



# Nasushiobara & Linz

## School exchange

### Kyoei-Elementary School × Zurndorf Elementary School

On 30<sup>th</sup> January, pupils from Kyoei-ES and Zurndorf ES met online to exchange about the food culture of Japan and Austria in English! The kids of Kyoei ES presented typical Japanese dishes such as *tonkatsu*, which they explained as "the Japanese version of Austrian schnitzel" – genius! In return, the pupils of Zurndorf ES showed us how an everyday meal plan might look like in Austria.

For Easter, Kyoei ES received handmade greeting cards and little Easter bunny chocolate from ES Zurndorf – the joy was huge!



## Piano solo concert by the Austrian Cultural Forum Tokyo

### Alfredo Ovalles



Vienna-based and internationally renowned pianist Alfredo Ovalles presented his unique, cross-genre repertoire at the GUNEI Mishima Hall in Nasushiobara on 18<sup>th</sup> February, including works by Bach, Ovalles himself and his piano arrangement of "Symphonic Dances" from Bernstein's West Side Story. After a short Q&A session, the audience enjoyed an encore of a piece for

Venezuelan folk dances Ovalles grew up with.

The following day, Ovalles visited three Junior High Schools in Nasushiobara. He interacted with the students by showing them the diversity of the piano and telling them stories about Austrian composers that the pupils had learnt about in music lessons like Schubert and Mozart.



◀ The audience could purchase CDs with Ovalles' signature after the concert.



The school exchange at Kuroiso JHS was broadcasted on jap. TV!



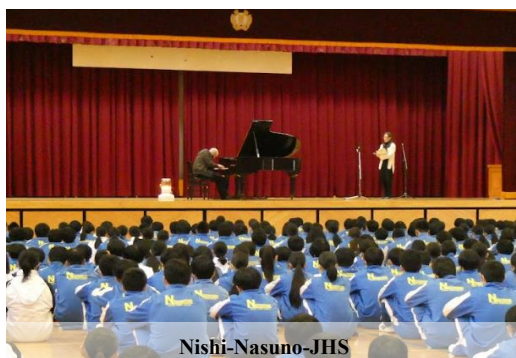
Here, you can listen to Ovalles' playing and pieces!



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Mishima-JHS



Nishi-Nasuno-JHS



Nishi-Nasuno-JHS



Kuroiso-JHS

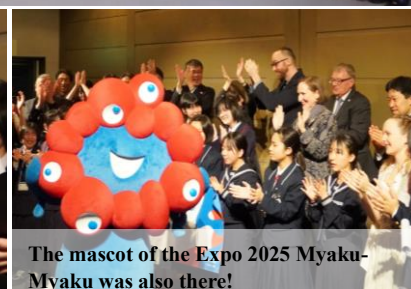
## Expo Choir Exchange Pilot Project

On 17<sup>th</sup> March, our Expo Choir Exchange Pilot Project took place in Osaka! The girls' choir consisted of around five schoolgirls from each of the four cities that participated in this event which are Nasushiobara, Linz, Yahaba (Iwate Prefecture) and Nagai (Yamagata Prefecture). Together as a group of around 20 students they sang Austrian and Japanese songs in their original languages. Five students from the Adalbert-Stifter High School in Linz took part, having already had a lively online musical exchange with the Mishima Junior High School in Nasushiobara the past. Their two music teachers and the headmaster were also on the trip.

Our event was attended by several guests of honour as well, including the Austrian ambassador and members of the Expo office of both countries. Thanks to the online broadcast, interested parties who could not be there, such as the mayor of Nasushiobara and Mr Niklas Salm-Reifferscheidt, were also able to follow the event digitally.



Austrian ambassador Mrs. Bertagnoli



The mascot of the Expo 2025 Myaku-Myaku was also there!



Here you can have a look at the Austrian local news of Linz LT1!





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The students met for the first time in person only the day before the concert – and the rehearsals began right away. Besides intensive singing with the whole choir, the eager practising of pronunciation and pitch in voice type groups was also an important process. In between, the girls exchanged gifts and souvenirs and chatted a little in English as well.



After the concert in Osaka, the students from Linz travelled to Nasushiobara, where they visited the Mishima JHS and sang together with the entire choir club. The Austrian visitors were able to try their hand at the Japanese instrument *koto* and had a little peek into other club activities, like the Brass Band or the *kendo* club.



The school exchange was broadcasted on Jap. TV!

The second school the students visited was the Hokine School, where they participated in English lessons and played card games with the Japanese students in class.



At a short meeting with the mayor of Nasushiobara and his deputy, we were once again impressed by the students who sang an Austrian folk song in a capella for us. Furthermore, one of the two music teachers, Mr. Würzburger, personally brought a letter from Mr. Salm-Reifferscheidt to the mayor, which was read out and then handed over.

The visit of the students and teachers from Linz as well as our co-operation contributed greatly to strengthening the town twinning. The choir exchange was a success, and we look forward to further exchange projects!



*"We had a wonderful time in Japan. It was thanks to the kindness of the people we met. We were especially touched by the warm welcome we received wherever we went during our stay in Nasushiobara. The schools and citizens of Nasushiobara and all the people involved who cared for us. Thank you so much."*



# Nasushiobara & Linz

## Austria's *hanami*: Apricot blossoms



Marillenblüte - © Donau Niederösterreich / Othmar Bramberger

Austria does not have much of a *hanami* culture like Japan, but the closest thing to *hanami* may be a walk through an avenue of apricot trees with their white flowers in full bloom. Most of the apricot fields are located in the Wachau, a region between Vienna and Linz on the Danube, and is most famous for its wine and apricots. Apricots are usually in full blossom from mid to late March, and in July you can enjoy delicious apricots here.



© by charly 54 via Pixabay

## Tell us, Yukari!

When I was in High School, I started dreaming about studying in Japan so I can improve my Japanese language skills. I majored in Japanese Studies at the University of Vienna and in my third year, I applied for a scholarship specifically for students of my major. I couldn't believe it myself but I got recommended by the Japanese Embassy for the Government Scholarship and fulfilled my dream by studying one year at the University of my first choice, Osaka University. I stayed in Japan from 2021 to 2022, but because it was in the time of Corona, my arrival got delayed to November instead of September. Additionally, after arriving in Japan, I had to be quarantined in a hotel for two weeks. Although Corona had a huge impact on my year abroad, my stay in Osaka was such precious time that taught me a lot about life and allowed me to meet people who have become lifelong friends.



With friends from all around the world, I successfully finished the program for students majoring Japanese.

## Quiz

Why is the Austrian flag vertically red – white – red?

- A : Because red and white used to be the colours of the emperor.      B : Because it represents blood staining of a soldier's white clothes.
- C : Because it represents the commemoration of Christ's crucifixion and death.      D : Because they represent the colours of socialism (red) and neutrality (white).



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Answer: B. It is said that the white military uniform of an Austrian archduke who took part in the Crusades in the 12th century was fully stained red by the enemy's blood, and when he took off his belt, only the belt part remained white. He then used his uniform as a flag.