

The story of the sacred tree violin

Miyazaki Prefecture, the birthplace of mythology. The lands associated with the stories of the gods recorded in the “Kojiki” and “Nihon Shoki” are scattered throughout this region. These gods are revered as the principal deities at various shrines and quietly watch over the changing times along with the sacred trees. Breathing in the moment, the sky, earth, and people intertwine. Weaving the past, spinning time toward the future.

| Story I A Violin from a Sacred Tree!?

Such an extraordinary idea was conceived by Tatsuya Yamauchi, a violinist from Miyazaki Prefecture. “The inspiration came when I visited a shrine during one of my performances and saw a sacred tree that was hundreds of years old. I was deeply moved by its grandeur. I had been thinking about how I could give back to my hometown of Miyazaki, and the idea of making a violin from the sacred tree came to mind.”

| Story II The Wishes Imbued

Sacred trees that have fallen due to natural disasters and have completed their roles are carefully cut and preserved. Meanwhile, a violin’s lifespan is about 400 years. If a sacred tree is reborn as a violin, it can create a new history by delivering its sound to people around the world. Additionally, this endeavor embodies our organization’s aspiration: “We hope that children, who will shape the future, will lead enriched lives by experiencing music and other cultural arts.”

| Story III Guided Feelings and Encounters

In the winter of 2020, Mr. Yamauchi and his team visited Takachiho Shrine in Takachiho Town and Sano Shrine in Takahara Town. When they explained their purpose to both shrines, the reactions were of surprise as it was the first time they had heard such a request, but they agreed willingly. From Takachiho Shrine, they received “keyaki” wood for the back plate, and from Sano Shrine, they received “Sano cedar” for the front plate. Reflecting on the experience, he said, “The boards we received felt very precious.”



| Story IV The Two Theories of Tenson Korin’s Descent

There is a reason why these two shrines were chosen. According to the Japanese myth of Tenson Korin, Amaterasu Omikami, the principal deity of Japanese mythology, sent her grandson, Ninigi no Mikoto, down from the celestial plain of Takamagahara to govern the

earth. The location where this descent took place is famously known as “Takachiho.” However, in Miyazaki, there are two places named Takachiho: Takachiho Town in the northern part of the prefecture and Kirishima-Takachiho Peak in the southwest. In the “Nihon Shoki” (Chronicles of Japan), it is written that the descent took place at Kirishima-Takachiho Peak, while the “Hyuga Fudoki” describes it as occurring in Takachiho Town. There has been a long-standing debate about which location is the true site of Tenson Korin’s descent. By combining the sacred wood from each location into a single violin, what kind of sound will it produce?

| Story V A Violin Crafted by Two Masters

The violin was crafted by Muneyuki Nakazawa, a renowned violin doctor who supports violinists worldwide. Upon receiving the request to make the sacred tree violin, he said, “I will pour my soul into this, considering it my final mission.” Since the sacred tree wood differs from the materials typically used for violins, the crafting process was extremely challenging. Mr. Nakazawa spent over two years completing it.

The back plate of the sacred tree violin features a painting themed around “Tenson Korin.” The artist is Marc Estel, a French painter based in Japan who creates works inspired by Japanese mythology and dedicates them to shrines across the country. He has a deep connection with various shrines in Miyazaki, including Takachiho Shrine and Sano Shrine, where he has also donated his works. Marc Estel’s painting adds a rich dimension to the sound of the sacred tree violin.



For the several hundred years it will serve as a violin, we are committed to ensuring its sound continues to resonate worldwide, accompanied by the many stories born in the mythical homeland of Miyazaki. We kindly ask for your warm support in this endeavor..



©高橋勝規

Violin Maker and Restorer MUNEYUKI NAKAZAWA

In 1980, Muneyuki Nakazawa established studios in Tokyo and Nagano (currently known as Japan Violin Co., Ltd.), specializing in the restoration of famous instruments for schools and museums worldwide. In addition to restoring and maintaining instruments for renowned musicians and museums, he also serves as a music producer at various music festivals. Following the Great East Japan Earthquake, he created the TSUNAMI Violin and launched the “Bonding with a Thousand Tones” project. In 2004, he received the Côte d’Azur International Art Award in the string instrument category at the Cannes International Festival of Arts (Japan-France Contemporary Art Festival). In 2011, he was awarded the Cultural Merit Award by the Governor of Hyogo Prefecture. In 2014, he received the Art and Culture Award from the Embassy of Croatia.



Painter MARCESTEL

Marcel Estel was born in 1943 in Paris into a prestigious family with an 800-year history. He lived in the “Hotel Bananole” and “Hotel Cap Estel,” established by his parents, spending time amidst the beautiful natural environment of the Mediterranean. Among the guests were many renowned figures from around the world, including the Kennedy family, French President Pompidou’s family, actors like Sir Laurence Olivier, Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo, and even Princess Grace of Monaco. He also developed a personal acquaintance with the world-renowned painter Marc Chagall, who lived nearby.

Since his first visit to Japan in 1970, Marcel Estel has been strongly attracted to the world of the Japanese mythology “Kojiki.” His works, now numbering 194, have been commissioned by shrines such as Ise Jingu and Dewa Sanzan Shrine.



Violin -JINGI-



Performance