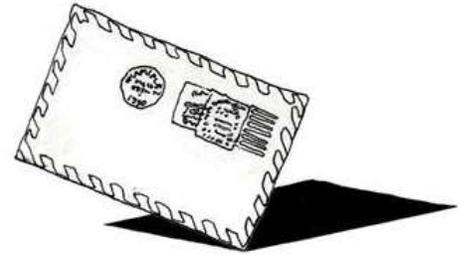


# Letter from Mari



March 2010

*It's already been three months since the beginning of the year and we are enjoying beautiful spring weather in Europe. The leaves are just emerging in our neighborhood of Bois de Boulogne in Paris and the sun is getting stronger day by day.*

*As always, we spent Christmas in San Francisco, but it was the first time in our new home with classic views of the Golden Gate Bridge. This year, the great American jazz pianist David Benoit and his family joined us for Christmas Eve. The evening started with David's improvisation on Christmas songs, with a Martini at his side, followed by a duo performance of David and June Benoit, his 9-year-old daughter, playing violin. After Karin, now 10, played some pieces by Bach, we passed to champagne, foie gras, and turkey, made with the traditional Nagano-style stuffing, by Kent's mother, Ruth.*

*We spent a calm New Years in Japan, celebrating with traditional New Years dishes and visiting family in and around Osaka. In Kyoto, we followed the Japanese tradition of taking meditative walks to several temples, contemplating the past, present and future.*

*To return to Europe, we decided on a round-the-world itinerary, which ended up helping with our jetlag. The 'secret' included, along with traveling west, to stay less than five days in each time zone, so as not to allow our bodies to fully acclimatize.*

*For me, 2010 started with recordings. In the little barn in Northern Holland, in a town called Valthermunde where we met last, the 'usual team' gathered to record Beethoven Sonatas Op. 10. This team included Wilhelm Hellweg (producer), Jean Marie Gejsen (sound engineer) and Michel Brandijs (piano technician). The CD will be No. 6 in the cycle. It will be a collection of small sonatas, which is another way of saying, 'for beginners.' In fact, they are not easy at all.*



*We were completely snowed in and it was extremely calm, since there were almost no vehicles on the nearby roads. We worked intensively 12 hours a day, with the only breaks being our ritual of cooking lunch between sessions. This year, piano technician Michel expanded his repertoire to include salad making, using his secret dressing recipe, which included roasted pine nuts, and olive oil from a private farm in Italy.*

*All of this excitement was followed by the recording of the Beethoven Triple Concerto. This is for cello, violin, piano and orchestra. Although we met for the first time, Kolja Blacher (violin), Johannes Moser (cello), myself on piano, and Kent and the Deutsche Symphonies Orchester, were able to make music with absolute musical unity. The recording was made at the Jesus Christus Church in the suburb of Berlin, where Karajan\* apparently used to play concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic right after World War II. The sound was magical, but the temperature was ice cold, so we all played in sweaters, with lots of hot tea at our sides.*

*2010 is being celebrated as the 200-year anniversary of Robert Schumann. His Piano Concerto is one of the most romantic pieces for piano and orchestra, a tribute to his affection toward his wife, Clara Schumann, who was a great pianist. Kent and I had the opportunity to play this Concerto for the Valentine's Day concert in Montreal, surrounded by couples. This was the most romantic February 14 we have ever had.*

*Then came my 'debut' with the Bavarian State Orchestra, which is the Opera Orchestra in Munich where Kent is conductor. It always makes me very nervous to play for the first time with my husband's orchestra, but, at the same time, I was looking forward to being able to make music with this group of fine musicians.*

We played in the charming town of Weiden, where I had a recital a few years ago. Their concert hall has wonderful acoustics, and the audience was sophisticated. We truly enjoyed our experience playing there.

One of the most exciting projects in Montreal recently was a concert themed around Japanese folk songs. When Karin was very small, we use to listen to these songs at breakfast every morning. Kent, fascinated the beauty of the songs and the sadness of their words, asked Jean Pascal Beinthus to orchestrate the music.

The beautiful performance of the Children's choir and the Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal brought tears to the eyes of many of those in the audience. The evening finished with a truly spectacular taiko drum performance by master Eitetsu Hayashi. His ability to make colors, nuances and drama was electrifying. We were amazed by his muscles, conditioned like those of a professional athlete, to control these enormous drums.

Karin is preparing her Italian 'debut' this summer at the Rieti Festival, and still enjoys her days, despite a schedule that is as full as her fathers.

I have included some photos from a shoot we did early this spring in Paris. It was conducted by Vincent Garner (photographer). The make-up artist was Go Miyuki. He decided to do the shoot crossing still-cold Paris, from South to North, and from West to East. It took the entire day, but it allowed us to get different atmospheres around the city. We started at the Fondation Cartier in the 14th Arrondissement and a 70s style restaurant nearby. Then we went to a designer's home in Pigalle (9th), the Maison du Japon (15th) and finished the session in a hotel that is considered of-the-moment in Paris, Mama Shelter, in the 20th arrondissement.

\* From Wikipedia: Herbert von Karajan (5 April 1908 - 16 July 1989) was an Austrian orchestra and opera conductor. His obituary in *The New York Times* described him as 'probably the world's best-known conductor and one of the most powerful figures in classical music.' Karajan conducted the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra for 35 years. He is the top-selling classical music recording artist of all time, having sold an estimated 200 million records during his career.

Mari