

CAJ Chronicle

Christian Academy in Japan

Fall 2020

created to
create

the gift of music





CHRONICLE

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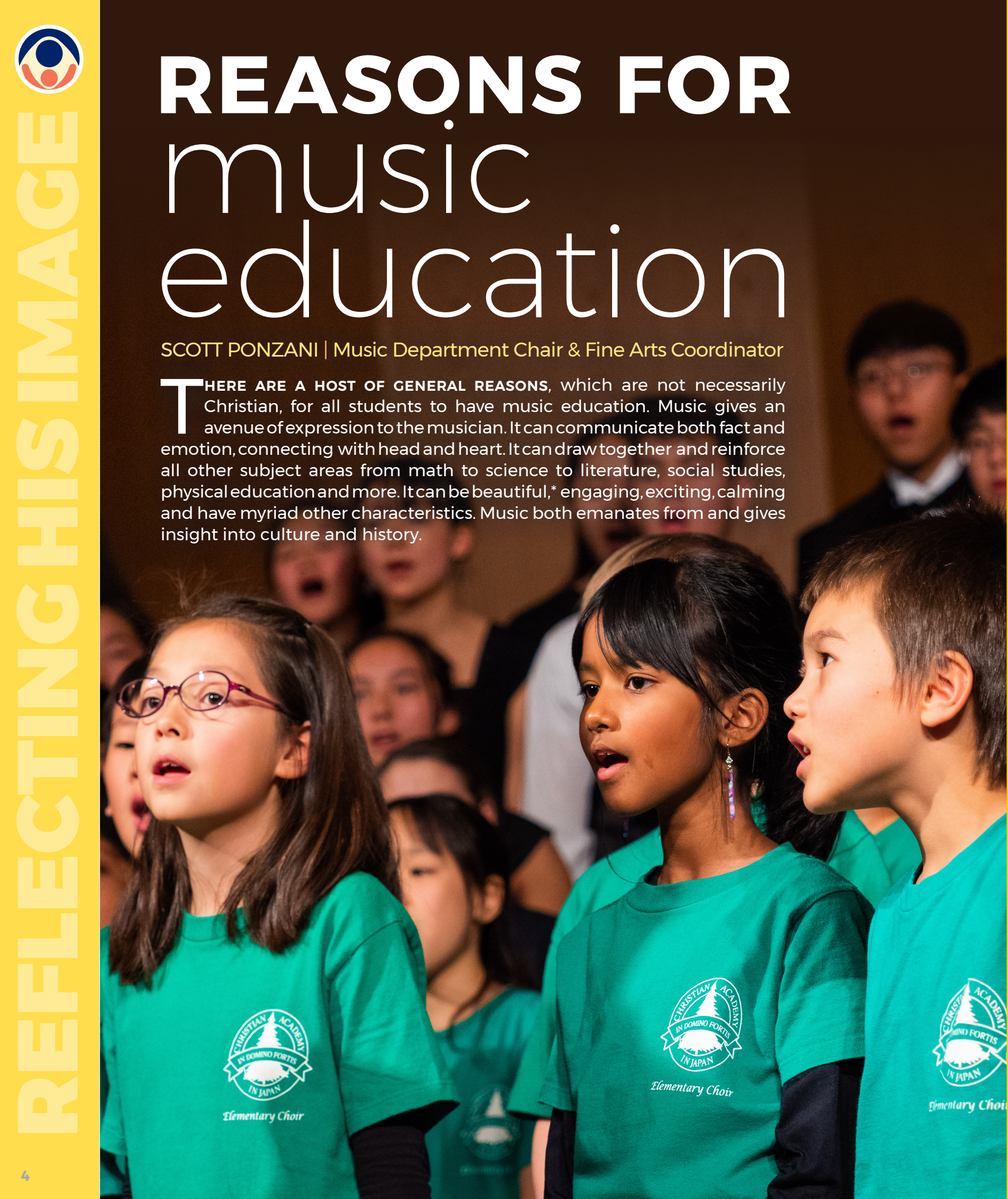
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Message from Head of School

The fact that we, as human beings, are created in the image of a creative God, is evidence that this is an important trait to develop and nurture. Creativity is an avenue for worship, for loving God and enjoying him forever, and an avenue for service to others. Music is one of the ways we understand ourselves and are empowered to express the depths of our emotions, and is therefore an important part of the education students experience at CAJ. Among many benefits, music provides social interaction, trains young ears, provides motor skill development, relieves stress, provides a sense of discipline, and can enhance learning in other subjects...and it is fun! Music has been an important part of CAJ's curricular and co-curricular program since the school began. We are grateful for our musical legacy; we are nurturing our music program during this unprecedented pandemic; and we look forward with anticipation to the many ways students will continue to honor God and serve others through the gift of music.

Anda Foxwell, Head of School





REASONS FOR music education

SCOTT PONZANI | Music Department Chair & Fine Arts Coordinator

THERE ARE A HOST OF GENERAL REASONS, which are not necessarily Christian, for all students to have music education. Music gives an avenue of expression to the musician. It can communicate both fact and emotion, connecting with head and heart. It can draw together and reinforce all other subject areas from math to science to literature, social studies, physical education and more. It can be beautiful,* engaging, exciting, calming and have myriad other characteristics. Music both emanates from and gives insight into culture and history.

All of these are valid reasons to learn to appreciate and to make music, that is, to be consumers and creators. However, why does a Christian school provide music education? How is it different from music education in a public school?

God is Creative ~ We are Creative

The Bible speaks of God as a creative being. He made things that are interesting, useful and beautiful in a multitude of ways, from the foundations of heaven and earth and all that is in them to mud as a healing balm.

His Word also tells us that we are made in his image. We have certain characteristics akin to God's. One of those is creativity. We can't go about making worlds from nothing. However, he has imbued us with the ability to create objects and experiences that are interesting, useful or beautiful, as he does, and to evaluate them. We are creative because God is creative.

Looking at creativity from a slightly different angle, the Bible teaches that God created beauty itself. All that is beautiful starts with the Lord, including music, art, poetry, nature and so on. In imitation of God and by his grace, we can convey his good and perfect gift of beauty. One could think of it as re-creating his beauty, mirroring it, or becoming a vessel for it, even in our imperfect presentations.

This great gift affords us a host of possibilities. In addition to imitating the Lord, creativity allows communication in sound, light, various materials, words, food and more. We glorify God and magnify his name when we create beautiful things. We serve when we share this beauty for the benefit of others. We proclaim his goodness, love, mercy and grace with the products or experiences we create. All these are summed up in an acrostic we use:

Magnify the Lord
Use music to communicate
Serve God and others
Imitate Christ through creativity
Creatively proclaim God

We have been given a marvellous gift in the ability to create as our God does. This is the layer, if I may, that Christian schools should add and rightly emphasize when they provide music education for their students.

Music Education at CAJ

We want our young people to be good at both understanding and making music, at being creators as well as consumers. This is the impetus for the lessons we teach in skill acquisition, music theory and music history. CAJ's elementary curriculum is replete with age-appropriate instruction on the fundamentals of these aspects of music. Young children are taught to interpret music notation and perform the rudiments

**Beautiful is a subjective word, for sure. In reference to visual beauty, there is an adage that states "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Transferring that to music, we could say, "Beauty is in the ear of the listener." In addition to personal taste, beauty must be understood in the contexts of culture and history.*

of music making. They learn how to play instruments and how to sing, and they acquire knowledge of composers. Our middle school ensembles build upon this, using a mix of direct instruction and concepts inherent in the music repertoire, giving students opportunity to practice their foundational skills and knowledge. In the larger high school groups, Concert Choir, Symphonic Band, and Orchestra, students further their accomplishments.

The instruction becomes even more based in literature because the abilities and knowledge the students have acquired in lower grades allows it. Listening lessons teach the students to be analytical adjudicators of their own performances and those of others. Our select groups, Chamber Singers, Handbell Ensemble, Flute Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, and Chapel Band, provide students who excel and desire more challenge to have a small group experience that is almost completely repertoire-based, performance-focused learning. Along the way we facilitate private music lessons for students who desire one-on-one instruction and furnish opportunities for students, individually and in groups, to participate in music festivals, not only showcasing what they have learned and practiced but receiving feedback from professionals and hearing what other international schools are doing in music education. Throughout the curriculum, we give chances for students to perform in off-campus service situations, and we encourage them to seek their own opportunities.

CAJ's music program endeavors to give students the tools and instruction to understand music and to make music as acts of love, worship and service. 🎵

Why We Teach the Arts

As Fine Arts Coordinator, Scott Ponzani delivered a short speech to parents during our Back-to-School Night. *Why We Teach the Arts* is a modified version of text that came to him from an unknown source on the internet.

“

We teach the arts not because we expect your children to major in music, art, design, fashion or another creative discipline. Not because we expect them to play, sing, draw, paint, sculpt, sew, or design all their lives. And, not even so they can relax or have fun. Although, any of these things may happen.

We teach them the arts so they can be human and can connect to other humans in beautiful and inspiring ways. We teach the arts so they can recognize beauty and

its ultimate source, God, and praise him for it and with it. We teach in order that they can use the creativity God has placed in them, and thus be closer to him, the Infinite beyond this world. We teach the arts so they will have an outlet for expression and have something to cling to through life's challenges. We teach in order that they will have more love, more compassion, more awareness, more gentleness, more good—in short, more life.

”



Left to right: Aaron Dishner, Don Ekstrand, Ayumi Tsuruta, Scott Ponzani, Denise Owen

Scott Ponzani | Music Department Chair & Fine Arts Coordinator

Scott has been at CAJ for 22 years, working in the music, development, and technology departments. He founded the CAJ Handbell Ensemble in 1999 and has directed the high school choirs since 2014. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Ohio Wesleyan University and a Master of Arts in Choral Music from Eastern Michigan University.

Ayumi Tsuruta | Orchestra Director

Ayumi comes from Tokyo, and teaches strings at CAJ, as well as directing the orchestra. She loves music, and also the challenge of trying new things.

Denise Owen | Elementary and Middle School Music Specialist

Denise started teaching at CAJ in 1981, after getting a degree in Music Education from Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio, USA, and a Masters in Christian Studies from Regent College in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Besides music, her hobbies include linguistics, seismology and volcanology.

Don Ekstrand | Music Teacher

Don comes from Iowa in the US and has been teaching at CAJ on and off since 1987. He graduated from Iowa University with a Bachelor degree in Music Education. He teaches brass and saxophone and is the Band Director for grades 5-12.

Aaron Dishner | Music Teacher

Aaron came to CAJ eleven years ago from Portland, Oregon. Before coming to CAJ, he studied piano and professional music at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. He teaches the high school Jazz Ensemble, Digital Music Design (making music with computer software), and co-teaches middle and high school bands with Don Ekstrand.

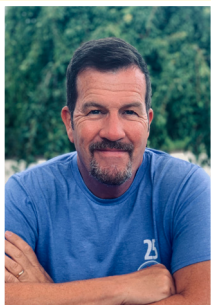


Eloise Merrill

Eloise Merrill served at CAJ as an elementary school music and piano teacher during a career that began in the mid-1960s. She influenced multiple generations of students in the classroom and was a dedicated piano teacher who faithfully followed the Lord’s leading in her life. She retired to Connecticut in 2001.

Eloise passed away in 2010 leaving a significant gift to CAJ in her will. This month we received the final distribution from her estate and decided to honor her one more time for a life well lived.

Planned gifts, made as part of a personal estate plan, can provide tax benefits and provide the reward of knowing your legacy gift will have an impact on future generations of students. If you are interested in this giving option please contact the Business Manager, Bryan Lewis, on blewis@caj.ac.jp



Tim Johnson CLASS OF 1977

Having come from a musical family (my father even directed the CAJ Choir for one year in '62-'63), I found CAJ to be an environment that fostered and developed my own musical interests. Whether it was the rhythm band in first grade, playing the tonette (they now use recorders), junior high and high school choirs (Martie Tarter), or the piano lessons I received from Kae Archer ('68), Hannah Friesen ('74), Ruth Drummond, and Margaret Halberg, CAJ provided a stellar foundation for my musical

career. Mrs. Halberg even entered me in a Tokyo city wide music contest for young musicians, and, because of her encouragement and instruction, I was able to win the piano section and play a solo with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra as a high school senior.

Since I graduated over 43 years ago, music has continued to be a source of great enjoyment and, in fact, one of my favorite ways to worship God. He has faithfully opened up opportunities for me to lead worship at Kurume Bible Fellowship and other churches and venues since the early '90s. To this day, I find great joy in leading worship at our church at the ripe old age of 61!

During the lockdown from March, my brother Than (class of '80) challenged me to record Facebook Lives (play and sing with my wife Jeannie) to encourage listeners with refreshing music, as well as lyrics and verses to focus our attention on God’s unchanging attributes of sovereignty, love and grace.



FACEBOOK | www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006755387664

Dan Oxley CLASS OF 1975

I have many great memories of my time in the band program at CAJ. I started school there in the 8th grade in 1970, and upon my arrival joined the band. My dorm parent, Tim Mayfield, played trombone, and led a brass group I was a part of. On occasion we would play along with the school choir and for other special school events. I was also a part of the pep band which played for the basketball games. When I was in the 9th grade, Terry Clark became the band director. He was a trumpet player in the US Air Force Band and came to CAJ to teach from the military base in 1971. A couple of friends, Phil Foxwell and James Ford and I formed a trumpet trio. I must say we were pretty awesome. We had a great time traveling around Japan performing concerts in small churches and public venues. We even took a trip down to Kyushu where I grew up and performed concerts. Last year, I had the opportunity to spend time with Terry Clark in our home while he was visiting Nashville. It was great to reminisce and talk about the good old days.

Over the past 40 years, I have had the priv-



ilege to travel all over the world playing my trumpet in countries such as Russia, Israel, Brazil, Canada, Japan, China, South Korea, and North Korea. Yep, you read that right, North Korea. I have been able to return to Japan many times to play my trumpet. I even went back to CAJ to perform in the mid 80s. One of my most memorable trips to Japan would be in the months following the tsunami of 2011. I was able to travel 3 different times with my brothers, Brian and Chris, to play for survivors living in shelters.

Over the years I have recorded numerous solo albums and produced and recorded projects as an engineer in my Nashville studio. I'm blessed to have been able to continue playing the trumpet throughout my life. It all started in Japan at the age of 10 in the town of Hitoyoshi on the island of Kyushu, taking lessons from a next-door neighbor. I'm thankful that my parents encouraged me and supported me over all these years. My mother, who recently passed away at the age of 95, was my biggest fan.

I will always hold my memories of growing up in Japan close to my heart.

WEBSITE | www.danoxley.com
FACEBOOK | www.facebook.com/pages/category/Musician-Band/Dan-Oxley-Trumpet-Player-650455068733758/





CAJ and the **NEW NORMAL**

ANDA FOXWELL | Head of School

No one would dispute that life has been turned upside-down by the COVID pandemic. Each person reading this has stories of pain and loss, of lessons learned and new ways of communicating, of fears, precautions, and a *new normal* we are all struggling to adjust to. Though we are all in this together in one sense, each person encounters unique struggles in facing the challenges brought on by this tiny virus.

Perhaps few institutions have had as many adjustments to make as schools. CAJ is no exception! In late February of 2020, Prime Minister Abe made a call for all schools in Japan to shut down on-campus education. We had very little warning, but our teachers heroically made a very quick change to moving all their classes and courses to a Distance Learning model. We had office staff forming an assembly line for collating packets of resources for students, IT staff members locating and providing electronic devices for all students, and Leadership Team members researching protocols and procedures to guide us through the process. We had no idea at the beginning of March that this learning model would become so familiar to all of us.

We ended the 2019-2020 school year with an in-person graduation ceremony including only the graduates, but live-streamed to all their family and friends. The seniors were so happy

to see each other after so many weeks apart, that even the physical distancing and extra health precautions could not dim their joy.

Though we received much appreciation from CAJ parents about the remarkable ways we conducted Distance Learning, this has been a difficult time for many at CAJ. One of the hardest struggles our community has faced is the isolation from families and friends, often oceans away from them. Several of our staff members have lost loved ones while Japan's borders have remained closed and hospital visits and funeral practices have been significantly regulated or prohibited. Though Distance Education worked well in many ways, some students struggled with doing school from home without the social support of their friends and physical presence of their teachers. Communication between staff, students, and parents needed to be frequent and encouraging.

This edition of the Chronicle contains some photos of pre COVID activities and concerts. We hope to be able to stand that close together without masks on again in the near future, but in the meantime, we are wearing masks and social distancing at CAJ.

Throughout the summer, our Leadership Team continued learning as much as we could about education during COVID. The Japan Council of International Schools (JCIS) was a valuable source of information and camaraderie. We entered the 2020-2021 school year with some renewed principles and priorities.

Our basic principles are:

- Act with faithfulness to our vision, mission, and values.
- Prioritize the health, safety, and wellbeing of students and staff.
- Prefer face-to-face learning over distance learning, when it is safe to do so.
- Ensure hygiene and health protocols are research-based, clearly communicated, effectively implemented, and consistently enforced.
- Stay flexible to respond to changing needs and conditions.

And our priorities for safety include:

- Individual health screening and preventive hygiene practices (temperature checks, masks, hand sanitizing)
- Physical distancing and reduced group sizes, as possible
- Cleaning and disinfecting, along with adequate ventilation
- Clear communication of procedures

We began the school year with a Hybrid Learning Model. Half of our students attended school on our campus in the morning, while the other half attended in the afternoon. Class periods were shortened to allow students to attend all their classes where they could receive direct instruction. They could then complete their class-work during the time they were at home.

The two weeks of Hybrid Learning provided time for us to work through many new procedures and protocols with students while having lower numbers of students on campus. Our "new normal" is not what we would have listed as a hope and dream for this school year, but we have healthy students who are so delighted to return to campus.

We were also keenly aware that students would need additional support to regain their emotional and social equilibrium. We put in place a stronger and more intentional social and emotional learning curriculum, and our counselors conducted training sessions with our staff. We want to support students' whole selves, not only their physical health.

It is impossible to know what the future will hold for us, but we have confidence in the God who holds all things in his strong and loving hands. We are hopeful that eventually we will return to a more robust program with fewer precautions and rules, but we also know that as stewards of precious students bearing his image, we are accountable for their wellbeing. We appreciate prayers as we maneuver through uncharted waters, knowing that God's plans for CAJ remain unchanged.

To see more about our COVID precautions, a CAJ video can be viewed here:
vimeo.com/460797099





The elementary music program at CAJ is offered for all students in grades K-5. The three main musical elements are singing, playing instruments, and learning to read music. All students learn the basics of good singing technique through posture, breathing, tone production, diction and interpretation. These are the *Five Essentials* and apply to instruments as well. Singing and playing instruments requires physical and mental self-discipline and this is part of the development of the whole child that we focus on in music lessons.

A student who has gone through the K-5 music program will be able to read rhythms up through sixteenth notes and notation in the treble clef. They will also get to experience playing one or more of each family of instruments.

PERCUSSION | classroom percussion
bell sets
handbells

KEYBOARD | pianica

WIND | recorder

STRING | guitar

Our program starts with the basics and builds on these each year. The musical concepts we focus on in K-2 include: steady beat, reading rhythm, the musical opposites (high/low, up/down, loud/soft, staccato/legato, fast/slow), singing in tune with good tone, and steps and skips on a keyboard instrument and on the staff with note heads. We use rhythm instruments, handbells, bell sets and pianicas, learning note names along the way. We practice all these concepts with full body movement, with listening and identifying, and with reading and performing rhythms or notes.

Grades 3-5 focus on being music makers. We continue using the concepts introduced earlier, and build on them to play a wind instrument (recorder), handbells, and strings (guitar). We learn more about singing



Grades K-2 use the acronym JOY to learn the biblical perspective behind what they are discovering about music and that it is for:

JESUS
OTHERS
YOURSELF

beautifully and start singing in parts. Again, we learn by doing. At this age, fine motor skills are utilized, and students learn how to practice until they get it right. We actively teach practicing skills which students can also use in their private lessons.

Listening lessons for all grades include learning about the instruments of the orchestra: how they make sound, how to identify their sound, and what instrumental family they belong to. As part of teaching about God's world, we also look at ethnic instruments from different cultures.

Music is a performing art, so our main job is to learn concepts and skills in order to perform. Our first performances are in the classroom for ourselves and God! We then can perform for parents and community members in our Christmas and Spring programs, and go out into the greater community at choir festivals.

Elementary music at CAJ lays the foundation for each student to be a musician, not only to continue in the CAJ music program in middle and high school, but also to be a lifelong

musician who can serve God and others, and express themselves spiritually, emotionally, intellectually and socially through music. As creatures of the creator God and made in His image, we help our students to develop their God-given gift of creativity through music. 🎵

Grades 3-5 use the acronym MUSIC:

MAGNIFY THE LORD
USE MUSIC TO
SERVE GOD AND OTHERS
IT'S FUN FOR YOU TOO!
CREATIVITY IMITATES CHRIST



Jesse McDaniel CLASS OF 2006



Prior to moving to Japan and attending CAJ, I had unique opportunities in music. I was able to play at a jazz venue in my prime, (at 12 years old!) with my piano teacher's band. Moving to Japan and attending CAJ really molded my identity as a musician, and it was a time when I did a lot of songwriting and experimentation. The city of Tokyo gave me limitless inspiration, and CAJ gave me the opportunity to play a lot of small fun shows with our band, Drypoint.

Since my time at CAJ, I've had a lot of great opportunities in music. My first show upon landing in Seattle was attended by 4,000 people at Rimac Arena in San Diego! God definitely provides. That was a while ago now, but during quarantine I decided to get back to songwriting. I have a small home studio here in Washington and I used the quarantine time to write for our band, called "brother figure." We released an EP in which each part was recorded separately. Even the choreography was done remotely by a local dance center. You can listen to one of the songs that I wrote for brother figure here: [youtube.com/watch?v=jclxj9huT5A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jclxj9huT5A)

You can find more of our music at brotherfigure.bandcamp.com/releases. I named the album Tokyo Piano because I sold all of my musical equipment a few years ago to invest into my start up. My parents recently gave me back the piano I had in Tokyo and I used that to write the songs. I hadn't touched the instrument for over a decade, thinking it would be used mainly for my daughter, so I was pleased that it could be used to create songs again.

I've played many roles as a musician, but I enjoy being a songwriter and producer the most. My daughter seems to have taken a liking to music, and I enjoy watching her performances.



orchestra ? ONLINE

AYUMI TSURUTA | Orchestra Director

Throughout history, countless natural disasters, pandemics and wars have occurred, but none of these has been able to stop music! With the outbreak of COVID 19, music events at CAJ, such as concerts and competitions, had to be cancelled. I wanted to think of a way to keep music flowing, even though no face-to-face learning meant that it was impossible for students to meet as an orchestra.

When distance learning began at our school, I began giving my students assignments in which they had to read digital music and record themselves playing with the provided accompaniment. After having the students complete these assignments for some time, I thought about ‘collaging’ their recordings and videos to create an online orchestra. In order to participate in these collaborations, the students began to video themselves playing, while continuing with their audio recordings.

The online orchestra is not a typical web meeting where people meet in real-time; it is made up of videos taken in the students’ rooms, at different times. For this reason, the students played along to a recording which they had playing in their earphones. This meant that they were all playing at the same speed and pitch! This was a good opportunity for the students to experience being in contact with people digitally, especially since Japan is well known for its natural disasters, as we never know when we might need these skills again.

For this online orchestra, I deliberately chose pieces that were either comforting or encouraging. The corona outbreak was unprecedented and we all needed comfort and encouragement

Justin Lau CLASS OF 2009



My most vivid memories of music at CAJ were made in A-13, that underground music room reminiscent of a sound-absorbing bunker. These experiences included: learning to play recorder and singing in three-part harmony with Ms Owen in elementary school, playing oboe with Mr Wackerman in middle school, singing tenor in Chamber Singers with Mrs Tarter and playing bass in jazz band with Mr Ekstrand in high school. To this day, I still remember singing Mr Hippopotamus Was Riding His Bike, and Ms Owen’s musicals like The Troubbable of Zerubbabel, and even vocal warmups (Lasagna, Chocolate Cookie, I Wander Through the Lovely Woods) — all this from more than twenty years ago!

My highlights include auditioning on a whim and making it into Chamber Singers—without even knowing what SATB* was! This kickstarted my singing life proper. I also formed an a cappella group called the Junior Guys which practised weekly in Mrs Tarter’s office, even performing in Hamonepu, a nationally broadcast TV competition (our little claim to fame). And finally, I auditioned—on a whim

again—for the musical, A Year with Frog and Toad, landing the role of Toad. This was directed by Amy Wood whom I remember being mesmerised by when she played the lead in the Cinderella musical I saw in 4th grade, eight years prior. Talk about coming full circle!

Having low self-esteem in a school full of talented people meant that I never thought myself capable. But it was through the high school staff—who encouraged, supported and championed me in my singing—that I began to develop the confidence needed for my skills to flourish. By God’s grace, I now work as a worship leader in a church of 500 in Durham (in north east England) where I also train younger musicians and help them develop their skills and faith—similar to how Mrs Tarter helped me. I also played bass and sang backing vocals in Harri Endersby’s electronic folk band for a few years. CAJ’s solid music education equipped me with the foundations on which I still stand today. And it all started in A-13!



*Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

as our lives changed completely. It was almost as if our daily lives stopped! However, this ‘stop’ gave us all a chance to think carefully about many things. Therefore, hoping for better things to come, I chose pieces such as *My Neighbor Totoro* and the *Hunter’s Chorus*. Besides these pieces, we played pieces like *Paprika*, to thank and encourage doctors and nurses, delivery and supermarket workers and bus and train drivers, who have all kept working throughout the crisis. To thank God for His grace, I chose the piece, *Amazing Grace*. The online orchestra also played *Ave Verum Corpus* in collaboration with the choir. *Ave Verum Corpus* was originally composed by Mozart, but Tchaikovsky incorporated orchestration and renamed it *Prayer*. I was really comforted by this piece and by its theme of prayer, and decided to have the students play it. I sincerely wanted the orchestra to be able to play with the choir, so I was really happy when the dream came true.

No doubt, in the future music performers will face various obstacles. However people will always demand music. Throughout history, music has adapted through pandemics, wars and crises. Who knows? It’s possible that after this corona crisis, it may become common for performers all over the world to collaborate through online orchestras. Without leaving Japan, people can even now enjoy sessions with people in the USA, Europe, and around the world. and play and listen to different genres of music, like jazz and classical music, thanks to the internet.

Nevertheless, nothing compares to live concerts. The biggest strength of live concerts is the fact that performers and audiences can share music while breathing the same air. So, let’s pray that this corona crisis calms down as soon as possible, and we can get back to living and making music peacefully. 🎵



GROUND BREAKING news

BRYAN LEWIS | Business Manager

There has been much cause for celebration recently. After years of planning, the construction of our new building has finally commenced! To mark the occasion, and to pray for a safe and successful completion of the project, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on the site in August. Representatives from the school and our building team—Raymond Architects, Koshin Construction and Takumi Associates—were led through a time of thanks and prayer by local church pastor, Rev. Taizo Morimoto. We praise God for His goodness, and excitedly look forward to the benefits of using the new building when the new school year starts next August.

Our planning focus is now on the redevelopment of the field and playgrounds and we look forward to sharing more about this as details are finalised.

Your tax deductible donations toward these redevelopments would greatly assist at this time. We have recently updated the giving section of our website, caj.ac.jp, to allow for an easier donation process and quicker processing of receipts for tax deductions. You are also welcome to contact our Business Manager, Bryan Lewis, on blewis@caj.ac.jp if you wish to discuss in more detail how you can help. Thank you for your consideration of supporting our mission in this way. 🙏



Alumni Updates

Do you wish there were more updates? You can help fix that! Spend five minutes right now emailing your update to alumni@caj.ac.jp.

Sharon Kruse Stradling | CLASS OF 1971

Sharon has survived 10 years with a brain tumor this fall. She thanks you for your prayers. One of her classmates has visited her several times which has been a joy. She is doing well.

Regina Dyer Nakamura | CLASS OF 1990

Gina is living near Toronto, Canada with her husband and youngest daughter Maya, 16, who is a junior in high school. Her eldest daughter Madison, 25, lives and works in Guelph, Ontario. Her middle daughter Naomi, 22, is a nurse at Milton Hospital and recently got engaged; her wedding will be in July 2021. Gina's husband is an HVAC mechanic and works in downtown Toronto. She is enjoying her role as a postnatal doula, ministering to new moms. If anyone comes to the Toronto area and needs a place to stay, she has a guest bedroom!

Rebecca Leigh Rivers | CLASS OF 1990

Becky lives in Folsom, California, USA with her husband and one remaining daughter at home. She is the proud mom of four, and works at Anthem Blue Cross in management. She still loves teaching piano as she has for the past 28 years. She is delighted to be the grandmother of three beautiful grandkids.

Kristy Endersby Severson | CLASS OF 1990

Kristy and her husband Erik live in Faribault, Minnesota. She teaches first grade at a small rural school and Erik works at The Caves of Faribault, a small company that is known for making blue cheese. They have been happily married for seven years.

James Yaegashi | CLASS OF 1991

James is still in Brooklyn, New York, USA with his family. His daughter, Anna, started high school and his son, Samuel, is a senior this fall.

Blanche Bartlett | STAFF MEMBER 1975-1996

Blanche Bartlett went to be with Jesus on September 29, 2020. She and her husband, David, served in Japan from 1967 - 1997. For 30 years, they were involved in the education of missionary kids, primarily at Christian Academy in Japan in Tokyo.

Blanche taught at CAJ for 21 years. While there, she lovingly taught third grade, remedial reading, and English as a second language. She also taught English and Bible at the Ochanomizu Christian Center in Tokyo. In addition, she taught four classes of English to neighborhood children, played the organ at a church, and taught Sunday school for children. The Bartletts retired from the field in May 1997. Blanche was a consummate educator who the Lord used to love, teach, and reach children in Japan with the gospel. No doubt, her love for students and MKs (missionary kids) made a lasting impact in their lives. Blanche is survived by her husband, David, and their children Mary Elizabeth (J.) and Timothy.



Benjamin Bailey | CLASS OF 1999 ▲

Benjamin Bailey married Ayumi Watanabe in Kyoto, Japan in November 2019. They also had an American wedding in Hawaii in February 2020 with CAJ alumni Luke Cole (1999) and Tracey Bailey Delamarter (1994) attending. Ben and Ayumi are both professors at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto.

Mark Hancock | CLASS OF 2010

Mark lives in Garland, Texas, USA. He has three children: Christian, Charlie and Caroline. Charlie got married last year and Christian is engaged to be married this year.

Class of 1990 | REUNION

The 30 year reunion event that the Class of 1990 had scheduled in San Francisco, California, USA for early July, 2020, had to be postponed due to COVID-19 concerns. Members of the class plan to reschedule for the summer of 2021. Meanwhile, the reunion was moved online and class members met virtually three times over the summer. Photos are from the initial meeting, which was held on June 13, 2020. Apologies to those members who joined subsequent meetings and are not pictured.



◀ L to R, top to bottom

Heidi Wenge Lomborg, Jamie Lucas Matsuoka, Ken Seat, Hubert Kim, Natsuko Ueda Seki, Aogu Matsuoka, Mark Klaus, Lark Amos Brenner, Marcy Meenk Connett, Molly Sloan VanCleave, Charlie Tamai, Becky Leigh Rivers, Russell Terhune

L to R, top to bottom ▶

Ken Seat, Jamie Lucas Matsuoka, Hubert Kim, Natsuko Ueda Seki, Aogu Matsuoka, Mark Klaus, Lark Amos Brenner, Marcy Meenk Connett, Molly Sloan VanCleave, Charlie Tamai, Becky Leigh Rivers, Russell Terhune, Tim Johnson (1977), Gina Dyer Nakamura

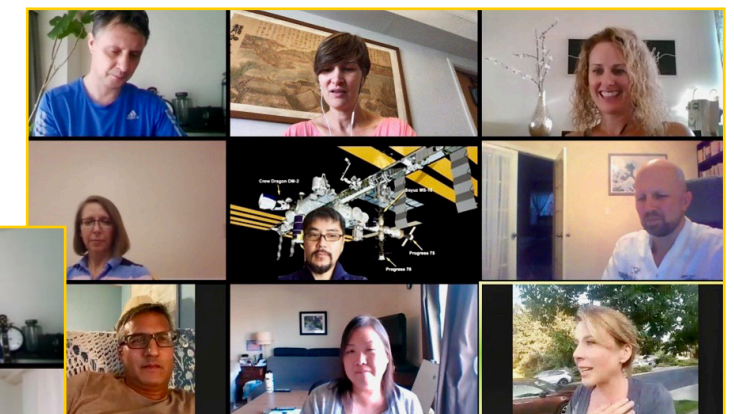


Class of 1991 | REUNION

Inspired by the Class of 1990, the Class of 1991 got together online on August 30, 2020.

L to R, top to bottom ▶

Brad Schmidt, Tanya Chislett Hall, Tasha Long Eyler, Charis Horne Chelen, Aogu Matsuoka, Ernest Leaf, Yasuhiro Hane, Jennifer Fujita Sentani, Sarah Kent



◀ L to R, top to bottom

Bob Clift, Tanya Chislett Hall, Brad Schmidt, Tasha Long Eyler, Shin Saoshiro, Mai Yoshikawa, Charis Horne Chelen, Yayoi Sakurai, Robert Fred Hayashi, Matthew Cummings, Minori Takao

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