

Act on Handel's message of good will to all

Magdalena Osumi
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George Frideric Handel's "Messiah" premiered in Dublin in April 1742 and has since been performed in churches and concert halls worldwide, eventually becoming a popular Christmas tradition.

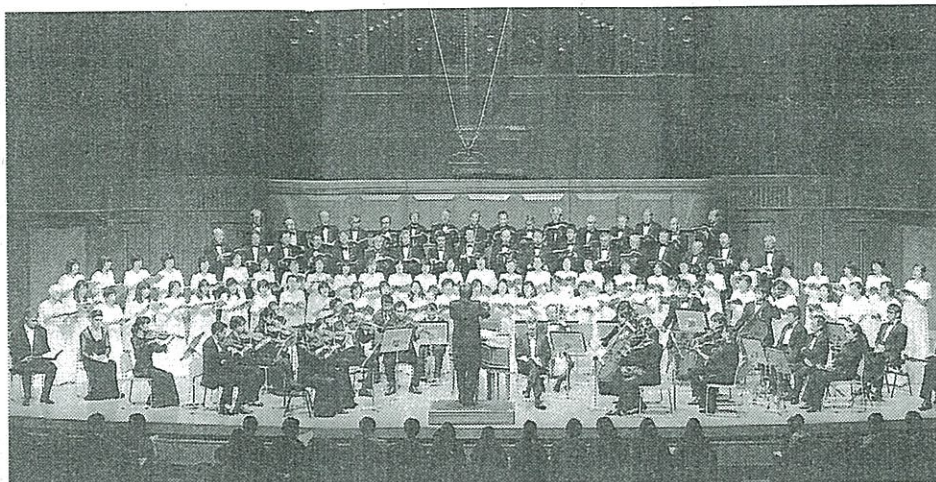
A timeless Baroque oratorio, the work has become synonymous with the festive spirit of peace and love, and an apt piece to be performed at this month's two annual Benefit Concerts organized by the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC).

The JVC Benefit Concerts, which have been organized since 1989, are being held for the 20th time at Izumi Hall in Osaka on Dec. 7, and for the 25th time at Showa Women's University's Hitomi Memorial Hall in Tokyo on Dec. 14.

Proceeds from the ticket sales will be donated to support the numerous JVC projects, which help support victims of war-torn nations, as well as those of natural and nuclear disasters in Japan.

Original gifts pop up in Harajuku

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Songs for Christmas: The 2012 Japan International Volunteer Center Benefit Concert in Osaka entertains a captivated audience with George Frideric Handel's "Messiah."

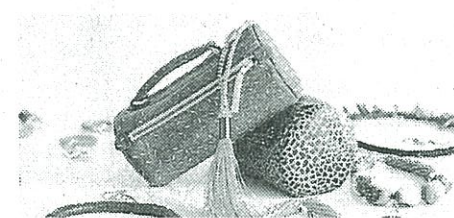
JVC is an international nongovernmental organization that has been providing livelihood assistance for people in need since it was established in 1980. Its most recent activities have focused on nine countries in Africa and Asia, including Cambodia, Afghanistan and South Africa.

Tickets cost from ¥3,000 to ¥10,000. A ¥4,000 ticket will enable a child-care volunteer in South Africa, which has one of the highest number of HIV and AIDS cases in Africa, to undertake five-day training. A ¥5,000 ticket can train two Cambodian families on how to improve the yield of rice, while a ¥10,000-ticket can provide a lecture

Curated by Liezel Strauss, founder of Subject Matter Art & My Japan, items for sale range from limited-edition, framed

on preventive health care for mothers in a village in Afghanistan. This is not just about beautiful music, it's about acknowledging and offering help to those less fortunate than ourselves.

The Japan International Volunteer Center Benefit Concert in Osaka takes place on Dec. 7, starting from 3 p.m. at Izumi Hall. The Tokyo concert takes place at Showa Women's University Hitomi Memorial Hall in Tokyo on Dec. 14 from 3 p.m. For more information visit www.ngo-jvc.net/concert/ or call at 03-3836-4108.



Don't choke on Japanese New

Jun Hongo
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Suffocating on *osechi*, Japan's select of traditional New Year's dishes, real does happen. Which is why Osaka-based food manufacturer Fukunao Medical Foods Co. is holding an event on Dec. 7 where *osechi* cuisine specially prepared for people with chewing problem and dysphagia will be available for tasting.

Osechi often includes grilled sea bream *kamaboko* (broiled fish cake) and *tazukuri* (dried sardines cooked in soy sauce and sugar). But with Japan's rapidly aging society, it's come to light that some of these dishes are troublesome for those with difficulty chewing and swallowing. Every year, there are reports of the elderly who have choked while trying to swallow *mochi* (sticky rice cakes), a popular part of the New Year's meal.

Fukunao is revolutionizing the tradition meal by creating what it's calling "*yawaraka*" (soft) *osechi*. Some of their

See 'Akira' in fi

Jun Hongo
STAFF WRITER

Experience animation artist Katsuhi Otomo's masterworks in a way you unlikely to have done before. The Bakuon 2013 film event in Tokyo is showcasing various anime films by the