

# ICU RIEGER ORGAN STORY

## Episode 1

### 1973: ICU Organ Committee (former ICU Sacred Music Center) to receive Torii Music Award (current Suntory Music Award)

In 1970, an Austrian Rieger pipe organ was installed in the ICU chapel.

This was a time when full-scale large pipe organs were still rare in Japan. The ICU Organ Committee (current Sacred Music Center), which sought to introduce the essence of its culture as a Christian university to Japan, was awarded the Torii Music Award (current Suntory Music Award) in 1973. Masaaki Niwa, who served on the jury, wrote of the situation up to that time as follows.

“In the 100 years of Western music in Japan, pipe organ music has not attracted public attention until recently. The lack of organ music in Japan will have to be rectified sooner or later.”

Under such circumstances, the ICU Organ Committee received the Torii Music Award for such a selection rationale.

“In January 1973, ICU invited Marie-Claire Alain, a French organ music authority, and Anton Heiler, an Austrian maestro, as lecturers to hold the "ICU Organ Academy," the first of its kind in Japan, and successfully held a series of pipe organ lectures and concerts, which greatly impressed the participants and audience.

This project was an extremely significant first step for the primary development of organ music in Japan, which is now in its infancy. Based on the results of this project, the committee has since held monthly organ concerts, contributing to the popularization of organ music”.

53 years has passed since its dedication to the ICU chapel, the number of serial concerts given with the ICU Rieger organ has now marked 340 in the spring of 2023.

