

Kenichi Kawabata / 川端 賢一

Clarinetist | Tonmeister | Classical Recording Engineer

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PROFILE

Kenichi Kawabata is a clarinetist and Tonmeister based in Feldkirch, Vorarlberg, Austria. He studied clarinet performance at the Royal Academy of Music in London and completed the Tonmeister program in classical recording at the Zurich University of the Arts as first in class. His work combines the musical perspective of an active performer with the technical and artistic expertise of a Tonmeister in classical music performance, recording and production.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Field	Details
Name	Kenichi Kawabata / 川端 賢一
Nationality	Japanese
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Email	kennichimail@gmail.com
Website	https://kenichi-kawabata.com
Languages	Japanese, German, English

EDUCATION

Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)

From 2024 to 2025, Kenichi Kawabata completed the Master in Tonmeister – Classical Recording Engineering at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). Under Prof. Andreas Werner, he studied recording production, audio engineering, musical interpretation and the relationship between recording practice and musical expression. He completed the program with the highest grade, 6.0, as first in class.

From 2022 to 2024, he also completed the Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) Tontechnik – Classical Recording Engineering at ZHdK. His studies included microphone technique, session planning, editing, mixing and communication with musicians in classical music production.

Mozarteum University Salzburg

From 2019 to 2024, he studied Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy at Mozarteum University Salzburg, at the Vorarlberg State Conservatory in Feldkirch, with clarinet as his main subject. He completed the Bachelor of Arts in Instrumental and Vocal Pedagogy (Clarinet) with distinction.

Royal Academy of Music, London

From 2014 to 2016, he studied clarinet performance at the Royal Academy of Music in London and completed the Master of Arts in Clarinet Performance with Distinction. He studied with Prof. Mark Van de Wiel, Timothy Lines and Laurent Ben Slimane, gaining extensive experience in chamber music, orchestral performance and contemporary music.

Kyoto City University of Arts

From 2007 to 2011, he studied clarinet at Kyoto City University of Arts and received the Bachelor of Music. Alongside clarinet performance, he studied chamber music, contemporary music, composition, arrangement and conducting.

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

As a clarinetist, Kenichi Kawabata has worked in Japan, the United Kingdom, Austria and Switzerland across orchestral music, chamber music, wind ensemble performance and contemporary music. During his studies at the Royal Academy of Music, he worked on a broad repertoire from classical to contemporary music and performed with ensembles including the Manson Ensemble and the Royal Academy Symphony Orchestra.

During his time in London, he also performed as a clarinetist in concerts with the Philharmonia Orchestra London, including performances conducted by Yuri Temirkanov. This orchestral experience developed his concentration, score-reading ability and ensemble awareness in large-scale professional music productions.

Since 2018, he has been active in Vorarlberg, Austria. With WINDWERK Vorarlberg, he plays first clarinet and E-flat clarinet. He has also appeared in concerts with ensembles and orchestras including the Argovia Philharmonic and the Vorarlberg Symphony Orchestra.

In 2019 and 2021, he performed as an orchestral musician in the Bregenzer Festspiele lake-stage production of *Rigoletto*. Through this work, he experienced festival-scale production, open-air stage conditions and long-running performance operations from the perspective of a musician.

In chamber music, he performs regularly in the Feldkirch concert series Musik in der Pforte, working on programs ranging from classical to contemporary repertoire. This performing background is directly connected to his work as a Tonmeister: score reading, breathing, rehearsal flow and musical expression form the basis of his approach to recording and sound production.

TONMEISTER / RECORDING AND AUDIO WORK

As a Tonmeister, Kenichi Kawabata works primarily in classical music, including chamber music, orchestral music, vocal music, instrumental solo repertoire, contemporary music, live recording and audio production for concert videos.

At the Zurich University of the Arts, he studied classical recording with Prof. Andreas Werner and developed systematic expertise in recording planning, microphone technique, session direction, editing, mixing and communication with musicians. In 2025, he completed the Master in Tonmeister – Classical Recording Engineering with the highest grade, 6.0, as first in class.

Since 2021, he has produced recordings in Austria, Switzerland and Germany and has regularly overseen audio and video production for the concert series Musik in der Pforte. In the recording situation, he combines score knowledge, musical structure, room acoustics, musicians' breathing and ensemble balance into a musically grounded approach to sound.

As a Tonmeister with his own stage experience, he places equal importance on technical precision, musical intention, phrasing, spatial resonance and dialogue with performers.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Live Mixing and Live Recording

In concert situations, he carries out live mixing and live recording while following the flow of the performance, the expression of the musicians, the acoustics of the room and the balance of the ensemble. He works with chamber music, orchestral music, vocal music and contemporary music, shaping the sound according to the ensemble and the space.

Musical Editing and Postproduction

In classical music, he works on take editing, musical editing, noise reduction, mixing and postproduction for CD releases. He reads score, phrasing, breath, timbre and spatial relationships, shaping the edit so that the performers' musical expression comes across as clearly as possible.

Recording Design and Mixing

He develops recording and mixing concepts according to instrument, ensemble, room acoustics and artistic expression. Microphone placement, the balance between main and spot microphones and the treatment of spatial resonance are adjusted so that the musical intention of the performance is naturally audible.

Audio Networking and System Design

In addition to recording and sound production, he works with Audio-over-IP, audio networks and audio software development.

He understands signal flow between Dante, RAVENNA, MADI, digital mixing consoles, audio interfaces and DAWs, and designs routing concepts for recording, playback and monitoring environments.

He also works with Linux systems and programming, developing his own DAW-like audio applications in C++ / JUCE that integrate recording, playback, routing and log management.

This experience allows him to understand technical problems in audio production not only at the level of individual devices, but across signal flow, networking, software and production workflow.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Commercial CD Productions and Releases

As a Tonmeister, Kenichi Kawabata has contributed to several commercial CD productions and has experience in recording, editing, mixing, mastering and musical decision-making in the release process. A representative release is *Kammermusik Vol. 2*

with works by Flor Peeters, released in 2023 by the German classical label Motette.

Live Radio and Broadcast Production

For live concerts by Concerto Stella Matutina, he was responsible for live sound and the production of broadcast audio material in collaboration with ORF Radio Vorarlberg. His work included recording planning, microphone placement, audio capture during the performance and quality control for broadcast sound.

This work gave him practical experience with the one-time nature of the concert moment, the stability required for broadcast production and simultaneous communication with musicians, production teams and the broadcaster.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Music Spoken by Space: Recreating and Recording 19th Century Salon Acoustics (2025)

As his master project in the Tonmeister program at the Zurich University of the Arts, Kenichi Kawabata investigated the relationship between the acoustics of historical salon spaces and musical expression. He carried out comparative recordings in several spaces, including a historical salon in Vienna, Villa Falkenhorst and the Stella Festsaal, examining how room acoustics influence performers' expression, listening experience and the final quality of a recording.

The project understands recording not merely as documentation, but as a form of musical interpretation that connects space, performance and listening experience. It positions the Tonmeister as a mediator between musical expression, room acoustics and contemporary production aesthetics.

The Necessities to Communicate Between Tonmeisters and Performers (2024)

In his DAS thesis at the Zurich University of the Arts, he examined the necessity of communication between Tonmeisters and performers. The thesis focused not only on technical decisions in the recording studio, but also on artistic intention, psychological safety and shared musical understanding.

This research is directly connected to his current working attitude: not to control sound, but to create the conditions under which music can naturally emerge.

AWARDS AND PRESS

As a clarinetist, Kenichi Kawabata has received recognition in competitions, concerts and reviews in Japan and Europe.

Awards

- Japan Classical Music Competition, 1st Prize (2005)
- Japan Classical Music Competition, National Round Finalist (2006)
- Great Wall International Music Competition, 2nd Prize (2008)
- Kyoto Music Arts Prize (2010)

Press

- *Classical Source* (London), review by Colin Anderson (2016)
- *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, "Große Opern auf der Klarinette" (2019)
- *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, "Die Bläser bescherten" (2019)

LINKS

- Website: <https://kenichi-kawabata.com>
- YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJF_ELqMwQjwFMWvbwGx-Lw