had been scheduled to leave Paris and live in a city called Tours for three months for my language study. I was relieved when I got on the train for Tours.

Surrounded by Wonderful Friends

I arrived in Tours, a pretty city, about 200 kilometers southwest from Paris to learn French.

At every park in France, flowers are planted beautifully soothing the eyes of the people walking by. Some elderly people sit on benches for hours, while some other people take time slowly over lunch. At the language school, I was fine with the French grammar they taught since I had already studied in Japan. But conversation was another story. Students from other nations spoke a lot of French. They knew much more vocabulary and frequently talked during classes regardless of their accents.

I knew that they came from nations sharing the same culture as France to their advantage, but I got irritated by my frustration that I could not say what I wanted in French.

Having settled down in a hall which was like a student dormitory, my life in France began. And I made many friends. They were all from Japan: some were studying in France by their own expenses, while others were sent from their companies. They made it easy for me to speak Japanese every day, which kept me from improving my French. I spent days, almost giving up my hope to learn French, thinking that language was not my gifting because I was a musician.

The summer of France had long hours of sunlight. Day broke early in the morning and it did not get dark until around 11P.M. I felt it very important to spend time with my friends after school. As we started getting used to the life in Tours, we began cooking dinner together.

I had been eating dinner at the student cafeteria, but the food was not as good as we wanted. My friends and I would go to the market, buy food and wine and then cook. Almost every night we had a wine party.

After we got drunk, we would play cards. Cards were a little bit dangerous because we kept playing until late at night. Sometimes we played until the morning. I would go to school the next day but sleep during class. There was

no way that I would improve my French this way but I was having so much fun talking with my friends. So I carelessly spent time with them. Since music had preoccupied me during my college years, I was very interested in talking with people who had other fields of specialty.

Once a month we would go out to dine at a restaurant. I learned how to read the menus and how to order the food little by little, with my firm attitude that I was not afraid because I had my companions.

As my 3 month stay at Tours was coming to end, we realized we were missing the taste of Japan and so decided to make "Sukiyaki." Of course we could not get all the ingredients for the recipe, so we improvised. We specially ordered meat sliced the thinnest way but we still got slices about 5 millimeters thick. At least it was high grade meat. Then, we used a frying pan instead of a Sukiyaki pot. We also used instant tofu. It was an unusual "Sukiyaki" but was very tasty. My friends and I wondered if we were getting homesick.

I made good friends with these Japanese during these 3 months in Tours, and I'm still connected with them today. 10 years later and they often come to my concerts. When we were in France, these friends did not believe me when I told them that I was a conductor, but that was because we were cooking and playing cards all the time. They finally believed me after I won the International Besançon Competition. They are truly valued friends.

My three months in Tours was complete. I returned to Paris to begin the season of my study.

Dear Papa and Mama

June 30th

At Tours

How are you? Tours is a nice city. On the way to Tours, I saw rural scenery like we see in Japan. Paris surprised me, because it was more terrible than I had expected. It was old and dirty and I cannot believe that this city is famous for fashion.

There are so many people from different nationalities in Paris and it is rather a mess. The city is far scarier than Tokyo. I was exhausted from nervousness. I cannot believe that the prosperity of culture exists there. But, some of the ladies were unbelievably cool. Some of the men were also like movie actors.

I have been making friends with those are different from my friends in Japan. Spending two days here made me realize that I should never lose my sensibility as a Japanese and the goodness of Japanese customs by living in these kinds of cross cultural conditions. I heard that there would be a small music festival from July 8th throughout the 31st. My class is starting from tomorrow. French people keep looking at me with curious eyes. I get annoyed with them so I glare back. Besides, if I am not careful, I may have my pocket picked.

July 2nd

At Tours

How are you? Has the rainy season finished in Japan yet? It is still cold here and I have nothing warmer, which worries me a little bit.

In my language class there are no other Japanese and the rest of the classmates are mostly American. Western foreigners seem to learn French quickly. However they have bad pronunciation and I have hard time understanding what they say with their terrible accents.

I live in a college town in the middle of a large park. It is as if I were in a highland resort area in Japan. Birds are singing everywhere. I smell the fresh fragrance of the trees. It is so quiet.

I found a good café on the street. I had an omelet today and it was delicious. In this restaurant, whatever food you order comes with bread. And the bread is so good. My friends also say that they bring the bread home.

We have no class on weekends, so I am thinking about visiting some castles.

I will write you back.

July 16th

I feel like I arrived in France a long time ago. I have already spent half a month, haven't I? I am right now living in a place where the guests are all Japanese. We cook our own meals and even cook the rice.

The instructor of the language school is quite passionate and I have so many things to memorize. In early August I am planning to visit La Rochelle in the region of Brittany. The city is by the ocean, so I think I will also enjoy tasting good fish.

As for winter clothes, please send me practical ones only. I cannot find anything here, even what is the least thought of. For example, there are no pocket tissues, no Saran Wrap, and not even a cutting board. I am amazed. Socks are also expensive. Please include stockings for me, too.

I found canned tuna at the market. It is tasty. But the rest of the canned food is not good. Some of the canned foods are strange, like boar meat and deer meat. I will write you back. Take care.

Dear Mama, and Papa

July 19th

How are you? I am much more used to living here. I now feel comfortable with European languages written sideways.

Today I visited an art museum and a cathedral. At the museum, paintings and

interior decorations were displayed together and the paintings were exhibited like accessories in the room.

The cathedral was amazing. The size, the height of the ceiling and the stained glass were incredible. Unfortunately no one was playing the organ when I visited the place, but I had heard of someone who had heard it and could not stop crying because of the music. The tradition of Christianity is still enormous. It is quite shocking to us Japanese, isn't it?

The other day, a friend of mine and I were looking at the trees here. The leaves grow really thick. These trees are different from ones in Japan. The willow trees here, unlike Japanese willow trees, have massive branches hanging down all together like a monster. We told one another that oil paintings prospered because of these trees. You cannot draw each leaf in detail like Japanese paintings. You can only plaster the painting with blocks of trees.

Yesterday I went to a concert for the first time in a while. Can you guess what time the concert began? It was 9 P.M. The sounds were totally different. It was not only because the air was dry but also because the musicians were enjoying music. I dressed up for the first time since I came here. By the way, I heard that Japanese bills are going to be changed. The bills with Shotoku Taishi will be replaced soon, right? That is disappointing.

Tonight five of us are going to eat dinner at a first class restaurant. We decided that it would be okay to do it once in a while. I will write you back.

PS: all the high class restaurants were closed because it was on Sunday. We went to a family-style restaurant in a hotel and ate a lot with only 45 francs. We came back, all satisfied.

Papa & Mama
August 11
Tours

The new class started today. The instructor is a female teacher who looks like Françoise Sagan. She is sharp and is a very good teacher. She gives us lots

of homework. She also talks about Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre during her class.

I am more used to listening to French than I was in July. When I introduced myself as a conductor, everyone paid attention to me and even my teacher quickly remembered my first name. Besides, I sit at the very front near the teacher, so she keeps her eyes on me. This is the most horrible seat for me, a poor student. But still I cannot speak French as much as I want to. Once in a while I get a hold of the cleaning lady in the resident hall to practicing talking, since she is French.

The weather in Japan this year is out of control, isn't it? Here the heat at the height of summer lasted for only about 10 days and it seems the summer is already coming to end. The weather is getting more comfortable. I can send you our classroom photo soon. You will see that the European foreigners look very nice in the photo. I will write you back.

Life as Parisienne Began

It turned out that my new residence in Paris was near the Louvre Museum in the 1st arrondissement. Comédie-Française, Pompidou Centre, Théâtre du Châtelet and all the other famous architectures were within my walking distance. When time was available, I strolled to places like Place de la Concorde and the Tuileries Garden.

Scenery on the streets of Paris was splendid from every viewpoint and I understood why the painters had wanted to draw these. As I walked slowly along the Seine, looking at the surrounding architectures and views, I even felt as if time had stopped. Questioning myself why I had been running restlessly all the time, I enjoyed having the time to reflect.

I needed to quickly get used to this area which was new to me. I had to start making a living, as the very first thing. The area was so convenient that I could go shopping easily, even though prices might have been a little high since it was in the center of Paris. A street market for vegetables was open several times a week on one particular street. Arabic immigrants sold vegetables at the market. Most of the people were buying potatoes, tomatoes and so on by the kilogram. It surprised me. Japanese people would not buy such large amount of vegetables at one time. If you bought all the kinds of vegetables, you would have more than you could carry in both hands.

There were many fish markets in Paris and they sold mussels by the liter. I once did not understand the name of a fish at the market which was written in French. I had to check my dictionary on the site before buying it.

At meat stores, meat was sold by cuts divided into smaller parts. You would have trouble if you did not know these names. Living alone by myself, I once ordered 200 grams of ground meat and 2 slices of large ham, which caused laughter in the store.

Going shopping was my daily routine. I learned the French words necessary for such daily living quickly.

The central post office of Paris was located near the place where I lived as well. As a student living in a foreign country by herself alone, nothing made me happier than receiving letters from Japan. I learned about what was happening in Japan through the letters I daily received. I had no TV, and the news reporters on the radio spoke in French too quickly for me to understand.

During my study abroad, I asked my families and friends to send me a great amount of newspaper clippings from Japan. Back in Japan, I would just make a quick phone call when there was no time. In France, I took much time to think about what to write in each letter. I also waited 2 weeks to hear the response. Every now and then it is not bad to live in an older life style.

September 8th

Tours

The contract for my residence in Paris was smoothly made. I am planning to move in on October 1st. The place is well furnished and has lots of space for storage. It is near the Louvre Museum and is located in the center of the city, so I probably have gotten the best spot. But prices may be high. So I will have to be careful not to spend too much money, otherwise I will end up becoming homeless in the Louvre area.

I thought it would become cooler, but it turned out that it did not. There are times when I can wear a sleeveless shirt and feel fine. It may become cold suddenly, though. By the time when I go to Paris, surely I will be able to watch autumn leaves falling from the trees.

We had originally planned that you would send me lots of things from Japan to France, but after coming and living here, it turns out I can manage to live here with minimum. I wear the same clothes and do not dress up much, and I do not need many pairs of underwear either, because I wash them frequently. Perhaps we waste a lot in Japan.

In Paris, many people ask me for directions. I do not know why they ask a Japanese like me. Perhaps they think I am a resident since I carry grocery bags. I just answer, "Là (that way)," since I cannot describe the direction well.

Today I am going to watch a movie starring Alain Delon. I am now used to watching movies in French. I will write you back.

October 11th

Paris

How are you? One week has already passed since I came to Paris. I am quickly becoming a Parisienne. I am going to rent a piano tomorrow. I also bought an FM radio so I can listen to classical music all day.

It is Sunday today. After a series of busy days, no one was walking outside.

1st movement
Letters

So I decided to go out and take pictures. I set out to Boulevard Saint-Germain along the Seine. Tourists were everywhere. In Japan, you must be celebrating the day of the harvest moon very soon. There is no such mood here, except the bells ringing from a nearby church. I will write you back.

Episode

One a lazy afternoon, I was walking on a sidewalk to go shopping, when someone threw water on me.

There was a store nearby the building I lived. The store clerk must have been washing the floor inside. He was just throwing out the water in the bucket to the street at the moment I walked by, and ended up throwing the water on my foot. Being shocked, I showed my displeasure. The young French man, while apologizing, smiled at me and said, "I will see you again tomorrow at the same time." What humor he had! My angry face was loosened because of his sense of humor.

On another evening, I was talking with my friend in a phone booth on a street corner. In those days, we could talk for as many minutes as we wanted with 50 centimes. I was talking for a long time when someone knocked on the door. I turned back and saw a man outside the telephone box, who seemed to be in a hurry. Since I had always had to wait at a telephone box, I kept talking without feeling any guilt.

Suddenly, the man opened the door of the booth and came in. He reached out his hand to the hook and hung up the phone. He must not have been able to wait any longer and ran out of patience, I supposed. Because my phone was cut off, I lost my temper. I went outside the telephone booth and started yelling at him. Before long, the man drove away in his car. It was quite hard to quarrel in French. I wished I had had more of a sense of humor in this kind of situation.

École Normale

I entered the École Normale de Musique for the first time on orientation day. It was the 5th day since I came to Paris.

I was informed that there would be a simple entry examination for the Department of Orchestral Conducting, so I went there to take the exam. I was not sure in which hall the exam was held and, of course, I did not understand French as well. Then I saw a crowd gathering in a room with a large door. One professor was talking about something, so I stood in the corner to listen to what the professor was saying.

Before long, a student who had been sitting came forward and began conducting with the quartet. The composition was Mozart's *Divertimento*. The professor carefully watched the student and gave him instructions at the same time. I realized that the professor was checking the level of each student. One after another the students raised their hands and started conducting. I did not see any other Japanese there. Then the professor said, "Who is the next person to conduct?" Surprisingly I heard myself saying in a loud voice, while raising my hand, "I am." I thought to myself, "I know this composition. I just have to do it." Moving forward to the front of the quartet, I started conducting the composition. When I heard the sound amazingly echoing throughout the hall and when I saw the musicians carefully playing even the shortest note and playing the music joyfully, I was thrilled, thinking to myself, "This is what I have been looking for."

When I finished conducting, there was a storm of applause in the hall. I had no idea what was happening. The professor asked me many questions but I did not understand his questions because he was speaking very fast in French. At that moment, a woman, who had played the violin in the quartets, spoke to me in Japanese. She was a Japanese. I was relieved because she told the professor in French that I had studied at Tokyo University of the Arts, and she also gave him the list of the conductors that I had studied orchestral conducting with.

I found out that even novice students took the entrance exam for the Department of Orchestral Conducting at the École Normale. Later students would be

auditioned for studying with Professor Pierre Dervaux.

As a result of the entrance examination, about 40 students were selected to study with Professor Rouits. After the orientation ended, I frantically completed the admission process. I did my best to tell the school in French that I wanted to study at the Department of Orchestral Conducting in the school.

We had a lesson with Professor Rouits every other week. In each lesson the students conducted a small orchestra with the full string instrument players and a few wind instrument players. The pianist played the notes for the other instruments that were missing. Many people came from other countries, but the most of them spoke French fluently.

One day my turn came for conducting the orchestra. I stood in front of the orchestra and led the orchestra. When I finished, the professor was commenting something but I could not understand it. The students in class also tried hard to explain to me by speaking in English and changing vocabulary, but they failed. Eventually I understood that he wanted me to practice orchestration.

Everyone in the class was kind and they explained until I understood the subject. Even after the lesson was over, we passionately talked about conducting techniques and they asked me in what kind of methods students were taught in Japan. My life of speaking only in French began. And day by day my conversation skills improved.

The European students had vast knowledge of history and forms of music, and they talked about compositions very confidently. Then I watched a student standing in front of the orchestra to conduct, anticipating a great performance based on what the student had commented on the composition. But it turned out that the student did not know anything at all about conducting. That seemed strange to me.

In Japan we first learn how to conduct. After mastering the techniques, then we think about the music. But in Europe, it is completely opposite. Every student has something that he or she wants to express and makes it known with conviction. But he or she does it while conducting with no skills.

Coming to Europe, I started thinking about conducting un-skillfully. In other words, no matter how “bad” my conducting may look, first I wanted to deliver what I really wanted to express. When I was in Japan, I was judging conductors based on their techniques. European conductors, on the contrary, had their own ways of conducting. No one conducted the same way as the others did and everyone had good points. I was blessed to think from another viewpoint of conducting.

October 20th

I heard that it has been cold lately in Japan. Here it is cold outside. Because my room is small, if I boil water, the room becomes warm. But I really miss the food smells of autumn in Japan.

Mussels are pretty inexpensive and two of us ate 1 liter of mussels. According to some Japanese, mussels here taste broad like surf clams. But no other clams can beat *asari* (short-neck clams) and *shjimi* (fresh water clams) in Japan.

We had the 2nd lesson at the École Normale today. I conducted Beethoven's *Coriolan Overture* in the class. After the class everyone came up to me and asked me questions like how long I had been conducting, which allowed me to speak French frequently. Don't worry, because they speak French slowly for me. They especially speak slowly for me when we talk about music. When they ask me why I am so good at conducting, I want to tell them, "Because I am." But I do not know how to say it in French yet.

Here it does not matter whether you are a woman or a foreigner, if you are a good musician. They judge and praise what is good, which makes it easy for me to be here. I am getting busy accompanying a singer and so on. Lately I have been spending the whole day speaking only French without difficulty. Actually I want to talk more French. By nature I am talkative, so I have been chatting and giggling. I have plenty of time here, which makes me happy.

In addition, when I hear music here, even the song I know sounds different. Perhaps it's because the atmosphere is different.

Some students here have an outstanding sense of music in spite of their poor conducting. Besides, everybody has confidence, or more precisely, pride. There is no spirit of competition. Each person has his or her character. I think that is totally fine.

Right now I am in a perfect atmosphere. I can learn a great deal this year. When Mr. Hikotaro Yazaki (a conductor residing in Paris) spoke of me to Professor Dervaux, the professor asked him why I came to Paris although I

already had already a degree at Tokyo University of the Arts. According to the professor, I should have as much fun in Paris as possible. So I am. I will write you again.

October 29th

Paris

It is getting cold but how are you doing? I went to the “Impressionist Museum (the Jeu de Paume Museum)” yesterday. I could not move from in front of the paintings of Claude Monet. I had dreamed to see them. The rest of the paintings in the museum did not catch my eyes. They had lots of other works by painters like Edgar Degas and Vincent van Gogh. In those days, there were Émile Zola a writer, Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine poets, and Claude Debussy. I suppose that it was a phenomenal era. They all inspired one another to develop their own unique arts.

I walked through the Tuileries Gardens to return home. The leaves of horse-chestnut trees were turning yellow and each tree was distinct from another in color. Under the cloudy air, the scenery was truly impressive. Whenever I come to this park, the sight of the beautiful trees makes me sigh. This day I really appreciated having come to Paris.

There is a distinct atmosphere of grayness in the air that is somewhat blurry, having no defined contours. I will enjoy the autumn in Paris for a while. How is the autumn in Japan? Please take care not to catch a cold.

Seiji Ozawa in Paris

In November, the Boston Symphony Orchestra was having a tour in Europe and I went to its concert in Paris. Of course Mr. Seiji Ozawa was the conductor. The orchestra was going to perform Beethoven's *The Pastoral Symphony* and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Many of the Orchestral Conducting students at the École Normale also went to the concert. As I had expected, I saw a large audience of Japanese at the concert hall. They all must have come to cheer on Mr. Ozawa. The performance of *The Rite of Spring* was excellent. The brisk rhythm and tempo kept the audience's attention throughout the piece. The entire audience at the hall was totally excited, which made me proud as a Japanese.

The French students were discussing all sorts of things about the differences between the American orchestra and French orchestra. I was so happy that I waited at the back stage entrance to see Mr. Ozawa. The room was crowded with many people. Not knowing him personally, I was unable to talk to him and just kept standing there. That was my first meeting with Mr. Ozawa in Paris.

The following February, I found out that Mr. Ozawa was going to conduct Beethoven's opera, *Fidelio* at the Opéra Garnier. I visited the theater, which allowed me to observe the rehearsal. The opera rehearsal continued until late at night. When the rehearsal finished, it was already close to midnight. Some people were visiting from Japan. I met Ms. Yuzuko Horigome, a violinist, there.

Conducting an opera must be hard work for a conductor, because it takes lots of time for rehearsals. I was amused by the episode that Mr. Ozawa had set a rice cooker. When I left the Opéra Garnier, it was too late for the last bus. I ran through the dark streets at top speed to return home.

After the opera concert, I was allowed to observe two other rehearsals of Mr. Ozawa with the Orchestre de Paris in May, and during the Salzburg Festival in August.

Dear Papa · Mama

October 14th

What surprising news you gave to me! When I heard it was very urgent, I thought it was bad news. I was so nervous when I was waiting for the collect call. So I was dumbfounded by the news.

When you come to Paris, please be really careful. Mama, first of all, please do not get too excited and dress up casually. When you walk around the towns in Paris or take a subway train, it is safe not to wear any accessories at all. This is because I heard that a pickpocket can come right next to you and steal your belongings easily. In addition, it is very cold here, so make sure to bring your scarf. You won't believe how cold it is. And don't worry about meals and other daily necessities. I cannot wait!

Yesterday I was invited by the Rotary Club for a presentation. Thanks to my friends who helped me, I was able to share about Japanese music in French. I sang *Sakura Sakura* and *Zuizui Zukkorobashi*. They liked the second song more than the first one. The counselor of the Rotary Club introduced me as a person who was always cheerful. A French person sitting next to me was inconsiderate, because she asked if I got timid while talking in front of people. So I responded, "Not at all, because I am used to conducting in front of people all the time."

Could you bring some Japanese postcards like castles and Kyoto? I want to give them to my friends. And I might ask you to cut my hair, too.

See you then.

My Parents Visiting Paris

In early December, my parents came to Paris without much advance notice. It was their first trip overseas. Since they were staying here for only 5 days, we spent most of the time within the city of Paris.

After watching the performance of the Orchestre de Paris, we saw the opera, *The Knight of the Rose* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The Opéra Garnier was still under construction but we were able to look around the interior of the building luxuriously and splendidly decorated in marble, as well as inside the hall. We could imagine the ladies and the gentlemen enjoying conversations during an intermission at the grand foyer decorated with elegant sculptures and chandeliers. We then enjoyed visiting the Palace of Versailles, the Louvre Museum, and the Impressionist Museum.

We spent another day touring an ancient castle by the Loire. When I lived in Tours, I visited many medieval castles by the river. It was during the summer and I clearly remembered the beautiful castles covered with verdure and especially the unbelievable flower gardens.

Early in the morning my parents and I got on a tourist bus. It was a dark and rainy morning. It was somehow unusually cold that day.

We viewed the great castles which majestically stood in the vast lands of Chambord and Amboise. By the time we arrived at Château de Chinon which has French style gardens and a beautiful Renaissance castle, the rain had turned into snow. The snow began piling up on the ground rapidly and before long the entire site was covered with snow. We saw a fantastic view of the medieval castle floating in the snow, as if we were soaked in a fairy-tale world.

But, right in the middle of listening to the information from the tour guide in the castle, we heard shocking news. There had been a coup in Poland. Possibly this might cause a war. That was not an exaggerated statement. Since Europe is a continent where many nations are adjacent to one another, we cannot predict how one incident in one country may spread to other countries. It was December 13th. As I watched the snow falling, it reminded me of the raid of the

47 Akoo Samurai Ronin.

The ongoing snow caused heavy traffic and we came back to Paris far behind schedule. We saw the beautiful night view of Paris just before Christmas, with the neon signs of the city and dazzling Christmas lights on the trees lining the streets, glittering in the snow.

Even during a group tour trip, we sometimes had a free time activity. But during the free time in France, we had trouble, especially in the language. We would go to a restaurant but would not be able to read the menu. Even if we ordered something “by accident,” we were not guaranteed to get what we thought we had ordered. The other Japanese people who were with my parents in the group tour also had the hard time. So, we invited them to have lunch with us. After the meal, they were so thankful that they were finally able to have a French meal in the way they had wanted.

The five days with my parents passed so quickly. It blessed me very much that they visited Paris when I was studying there.

Christmas Mass

When December came, the city of Paris welcomed the season of Christmas gorgeously by stringing lights on the trees along the Avenue of Champs-Élysées. Department stores were crowded with people shopping for Christmas presents. I had to think a while how to spend my Christmas during my study abroad in Paris.

Most of my friends from Tours wrote me that they wanted to visit. They were living in a rural city, so they wanted to spend Christmas in Paris. Since I had moved to Paris, I had regularly received letters from them and they had visited me. The 1st arrondissement of Paris was a very convenient area and we could walk to the Louvre Palace within 2 minutes. There had been a time when 5-6 people slept on blankets spread over the floor in my one-room apartment.

So, we decided to spend Christmas in my apartment. We spent lots of time cooking tempura with my electric cooking stove but it did not turn out as well as with a gas stove. By the time we finished cooking everything, the tempura had already grown cold. But we didn't care, because we missed tempura so much.

We all agreed to attend the Christmas Mass, though no one was a Catholic believer. We walked to the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris. Many others must have thought the same thing. We managed to enter the crowded entrance of the cathedral. I had been inside the building several times on sunny days. Whenever I saw the magnificence of the large stained glass windows, I could not help going inside.

The Cathédrale Notre-Dame on Christmas was different from any other time. They were holding a solemn Mass ceremony. All the crowd were standing inside the cathedral and there were no empty spaces. They were praying in earnest. There had been a coup in December of this year (1981) in Poland, and many people were praying for peace. We all had come to the cathedral in a festive mood. As we went inside, however, we felt restricted in the solemn atmosphere. It was so solemnly silent that we even took care not to disturb the people praying as we walked by.

Someone was playing the cathedral organ and they were singing Christmas

hymns. The sound of the organ resonated with solemnity. Anyone who came to Europe and heard an organ playing inside a marble church building, would instantly realize how different Europe is in history as well as culture. European music has developed on the foundation of this solemn sound and culture of stones.

Usually a guest organist plays the organ during the Christmas Mass. I was fortunate to listen to the Mass at the Cathédrale Notre-Dame. When we went outside, the chill wind pierced through the skin. My body and soul were purified by the touch of the icy cold.

“Carmen”

When I first started living in Paris I did not walk around the city at night for a while, because I had heard that it was not safe at night. A friend had also advised me to be very careful when I rode the subway, and not to wander around while looking at a map so that I might not be targeted.

One night, I ran across a friend of mine from Tours on a street corner when I was walking to buy groceries. He had also come to France as a grant receptionist from the Rotary Club and he was a huge opera fan. While studying at Lille, a town north of France, he visited Paris on weekends to see various operas and other performing arts.

The moment he saw me, he said that the look in my eyes had changed and I looked unfriendly. I gave him the excuse that living in a big city, I had to be extra careful. Then he told me that there would be a performance of Bizet's opera, *Carmen* that night. So I decided to watch the performance with him.

Carmen was the first opera I saw in Paris and one of my favorites. Unfortunately the opera was performed at a building like a sports center, because the Opéra Garnier was under construction. Yet I was fully satisfied by the performance. The *Carmen* I saw in France was exceptional. I returned home desiring to conduct *Carmen* myself someday.

Although I had seen Romani people in the opera, I did not know what Romani people were actually like. I imagined that they were women like *Carmen*, free and uninhibited. I had wondered how they really were.

I had heard of Romani children. A group of four or five would often appear at a tourist spot. They would come close to a tourist to show something like a newspaper or a memo on a piece of paper. When the tourist was distracted by the paper, they would rob him. I had also heard that many Japanese had become their victims. Meeting Romani children would have been easier to deal with. But, instead of the children, I had an encounter with two Romani women.

I had been a little more used to the crime condition in Paris. A friend of mine

visited me from Japan. This was his first time to come to a foreign country. We were walking on a passageway in the subway, when I saw two Romani women coming toward us. Quickly and without thinking I put my hand on my purse and held it tight. My Japanese friend had no clue what was going on, what was going to happen, or what to do. Instead of my purse, one of the Romani women tried to grab his shoulder bag. I found myself yelling at them, "Non! Allez (go away)!" I slapped the woman's hand as hard as I could. That caused a stir from the people walking around us. The Romani women glared at me with gruesome looks and left us without taking anything.

That all happened in just a few seconds. Afterwards, my legs were shaking. What if they had had something like a knife? Those Romani women were quite different from the woman in *Carmen*, I decided.

Another “Carmen”

Around the same time, everyone was talking about the theater play, *La Tragédie de Carmen*, directed by Peter Brook. The production was so successful that tickets were sold out everywhere. The play was on stage every night but I could not get a ticket. Fortunately, a French friend of mine invited me to see the play. I went to the theater, the Bouffes du Nord.

This theater was an old building and the whole floor was covered with sand. As soon as I entered the building, I felt as if I were in Seville, Spain, the location of the story of *Carmen*. There were no stage settings. A dozen musicians appeared on the stage and began playing. Unlike Bizet’s *story* where Carmen beautifully enters, singing her “Habanera,” in this story, she peeped her face out of a large dirty woven sack.

The play was all in French so I did my best to understand it. It was done in a completely different setting. Each character had more freedom in movements and expressions. As a result the show was more truthful to Prosper Mérimée’s original novel.

Having spent one year in Paris where I encountered Romani women and experienced *Carmen*, I came to understand that the Romani were different from what I had imaged. It was a very stimulating year.

January 1st, 1982

At Bonn

Happy New Year! The New Year Day came when I was at Köln. I saw *The Woman without a Shadow*, conducted by Mr. Hiroshi Wakasugi. It was absolutely wonderful. That opera was something that you would not be able to see in Paris.

I am in Bonn today and am planning to watch another opera. Unfortunately the Beethoven House was closed, which was too bad. Beethoven must also be celebrating the New Year.

The street lights here function regularly. I see Germany well-ordered, and very different from Paris. The street lights in Paris turn red so quickly that I have never been able to finish crossing while it is still green. Everyone ignores the lights and passes between stopped vehicles. Here in Germany, if I do not follow the lights, I feel somebody may give me a warning. Besides, the lights are huge.

The volume of the food here is large, too, and beer is tasty. By the way, I was allowed to be enrolled to Professor Dervaux's class. There will be 17 students and the class will begin on the 12th. Please be careful not to catch a cold.

See you.

January 10th

Paris

Thank you for sending the video tape of the NHK Year-end Song Festival. I enjoyed watching it. It is snowy again in Paris today. It is freezing cold and I heard that the airports and other places are closed. We are having more snow this year than usual. How is Japan? Paris is busy, getting ready for the after-holiday sale season.

Living in France, I do not feel that the New Year has come. A friend of mine gave me a lot of dried *shiitake* mushrooms and I am eating them every day. I am also cooking the rice that Papa brought me to make sushi. As you know,

Japanese rice is delicious. Tomorrow I am attending a Rotary Club meeting. Lately I've been busy doing something all the time. I will go skiing from the 20th. I will write you back.

Dear Papa · Mama

January 28th

Paris

Nori-chan's due date is coming closer, isn't it? You must be very busy right now. You will become grandpa and grandma very soon, and I will be an aunt, too.

The other day I went to Briançon to ski. Only experienced skilled skiers were allowed to ski there, so I did mountain skiing. It was my first experience with mountain skiing and so different. I did nothing but fall down. The scenery was absolutely beautiful. Then I went to Torino, Italy. About 60 grant recipients of the Rotary Club gathered there.

In Japan, the Min-On Concert Association will have its conducting competition in September, but the date and schedule is conflicting with the Besançon competition.

I will record what is happening here on a tape and send it to you soon.

May you not catch a cold...

To Mama

February 20th

Paris

How do you feeling about being a grandma? I heard that the baby is very active. I am already wondering what kind of super girl she is going up to be. She must be steadfast and strong.

The song list for the Besançon competition just came. I am delighted because there are many French compositions on the list. I am lucky. This year is my last chance to enter this competition because of the age limit. I want to win by

all means. If I win, I can give concerts in France.

I may be planning too ahead, but I am afraid that I should not send my winter clothes back yet. I will send packages little by little through the national shipping company in France. If I do not win the competition, then I will ship everything all at once.

But it would be sensational if I become the first place winner. All the compositions in the list for the competition increase my motivation.

I turned 29 years old, already. I had a small birthday party with my friends in my room. Frederick's mother baked a cake for me, and it was very good. The main dish was a Japanese curry rice, of course. I am moving forward toward the competition for now. Please be careful not to overload yourself.

Visiting Provence, South France

Côte d'Azur was very quiet in February. There were few tourists except during the season of the carnival. Many hotels as well as restaurants were closed. One evening we got on a night train and left Paris. The next morning, we arrived in Nice, a town in South France.

In Nice, there was a museum dedicated to Marc Chagall. It was built on a hill top, providing ample sunlight for the stained-glass. It was VERY wonderful. Menton, another city located along the border between France and Italy, was warm even during the winter time and was blooming with Mimosa flowers. Its town hall had a wall painting by Jean Cocteau. In a small town called Saint Paul, there was also a modern art museum which displayed numerous works of art by Joan Miró, Alberto Giacometti, Wassily Kandinsky and many other artists.

Even the tiniest town had a fine museum. Considering the fact that many painters, seeking sunshine, moved to South France, we must admit that France is the country of the arts. This province has multiple museums individually dedicated to these many painters. During my study abroad, I was deeply attracted to the visual arts. Till then, I had not been interested.

I stopped by Arles on my way home from Côte d'Azur. This was the town I had wanted to visit. I had to see the town where Bizet composed *The Girl from Arles*. An amphitheater during the Roman era still exists in this city. I felt so good when I stood on the top of the amphitheater. Most of all, I marveled at the red colored roofs of all the buildings in the town.

In some French towns, buildings were intentionally made the same color to match. Arles was a pretty town. It thrilled me when I saw the folk dress of Arles at the folk museum in the town. In this region's cooking, they used plenty of tomatoes, garlic and olives. And I had its fish soup for the first time. I dipped my garlic toast in the soup and it was so good.

After returning to Japan, whenever I have a chance to perform *The Girl from Arles* or pick up a song that is related to the region of Provence, I think about this trip.

Papa-san · Mama-san

March 26th

I received Ayako's photo. She is so cute. I cannot wait for her to start talking. The weather in Paris is changing to spring: one day it is warm, and then the next day it is cold. The spring must be coming very soon. It has been bright until around 7P.M. in the evening. I am not sure about the morning, since I have been waking up late. I heard the summer time change will begin on March 28th.

Last week something was wrong with my stomach and I had no appetite. I suppose I have been eating too much. Perhaps when I return to Japan, I will not be satisfied with the amount of the food there.

On the 28th, I will be playing the piano to record some songs for a theater use. It will be very easy. I will be deliberately playing the piano poorly. I will be recording songs by Beethoven and Mozart. This recording will be used for a scene in a drama when a woman, who has not played the piano for a long time, gently touches the piano. It's interesting, isn't it? I will also take a trip to Italy in early April.

Visit to Italy

It was right in the middle of the Easter holiday when I took a trip to Italy in April. We walked and looked around several towns filled with tourists. The museum we went to in Florence was too huge to look around in one day. Buildings in the town were very old, and the exterior walls piled with rocks had turned black. Every big house had its courtyard without exception. Everything caught my eyes with novelty.

We got on a train to visit Venice without knowing that the town was a floating lagoon across rivers. We also did not know that we had gotten on a wrong train. The train kept moving toward the mountains. We managed to change to another train. Finally we arrived in Venice.

If we view this town by its scenery, the town surrounded by canals were like a fantasy in a dream. But it was another story when we were in the town and wanted to walk around. The town made us very tired. We wanted to go straight, but there were no streets which went straight. After crossing maze-like bridges, we finally arrived at our destination. When St. Mark's Square appeared, we felt as if all of our fatigue was gone. I was informed that the bottoms of the buildings soaked in the water had been eroding little by little, and that the whole city would eventually be sunk underwater. The town was filled with transient dreams and romanticism.

Though I could not go further to Rome, through this precious trip I was able to taste the Italian culture which was different from the French culture. I understood why many composers who had gone to Italy, wrote compositions based on their strong impressions of the country.

Papa • Mama

April 13th

At Paris

Have you received my postcard from Italy? Perhaps because I was in Italy, it feels very chilly in Paris. The winter season seems to have returned.

We rode many night trains in the trip so we got confused about day changes. Our days in Italy passed quickly. But I was glad to take the bold action to visit Italy. It was brighter than Paris and was not so crowded. I liked the fact that the people were very cheerful. Like the great fashion city that it is, the people in Milan were very fashionable. They had lots of primary colors.

There are LOTS of handsome men in Italy and whenever I passed by, I could not help staring at them with fascination. Having attended the Easter Mass service, I came back with full satisfaction. It is not bad to visit a place we have never been to. Next time I am planning to visit Berlin and Vienna. I will write you back.

Visiting Berlin, the Music City

Besides Paris, I really wanted to visit Berlin and Vienna during my visit to Europe. I wanted to go there primarily to listen to orchestras. Since many Japanese friends were studying in Berlin, I decided to visit them. Fortunately I had no lessons at school for a while, so I set out for Berlin in April.

In Berlin, they were performing different operas each day, so my friend and I went to see a performance one night. The ticket was not expensive. In Paris, it was very hard to get an opera ticket. People tried to get cheap tickets by standing in a long line, but it was still hard to get one. In Berlin my dream came true: I was able to see the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. The orchestra was having a huge celebration of its centennial anniversary that year.

I visited the Berlin University of the Arts. My friend Yoshikazu Tanaka was studying at the university. I observed his lesson at the conducting department. The students were mainly studying operas, which was unthinkable in Paris. I also saw many oriental students at the university.

Afterward, we looked at the Wall of East and West Germany. As I saw the atmosphere of the city, which was different from the one of Paris, I sensed the city's dark and heavy air, carrying wounds from the war.

I was informed that Professor Ken-Ichiro Kobayashi was having his concert in East Germany, so we went to visit. It was very difficult to enter East Germany from West Germany. When we arrived, we were shocked by the living conditions of East Germany. Despite their difficult life conditions, the audience of the concert listened to the music earnestly and gave a big applause to the performers. "They must really love music," I felt deeply.

Professor Kobayashi told me about another concert in the city of Nancy, France. So I decided to stop by on my way back from Vienna to see the concert. Ms. Harumi Hanafusa was the pianist and performed Edvard Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A minor*. Mr. Kaltenback was the resident conductor of the symphony in Nancy. I had met him in Japan. When I had entered a competition for

conductors in Japan for the first time when I was a student, he was a French participant. It was so nice to see him again. It had been 6 years since we had seen each other. I stayed in Nancy for several days as an interpreter for Professor Kobayashi.

After the concert, I returned to Paris with Professor Kobayashi. He graciously gave me a lesson for the Besançon competition, as the program for the competition had been released. It was a delightful lesson since I had not expected to have a lesson with him in Paris.

To Papa · Mama

May 15th

At Paris

How are you? It has become very warm in Paris. While I was taking a trip to Germany, the weather in Paris changed and I see some people wearing short sleeve shirts. It is amazing. It was still cold in Berlin.

I saw many Japanese students in Berlin. They spoke to each other in Japanese all the time. But the music environment in the city made me envious. The city was very new and pretty. It was safe, and its cleanliness is no match with Paris. I also saw Mr. Carl Bunte, who was my professor from Germany at the Tokyo University of the Arts. We had a meal at his house. He was surprised to see me and Yoshikazu Tanaka there.

After Berlin, I spent three days in Vienna. I went so far as Heiligenstadt where, it is recorded, Beethoven had walked around. There was a castle like a miniature model of the Palace of Versailles. A tour group from France happened to be there, so I followed the group to listen to the guide's information. Then I continued to Nancy, France with a night train.

I must be used to the language here now. I feel that it is not my fault but others' faults that they do not understand me. I have also made myself more understood by boldness, whether it is grammatically correct or not. What cheek! I should be learning more proper French.

While I was in Berlin, I tried to write a letter to my friend in Paris. But since I was not used to writing in French, I could not write, though I could pronounce. It is terrible, isn't it? Thankfully, my French comes naturally without much thinking, so I am able to live a daily life in French, except when I write a letter to Japan.

Strawberries have been in the markets in Paris finally. It must be the end of the season in Japan. The strawberries here are not as sweet as they should be. We have various kinds of fruit and we can get oranges all year round.

Please take care of yourselves.

No Woman for 1st Winner?

One incident happened in June. There was a workshop for the Besançon competition. I wanted to attend the workshop but was bluntly declined, because they said it was for the French natives only. Nevertheless I went to the workshop as an auditor.

Mr. Jean Fournet was the guest conductor at the workshop. The French participants were preparing for the competition with orchestras like this. I felt it was unfair.

A woman, born in the Soviet Union, was attending the workshop. She had obtained her French citizenship. After the workshop, I got a ride with her, so we talked on the way home. Eventually, we talked about the Besançon competition. She was also entering the competition this year. She had participated in the same competition in the past and made it to the finals, but could not win the 1st prize. When she asked the judging committee why she could not win, she was told, "We do not grant the 1st prize to a woman." I was shocked. I really wanted to doubt that it was true, but surely no woman had won 1st prize at the competition before. I was devastated by her words. I thought, "Then it would be meaningless to enter the competition." I thought about withdrawing from the completion.

After the competition was over, I asked questions about this issue to those who were in charge of the competition. They said that the lady with whom I had talked had not even made it to the final round. They also said that it would be absolutely impossible for the association not to grant a woman the 1st prize. What a cry wolf it was! But actually what she had said led me to release my burden. I was able to enter the competition at ease.

Dear Mama,

June 3rd

Paris

How are you? You must be busy babysitting. I visited Frederick's home in a rural area. His house had a large garden, and cherry trees as well as kiwi trees were planted there. A herd of cattle was grazing in the field near his house. It was a very nice laid-back countryside. We had a home concert during his house party, and I sang Japanese folk songs accompanied by flute and cello.

His relatives and neighbors came to the party, so about 20 people gathered together and had a lively time. I was the only Japanese and that was a bit tiring, but the party was fun. His house is located about one hour away from Paris by car. Everyone was genuinely kind there. They treated me like their daughter. I was so blessed to meet such a wonderful family.

I have another thing to share with you. We had a competition for the completion of the courses at the École Normale, and I placed 1st, and unanimously from all the judges. In France any woman is acknowledged if she is good. Professor Dervaux was well pleased, too. After the performance, the orchestra musicians also told me that it was good. One person commented that he could instantly tell that I liked music very much. That was the best compliment. Now I am aiming for Besançon. I have to work hard. In August I am planning to attend a workshop in Salzburg. I will write you back.

June 10th

Paris

How are you doing? It has been very hot in Paris. I hear thunder every day. It echoes well here, since it is surrounded by buildings. We have lots of rainstorms, causing flooding everywhere.

I received a letter that my application process was complete for the Besançon competition. The competition will start on September 10th. It would be great if I could stay until the finals. June is a very busy season. Right now there is an international orchestral festival in Paris, and many orchestras including the

1st movement
Letters

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic, and the Bamberg Symphony are in town.

Riccardo Muti, a conductor, is performing Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, so I am going to see his rehearsal. I will write you again.

Riccardo Muti, the Conductor

Every year there is a music festival at Saint-Denis, Paris. This year Ricard Muti was conducting Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* with the Orchestre national de France. I was worried that he might not allow anyone to observe his rehearsal, since he seemed to be a grumpy person. But I got the permission by asking him directly. I had seen this orchestra's rehearsals many times. And knowing its French characteristic of "chatting" during rehearsal, I could not believe what I saw during Muti's rehearsal with the orchestra.

Throughout his rehearsal, Muti did not talk to any member of the orchestra (neither musicians nor chorus). To me it was unheard of for those talkative French musicians to intently listen to the conductor's direction with silence. The performance was amazing and the music sounded nothing but Italian, communicating the heart of Verdi itself.

My first encounter with Muti was impressive. Then two years later, I had another opportunity to listen to his rehearsal again with much more musicality than the first time. The program of his performance was *Ivan the Terrible*, composed by Sergei Prokofiev. Like the *Messa da Requiem*, this composition was played with a large chorus, and this was the first and a very difficult performance for the members of the orchestra. Like the last time, the conductor directed his rehearsal without talking. Once in a while we heard talking in the choir, but Muti strictly quieted them down, saying, "What are you talking about?"

I saw something very impressive during this rehearsal. There was a part when the chorus had to stand up to sing in the middle of the music. When the right part came, Muti signaled for the chorus to stand up. The members of the chorus stood up slowly, or rather not together. It obviously did not look good. Immediately Muti demanded them to repeat the part. But the way he told them was quite impressive to me.

All Muti did was just say one word to the chorus, "Musicali (be musical)." I could not believe how smoothly and unified the whole choir stood up when they repeated the part right after that! In this manner, Muti demanded with less words, which led the members of the orchestra to praise him, saying, "His rehearsal is

nothing but music.”

Muti was a dictatorial conductor, which was rare in today’s classical music. The levels of concentration and intensity during his rehearsal were extraordinary. The musicians were also required to concentrate to the full extent. I could not help imagining how hard it would be if this level of rehearsal continued every day. Those who have seen Muti’s rehearsals regard him as either genius or insane.

The final note of *Ivan the Terrible* ended with a fermata. But Muti prolonged the note with unbelievable length and strength, which was far beyond the normal length and strength. As soon as the rehearsal was finished, all the member of the orchestra and the chorus gave him a big ovation.

It was as if they gave themselves an ovation out of their own musical satisfaction with having maintained such extraordinary intensity. All the people seemed to be satisfied. Though strangers, when everybody left the hall, they greeted one another with smiles, saying, “See you tomorrow!”

Dear Papa · Mama

July 30th

Salzburg

How are you? I came to Salzburg by a night train. I was so tired by the time I arrived, because I had been studying for the audition on the train. The place where I am staying is very pretty and the landlord brings breakfast to my room. The room size is as large as my room in Paris, but much cleaner.

About 50 people came from various countries for the audition. Those who passed the audition were divided into groups A and B. Of course I am in the A group. There are 8 members in the group. My audition was fantastic! Afterwards, everyone praised me, saying that it was very good. There are 4 Japanese people in the workshop. As many as 6 people came from the École Normale as well.

We speak daily in French, German, Japanese, and sometimes English, so the workshop is very international. I am speaking more German little by little. I speak in French when I need a time for refreshment. Today Professor Hager gave us his critiques about the audition. He said he did not remember that I was a woman during my conducting. He gave me a compliment that my small body looked very big and that I expressed the image of the composition in my movement and expression well.

For the audition, I conducted the overture of Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*. As I began conducting, I spoke to the orchestra in French, "S'il vous plait." That made me laugh. Anyway, I am taking so many classes, but I am delighted to have my talent acknowledged while being here. I feel as if my dream is expanding without limits.

I don't think I can write many letters until the Besançon Competition. I am studying harder than I have ever done before. I wake up at 6A.M. and start studying music scores, nibbling on bread. Right now I am at the peak of my study this year. I also feel at peace here since Salzburg is a safe city. It is very pretty, too. I will write you again when I can.

August 8th **Salzburg**

Have you received my post card? It is pretty, isn't it? It is cool here, too. It often rains. It always rains when Sunday comes. My concert on the 6th was done without problems. I conducted *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, composed by Maurice Ravel.

The members of the orchestra said they did not know the composition at all. We only had two hours of rehearsing, which was tough. I had not studied the composition until I came to Salzburg either. So the rehearsal was done quite lively. Members of a student orchestra joined the orchestra. They were very happy to participate in the orchestra.

Foreign students here are not very expressive, but I am having fun every day.

Yesterday I went to see Beethoven's opera, *Fidelio*. Just as I expected, the audience at the Salzburg Festival was all dressed up with black suits and long dresses. It was almost like a party, and the tourists outside the hall watched the audience of the opera.

Surely I watched an authentic opera performance. It was so good. This town was busy only during the summer time. For the rest of the year, the city is just a rural town.

I have become more used to speaking in German, but I still speak more French, since my French friends are with me. They are all boys. They seem to like my rehearsals, so they often come to visit. We all get along with one another well. One of them tells me that I am like a butterfly, because I go here and there to chat. When I am with foreigners, I can express my opinions without reserve, and I like it. That is because there is no flattering.

I wish I could walk around the town on a sunny day. I have not been able to see anything of the town, because I am doing nothing but study. It is as if I were taking a college entrance examination. It is tiring, but satisfying as well. I will write you back.

Workshop at Salzburg, Part I

I completed the course at the École Normale in June, and I had two more months until the Besançon Competition started. I could not stay in Paris while doing nothing for two months, and there would be no concerts once the vacation season started. I knew I could not go on like this.

Then I heard about a summer workshop with the Konservatorium Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, so I applied for it. There would be an audition and if I passed, I would be able to conduct an orchestra anytime I wanted. In Paris, I had had less opportunities to conduct orchestras than in Japan. I thought it would be wonderful if I could have the chance to conduct. I was also preparing to return to Japan and was busy packing my belongings to ship back, before moving out of my apartment in Paris.

When I finally arrived in Salzburg, it was at the end of July and the flowers in the city park were in bloom. The city was filled with gardens shining in the strong summer sun. There were lots of tourists too, since it was right in the middle of the Salzburg Festival. Many Japanese were attending the workshop as well, and some of them were my former classmates from the Tokyo University of the Arts.

I took and passed the audition to be enrolled in the workshop class. Now I could conduct every day. Some students from the École Normale were also taking the workshop. This orchestra was formed just for the summer workshop and was made up with half Germans and half Americans. The instructor of the conducting workshop was Mr. Leopold Hager. His lectures were done in German. I did not understand them at all, and they often made me drowsy.

Dear Papa · Mama

July 30th

Salzburg

How are you? I came to Salzburg by a night train. I was so tired by the time I arrived, because I had been studying for the audition on the train. The place where I am staying is very pretty and the landlord brings breakfast to my room. The room size is as large as my room in Paris, but much cleaner.

About 50 people came from various countries for the audition. Those who passed the audition were divided into groups A and B. Of course I am in the A group. There are 8 members in the group. My audition was fantastic! Afterwards, everyone praised me, saying that it was very good. There are 4 Japanese people in the workshop. As many as 6 people came from the École Normale as well.

We speak daily in French, German, Japanese, and sometimes English, so the workshop is very international. I am speaking more German little by little. I speak in French when I need a time for refreshment. Today Professor Hager gave us his critiques about the audition. He said he did not remember that I was a woman during my conducting. He gave me a compliment that my small body looked very big and that I expressed the image of the composition in my movement and expression well.

For the audition, I conducted the overture of Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*. As I began conducting, I spoke to the orchestra in French, "S'il vous plait." That made me laugh. Anyway, I am taking so many classes, but I am delighted to have my talent acknowledged while being here. I feel as if my dream is expanding without limits.

I don't think I can write many letters until the Besançon Competition. I am studying harder than I have ever done before. I wake up at 6A.M. and start studying music scores, nibbling on bread. Right now I am at the peak of my study this year. I also feel at peace here since Salzburg is a safe city. It is very pretty, too. I will write you again when I can.

August 8th **Salzburg**

Have you received my post card? It is pretty, isn't it? It is cool here, too. It often rains. It always rains when Sunday comes. My concert on the 6th was done without problems. I conducted *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, composed by Maurice Ravel.

The members of the orchestra said they did not know the composition at all. We only had two hours of rehearsing, which was tough. I had not studied the composition until I came to Salzburg either. So the rehearsal was done quite lively. Members of a student orchestra joined the orchestra. They were very happy to participate in the orchestra.

Foreign students here are not very expressive, but I am having fun every day.

Yesterday I went to see Beethoven's opera, *Fidelio*. Just as I expected, the audience at the Salzburg Festival was all dressed up with black suits and long dresses. It was almost like a party, and the tourists outside the hall watched the audience of the opera.

Surely I watched an authentic opera performance. It was so good. This town was busy only during the summer time. For the rest of the year, the city is just a rural town.

I have become more used to speaking in German, but I still speak more French, since my French friends are with me. They are all boys. They seem to like my rehearsals, so they often come to visit. We all get along with one another well. One of them tells me that I am like a butterfly, because I go here and there to chat. When I am with foreigners, I can express my opinions without reserve, and I like it. That is because there is no flattering.

I wish I could walk around the town on a sunny day. I have not been able to see anything of the town, because I am doing nothing but study. It is as if I were taking a college entrance examination. It is tiring, but satisfying as well. I will write you back.

Workshop at Salzburg, Part II

Being surrounded by French friends, I spent every day speaking in French and Japanese. But during the rehearsals with the orchestra I had to speak a mixture of German and English. The members of the orchestra had come from various countries, so I made lots of friends. My time during the month of my stay in Salzburg was meaningful. I heard many different opinions from them as well, such as how to understand music.

The place where I stayed in Salzburg was located by a river. From there I had some moments to watch the river flowing at ease. I was concerned about the program for the Besançon Competition, though. Since I had to conduct the orchestra for the workshop in every class, I had had no time to study other compositions. I was getting nervous.

August 16th **Salzburg**

How are you doing? I heard that it is getting really hot in Japan. Here it is cool and comfortable. I have lost much weight since I came to Salzburg.

It is getting too hard. I mean this workshop is. There is more time watching other people conducting than doing it. The professor often does not call my name. He does not allow me to conduct, though I want to. Members of the orchestra are often asking me when I will conduct, but...

Finally today, I was able to conduct "Bartók." It seemed that Professor Hager was looking for any fault from my conducting. Before he spoke anything, I spoke to the orchestra in German first. I had accepted the challenge, so it did not matter whether my German was good or not. Afterwards the orchestra cheered me, shouting, "Bravo!"

Tired of continually waiting for my chance to conduct, I decided to skip the workshop class so that I could prepare for the Besançon Competition. Recently, there are reports of bombings in Paris. They cannot walk around the city, can they? I was invited to participate in a gathering held in Brittany at the end of August. But since I am preparing for the competition, I think I will stay in Salzburg a little longer. I am about to be completely exhausted. I am cutting my sleep time to study.

One of the orchestra members is a Japanese who urged me to win the 1st place for the Besançon Competition. But he also said that I would not be able to win, unless I studied. I really need more time. I cannot believe that I am going back to Japan in a month! I want to work here. People in Salzburg eat lots of pork and they don't eat beef. But, I miss the cheese in France. Beer here is very tasty. So are cakes. Nevertheless, believe or not, I am losing weight, and my face looks thinner. I will find some time to write you again.

Workshop at Salzburg, Part III

I had known it beforehand, but throughout the workshop I could not get along with Professor Hager. We had different opinions with one another. I had hard times with him during my rehearsals. I had been chosen as one of the students to perform in a concert. Ranks would be given on the basis of the performance.

When I stopped the orchestra in the middle of rehearsing, Professor Hager would immediately instruct us to continue and to look for other parts to practice. The members of the orchestra were confused as if there were two conductors. I could not direct the rehearsal as smoothly as I wanted. As a result, I was ranked as 2nd. The orchestra members gave me various words. Some also gave me words of encouragement. One of them said, "I can see technique in your conducting, but not music. That was very profound advice. Chagrined at the result of the concert, I made a declaration that I would not fail to win the Besançon Competition. A friend promised that he would walk standing on his head throughout the town of Salzburg if I won the competition. I wondered if he would keep his promise. But, in spite of everything, I want to be thankful for the workshop, which made me study eagerly.

When I re-visited this town years later, the past memories of the workshop came back as if they had happened yesterday. Once in a while I receive letters from the Italian friend I met back then. It was so good to meet with people from different countries. What shocked me the most was when they told me that they had to do their required military service for one or two years. They had to pause their hard effort to study music in order to serve in the army. They were envious about Japan, because it had no liability for military service. That month of the summer was truly meaningful.

August 28th

At Salz

How are you? The month of August is almost over. Japan must be in the heat of the late summer now. The workshop is finally over and I am exhausted. So many things made me mad during the workshop. Even the last concert was difficult.

I really do not like it when I cannot practice in a way that I want. Right now I am shutting myself in my room to study. I will go to Paris on the 31st. I have not been around this town, the castle or even the birthplace of Mozart. I am doing nothing but studying. I cannot fail to win the Besançon Competition. Otherwise, my frustration may not be appeased. My time as an overseas student is less than one month now. I am maximizing my time of freedom as much as possible. I will do my best for the competition, though. I will write you back.

The Besançon Competition, Part I

I headed for Besançon in early September. It had been just one year ago when I visited the city's music festival to observe the competition of that year.

The city of Besançon is located near the border of Switzerland. Because of its clean air, the city once flourished in the precision machinery industry such as watches. Later the industry business declined. Some French think (and they always say whenever they see Japanese people) that the decline resulted from the advancement of competitors such as Japan's Seiko and other corporations. There is an ancient castle on the top of the hill, and from the top of the castle we can view the whole city of Besançon from the oxbow of the Doubs River which runs in the shape of a lyre.

There is a long history of the music festival in this city, and this year was its 35th year. The competition for young conductors, which began in 1951, is held annually during the music festival. In 1959 Mr. Seiji Ozawa placed 1st. A few Japanese people enter the competition every year.

On September 9th, the day before the 1st round, all the candidates gathered together for orientation. 32 candidates from 18 nations would enter the competition. The age limit was 30. I entered the competition at the age of 29, barely under the qualification. Prior to the 1st round, there had been a screening process to select candidates by their records, and those 32 candidates were chosen out of approximately 150 applicants. Three women, including myself, were entering the competition. One of the three women was that lady who had been born in the Soviet Union. Another Japanese, who had been living in France for a long time was also one of the candidates. A young 20 year old student was also entering the completion. Some of my classmates from the École Normale were with me, too.

Those who live in other European countries seem to enter competitions in any nation easily. When they have a chance, they take it. But, for a Japanese entering a competition in a foreign country, we need to make a serious commitment, almost as if we were joining a battle, because it is far from Japan. For that reason alone, living in Europe makes it easier to enter competitions.

Candidates from Eastern European nations, such as Romania and Hungary, were sighing because they had not been able to get the music scores for the program. Some of them had purchased the scores only after arriving in France. The people assembled together for the orientation were big, and they all looked competent. I willed myself strong to keep from flinching. Fortunately, I saw many familiar faces in the assembly, and as I talked with them, I gradually relaxed.

A drawing was held to decide which composition each candidate would conduct for the 1st round. I would be rehearsing and performing one of three programs. My drawing result was to conduct the Sinfonia in *The Barber of Seville* by Rossini. I felt lucky, because, out of Rossini, Berlioz, or Schubert, I had wanted to conduct this composition the most.

When I returned to my hotel, last year's winner of the competition passed by me. He was here to perform in the Besançon International Music Festival as the winner of the previous year's competition. I was familiar with his face since I had seen him last year. We looked at each other but I did not greet him. Yet I made my own interpretation that it was an event of good luck. I was being kind of superstitious.

On the following day, the 10th of September, the 1st round began. We candidates conducted the Orchestre Symphonique de Mulhouse at the Théâtre Musical de Besançon. We were not allowed to watch other candidate's performance, so we had no idea what was happening inside the theater. In the early morning the candidates were already in front of the theater entrance, nervously talking to one another. All we could do was ask the candidates who had finished conducting about things like the functionality of the orchestra, and make a good guess of how things were set up inside.

Then my turn came. As I entered the theater, I saw a group of Jury members in a line on the stage. Professor Dervaux was there as the chairman of the Jury. A candidate would have 10 minutes to rehearse a given program, followed by conducting the program in its entirety and without interruption. Having just 10 minutes for rehearsing the program was hard, and the candidate had to be really careful in order to communicate to the orchestra short and to the point what the

candidate wanted to express or do.

The orchestra was not as functional as I had expected, but was very cooperative with me when I conducted. Of course we rehearsed in French. English and German translators were present, but I had been advised to speak in French no matter how broken my French might be, because it would take too much time if I relied on the translators and it would also block me from directly expressing my feelings. Fortunately, thanks to my one year oversea study in Paris, I had almost no trouble speaking in French to direct the orchestra, using some technical terms I had learned for rehearsing.

When it comes to rehearsing, a conductor has to say numbers quite often during the rehearsal. That is, the conductor points out sections to practice by the numbers written in the music scores. And these numbers are tricky. If you are panicking, numbers do not come out of your mouth smoothly in French.

There was one funny incidence. I was pointing the musicians a music section, which was a few bars before the number written on the music score. I counted the numbers in Japanese, saying, "Ichi, Ni, San...", because counting numbers in French would confuse me. After counting in Japanese, I told the number to the orchestra in French. But the foreigners did not know the Japanese counting. Later a French person asked me, "What were you yelling and talking to yourself about?" When I told the person that Japanese came out of my mouth because I was panicking, I was laughed at.

Because I conducted an orchestra during the workshop at Salzburg, right before the Besançon competition, I had been used to rehearsing in German. So I mixed in some German words during the 1st round of the competition. The orchestra was based in a city close to the border between Germany and France, and many members of the orchestra understood German.

The members of the orchestra must have been thinking about how many languages I was mixing during the rehearsal. When I could not make myself understood by words, then singing was the best way. I sang a melody line to them, saying that this was how I wanted them to play, with exaggerated gesture. Then the orchestra responded immediately. I was glad that I had picked *The*

Barber of Seville at the drawing and that I performed it with the orchestra.

The 1st round of this competition was to test how the candidates could run their rehearsals. The Jury members paid great attention to the candidates during their rehearsals with the orchestra, but not during their performances. They did various things such as talking with another Juror next to them, or looking at papers. I could not help wondering why they could not just sit and listen quietly.

I was very satisfied with my performance in the 1st round. I knew I did what I wanted to do. The results of the evaluation by the Jury would be announced later. The orchestra was faithful in following my conducting. At least, I finished my 1st day of the competition safely.

September 10th

Besançon

Bonjour. I haven't written you for a while, have I? I am a little bit tired. I returned to Paris from Salzburg and ate a lot at Frederick's house. As a result, I gained weight and became chubby.

When I came back from Salz, I was really skinny.

I will be returning to Japan in two weeks. Could you do me a favor? I am really craving for *Atsuage*. And I also want fish (grilled or fried).

I feel so much relief now, because the 1st round competition is over. Fortunately I was able to conduct on the 1st day of the round, so I can prepare for the 2nd round now. I conducted Rossini. I must have been very lucky. I will write you back.

The Besançon Competition, Part II

The 1st round of the Besançon Competition finished in the morning of the 3rd day after the competition began. The results were going to be announced finally. When all the candidates gathered together to hear the announcement, my name was called at the very first. I could tell easily that they called the name of a woman, because they said in French, “Mademoiselle.” I was so delighted that I had passed the 1st round. 11 out of the 32 candidates passed the 1st round. Immediately arrangements for the 2nd round were announced.

I would be the first candidate to conduct and the program *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* was selected. “Yes!” I thought. This motivated me to do a good performance. Like the 1st round, three compositions had been pre-selected for the program for the 2nd round. All the works were French works, which made the Besançon Competition distinctive. Success in the competition depended on how well we could present French music. Decorating the song with as many nuances as possible was the key.

The 2nd round was scheduled to start one hour after the announcement of the 1st round result. Quickly I called Japan to report the result, and then went back to the hotel right away to get into work for the next assignment. There was no time. I had no time to eat lunch, either.

Like the 1st round, I was given 10 minutes for rehearsal. I had to be really careful rehearsing the slow tempo song, or the time would run out quickly. I needed to get my ideas in a few words point by point, while leaving out unessential parts. I tried recalling my first lesson with Professor Dervaux at the École Normale.

The 2nd round began. It was the same orchestra as the 1st round competition. As I stood on the podium, I imagined Mallarmé’s poem, *the Afternoon of a Faun*, and then quoted it to the orchestra.

“In a hot and dull summer afternoon, having nothing to do, a faun starts playing the flute.”

Every French person knew this poem, so I did not need to say it. But, I wanted

to create the poem's atmosphere. In my music score, I had written notes in French that I had learned from my French friends. The people of the orchestra started playing the song, beaming.

The beginning part went very well. I did my best not to stop the flow of the song, and practiced only essential points part by part. And indeed, the orchestra sounded distinctly French. Completely different from the 1st round, the orchestra sounded as lovely as it should be. Because I had not expect this level of music flow, I was deeply moved while conducting. How blessed I was!

Participants of the competition, who were nervous during the daytime, went out for dinner in the evening. Restaurants were located in a certain area. Cool breezes comforted us at dusk, and we had dinner on tables outside. Over dinner, I talked with other participants about the competition. Many of them said that they were not good at French music.

I imagined how the orchestra played as I listened to other participants' stories. I heard that the orchestra could not follow one conductor smoothly, because the conductor treated the orchestra harshly. I felt it strange that the competition in this foreign country was so light hearted. The mealtime was a brief time of refreshment for all the participants.

On the following day, results of the 2nd round were announced, and six candidates had passed. I, the Japanese man, the woman born in the Soviet Union, and three other people were selected. I was relieved by the results, but I knew that the 3rd round was going to be challenging. The 3rd round seemed to make the Besançon Competition unique. Candidates would have to find errors from the orchestra and then sight-read another program piece.

I heard that music schools in France have adopted this "finding errors" drill in their classes. The conductor had the correct music score, but the parts for the orchestra had some errors. And the orchestra intentionally would play the parts, including those errors. Within a time limit, the conductor would have to point out those errors. Out of the six candidates, my turn was first.

In fairness, for the 3rd round, each candidate would enter a room to study the

music score for ten minutes. I found that the program piece was the March from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. I was paying attention to the music score during the 10 minutes, so I failed to see a note written in small letters in French that there would be “EIGHT errors.” Without knowing it, I stood on the podium. I was thinking that I just needed to find errors, I kept pointing out errors by playing with slow tempos or by repeating the same parts several times.

I did not find it difficult to find errors, because in Japan I had often conducted amateur orchestras. Whenever I found an error, Professor Dervaux, the chairman of the Jury, raised his hand and said loudly, “Good.” My time ran out when I pointed out the 6th error. I heard voices of “Bravo!” from the audience as I came down from the stage.

The competition was open to the public from the 3rd round, so the seats were packed with people. This gave the conductors more pressure.

After the round, all the 3rd round candidates had fun talking to each other about how many mistakes they had found. One candidate even said that there were no errors. I was fortunate to conduct first, because the audience soon found out where errors were, so they started giggling when the candidates repeated the same parts but could not find where errors were. I thought this part of the competition was mean.

“Out of the frying pan and into the fire,” I took the next challenge to sight-read a new piece and conducting it. Again, to be fair, each candidate was separated and was allowed to study the music score for 10 minutes before conducting.

When I entered the room, I was stunned to see a part of the score from *Le Chant du Rossignol*, composed by Stravinsky. The part was the hardest section in the composition to conduct. I had experienced conducting music pieces with irregular time many times. But it was still not easy to conduct such a difficult song with the orchestra after briefly studying the music for only ten minutes. Looking at the score, I practiced conducting. But it was extremely hard. As a staff member took me to the stage, I kept complaining in French, “C'est pas possible (It is impossible).” There was no way that I could conduct this piece. But I had to do it. So I decided to be brave.

Looking at the music score, I began conducting. I doubted how long the orchestra had really practiced this piece before, because it was difficult for the orchestra as well. As we came closer to the end, the orchestra started losing the time of the music, and finally no sound was heard. But I felt I had to keep conducting. I finished conducting the piece by singing with loud voice. There was applause throughout the hall.

I will never forget the sense of intensity and nervousness. After all the candidates finished the 3rd round, all said they had had an extremely hard time conducting the piece. Somebody said that he lost the time right in the middle of the performance. Another person did not know what to do when the orchestra stopped several times. One person did not even change time at all and kept playing the piece in double time. That person ended up being asked to play the piece from the beginning again.

The results were announced. Two people were left for the final round, I and Osmo Vanska, a male candidate from Finland. Partially I was relieved, but I had to make one more push for the final round.

During the competition, candidates in each round gathered together to take photos. Local TV cameramen were present as well, so photos were taken in a lively atmosphere. Eleven people were selected after the 1st round, and they were called the soccer team. Six people were selected after the 2nd round, so they were called the volley ball team. When the two of us were selected after the 3rd round, we were teased as if being in a marriage ceremony because we were male and female. Even then, the spirit of rivalry was absent between us.

The members of the orchestra spent their break time at the park, playing games and so on. I talked with them a lot about music. They were delighted in the music I expressed. They had not seen any other conductors who said, "Please," or "Thank you." I was glad that my acts of kindness had made them feel happy and perform with good feeling. They even said to me, "No matter what result the final round may be, we all acknowledge you as the 1st winner. What a complement they gave to me! Instantly my intense nervousness disappeared. I knew in my heart that I would make my best performance at the final round.

Since the competition began, several rounds had taken place, and a lot of time had passed. Before welcoming the final round, I quickly made a phone call to my family in Japan. I also asked them to let Professors Watanabe and Kobayashi know that I had made it to the final round.

Because the competition was a part of the music festival, the city of Besançon was fully involved with the event. On the night when the 3rd round finished, a party was held at the city hall. The Mayor of the city, officials, as well as participants of the competition, including the two of us who remained until the final round were invited to the party.

The party began in the evening after 8P.M. The sun was still out and bright, creating solid shadows on the buildings. Preoccupied with the final round the next day, the two of us were extremely nervous. We worried about how long the party was going to last. The participants who did not make it to the final round all encouraged me to do my best for the final round. I think the party lasted until around 11P.M. I hurried to my hotel to prepare. I could not sleep because of nervousness. I stayed awake throughout the night, catching up on the music score and preparing for the final round.

At last, in the morning of the next day, the final round rehearsals began. Both of us were given 70 minutes to rehearse three program pieces in the presence of the Jury. The program was Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte*, Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, and Bartók's *Violin Concerto No. 2*. The violin concerto was really difficult. Mr. Devy Erlih, a French man, was the solo violinist for the concerto. He could play passages accurately with fierce speed. I was so delighted to perform with him. I barely finished the rehearsal under the constant pressure of time. But, I did not have much time, so I could not rehearse enough to be satisfied. The other conductor must have been in the same situation. The rehearsals were over in the morning, and the final round would be held as a concert at the concert hall at 8P.M. that evening. I had a free time in the afternoon until the concert, but there was no way that I could rest. The members of the orchestra cheered me on, saying, "We will also play our best." I was very delighted by that.

The time for the final round concert came. Dressed in black stage costume, the

two of us waited in the backstage room. We had no spirit of rivalry. We held hands, promising to have a great concert together. The hall was packed with a great audience. I had contacted Mr. Robin of the Rotary Club, so Mr. and Mrs. Robin came to see the concert from Paris. They were going to watch me conduct for the first time.

I had to say I was not fully satisfied with my performance that evening, but I conducted Ravel's *Pavane* with deep feelings. It moved me that I performed the piece of Ravel, my favorite composer, at the final round of the Besançon Competition, my true dream. As I finished conducting each piece, there was applause from the hall. It was a very affectionate applause.

I had forgotten that this was a competition. When the performance was over, I sensed that this was the completion of my study abroad. The results of the competition did not matter, because I was fully satisfied that the competition was over. After the concert, we had to wait for a long time, at least an hour. But I did not feel any anxiety during that time.

Finally the results for the final round were announced. We were told to wait at the stage wing. A ceremony continued for a long time, as the progress of the competition was explained, and Professor Dervaux gave his critique, and so on. Then suddenly the two of us were called to come forward to the stage. There was a great noise of excitement throughout the hall accompanied by tremendous applause and voices of "Bravo!" In a flash, I wondered what was going on. Anyhow, we came to the stage. The staff next to us shook our hands and congratulated us. Both I and Osmo Vanska were standing speechless.

Osmo Vanska only spoke very little English. Unable to hold my self any longer, I asked a staff person near us, "So, what are we placed?" The staff responded, "Both of you are placed 1st! Congratulations." Surprised at the answer, I interpreted it for Osmo Vanska, and finally we found out that both of us were placed 1st. I found it strange that everyone in the hall was very excited for us, while we did not understand it.

The Jury members were sitting at the table on the stage, and Professor Dervaux was, of course, rejoicing. Without knowing what I was doing, I shook his hand.

He seemed very delighted. I did not know that, when we were waiting at the stage wing, he had announced, “I am so delighted to choose two 1st winners in my last year as the chairman of the Jury for the Besançon Competition.” No one had thought this would be his last year as the chairman of the Jury.

The 1st winner of this competition had received the Émile Vuillermoz Award. We were given certificates for the award and *LYRE d'OR* (Golden Lyre), which was shaped after the city of Besançon surrounded by the Doubs.

This “Golden Lyre” was only given to one person every year, just because 1st winner was ruled to be one person. But because there were two 1st winners, another “Golden Lyre” was going to be sent later. We immediately began talking about which of us would bring the “Lyre” home first. By the way, this “Lyre” was extremely heavy. He would have to bring it to Finland, while I would have to bring it to Japan. I thought it would be troublesome to take it home with me. I was thinking of many other belongings that I had accumulated during my oversea stay. How could I carry this home, in addition to my other luggage? We did a coin toss to decide who would take it home first.

In the end, I was the one who was going to take it home first. Looking back, that was actually good, because of all the interviews I had back in Japan after the competition. And now it is funny to think that we were giving way to one another over such a precious “Golden Lyre.” Its weight was 3 kilograms.

When I was leaving Paris to go back to Japan, I was asked what this heavy thing made of metal was at the airport check point. When I explained to the officers about the competition, they became very pleased, and asked me to come back to France again soon and have a concert. I thought they were humorous.

All the competition ceremony was finally over, and I was so exhausted. I think it had already passed midnight. I had been in a state of nervousness and tension all day, since the rehearsal early in the morning. I just wanted to go back to the hotel and rest. But there was still another ceremony. We were going to have a meal with the Jury members. Although it had already passed midnight, we received comments about the competition from them. I asked Professor Dervaux, “How was my performance during the competition?” He told me, “That

Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun was the best.” This piece, with which I had bitter memories, actually opened the way for me as a conductor today. Since the competition, I have conducted the piece many times, and it always reminds me of the competition. I always conduct this piece with the music score that I used at the competition. The part of Mallarmé’s poem is written on the sheet. Numbers are written in French. All of my precious memories of France are filled up in this small music score.

One French once commented that my performance of this piece was more French than French conductors. I am not sure what it means to be more French, but I am sure of one thing: I love this piece very much. I love this piece more than anyone else does.

Professor Dervaux, who taught me many lessons, is gone now. It has been very long since that competition was over.

September 19th

Paris

I will be probably in Tokyo by the time you receive this letter. What a situation I am in now! I do not know what is going to follow after this. I myself have no clue. But I am happy, because I will be able to come back to Europe again. Well, I will see you in Japan.