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Not by Love Alone: The Violin in Japan, 1850-2010

Margaret Mehl

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Suzuki Shin'ichi, the Tokyo String Quartet, Midori – How did Japanese violinists manage to revolutionize violin teaching, win international competitions, conquer Western concert stages, study at world-famous conservatoires and take up positions in leading orchestras and prestigious music faculties? What enabled the Japanese to master Western classical music within a few decades? What are the true origins of the Suzuki Method? How did Mozart and Beethoven come to be more widely heard in Japan today than Japan's own traditional music?

Not by Love Alone presents Japan's biggest success story: the complete assimilation of an alien musical tradition within a few decades and Japan's rise to a musical superpower in the latter half of the twentieth century. The violin played a key role in this story and is still one of the most popular instruments. Mass-produced by Suzuki Masakichi already in 1900, it became the vehicle for Suzuki Shin'ichi's pioneering teaching method fifty years later.

Not by Love Alone traces the history of the violin in Japan from its beginnings to the present day. It presents the most important pioneers of Western music and the violin, both Japanese and foreign, the first students, violin makers and composers for the violin, early child prodigies, pioneering teachers, and today's leading violinists, including those who have crossed stylistic boundaries. In addition Not by Love Alone discusses the relationship between the violin and the traditional music of Japan as well as the violin's part in expressing Japan's modern identity.

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