

Festival of Choral Music hosted by TIS



Rehearsing the mass pieces for the grand finale of the choral event. ANDY MCGOVERN

About 570 children from nine international schools in the Kanto area, their teachers, and many parents and even grandparents, gathered in the gymnasium of Tokyo International School (TIS) on May 7, a cloudy spring day at the end of Golden Week, to enjoy a morning of choral singing.

For the first time this year TIS had the honour of hosting the Elementary Kanto Plains Choral Festival, an annual event that promotes choral music and fosters interaction between elementary students from different international schools in the Kanto area.

And international it was indeed at this festival, which saw children of many different nationalities stepping on stage together to present songs from around the world, ranging from gospel to a Hebrew folk song, from the English canon to a traditional song from Ghana. The songs powerfully echoed through the hall, which was colourfully decorated with the national flags of many countries. This high-profile music event vividly illustrated the open spirit of the international school community.

The hall was brimming with activity, with children and guests finding their places and last-minute preparations being made before the 10am start, when Miguel Arambulo — music teacher

and choir director at TIS and this year's festival organizer — and Denise Owen, choir director at the Christian Academy in Japan, stepped on stage to lead the expectant crowd through some fun vocal warm-ups.

At centre stage (both on and off) were the students, mainly from grades 3 to 5. They were happy to be out of school for a day and keen to participate in this annual choral festival. The various groups waited their turns in silence and were amazingly well behaved while attentively listening to the presentations.

The Junior Choir of the International School of the Sacred Heart started the first round of choral singing in the morning, followed by the Yokohama International School Show Choir, the American School in Japan Grade 5 Choir, and the TIS Elementary School Choir. After a short break, presentations were given by Nishimachi International School Elementary School Chorus (grades 3–5) and Saint Mary's International School Grade 5 Choir before breaking up for lunch in the school playground. In the afternoon, three more choirs presented their songs, including the Christian Academy in Japan Elementary Choir, the Saint Maur International School Choir, and the Seisen International School Choir.

"I like the way I feel when I'm singin' this song; I

wish everyone could feel this way", sang the choir of Saint Maur International School. This song perfectly expressed the happy mood in the hall where everyone hummed along with big smiles on their faces. The teachers and parents, many mums and some dads too, sat at the side and in the back of the hall and proudly listened to the children singing or happily snapped some photos of this memorable day.

The choral highlights of the festival were two mass songs jointly sung by all participants and directed by Miguel Arambulo and Denise Owen respectively: first "Sing a Song of Love" composed by Denise Owen and next "Obsiwana," a traditional song from Ghana.

"I loved the energy level of the singers while singing the mass pieces. Each child looked very focused and enthusiastic while singing," commented Arambulo.

It certainly was "a morning of 'golden voices' at the end of Golden Week," as Des Hurst, the Head of TIS, remarked in his closing speech.

When Mr. Hurst handed out certificates to the directors of the attending schools, there was thunderous applause from the children, showing how much they liked their choir directors and how much they loved this event — a great way of saying thank you! — ALENA ECKELMANN

New “Joy Tots” program at Joy to the World



Joy the World American International School's Principal Jerry Hanus, with a new student. JOY TO THE WORLD AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Joy to the World American International School's new “Joy Tots” morning program for children aged 18 months to 2 years is one of two bilingual programs offered, the other being their regular “Mommy and Me” program.

Both programs focus on helping parents to raise bilingual children through puppetry, dance, and role-play, encouraging children to follow simple instructions given in English. Mr. van den Berg, who runs the Joy Tots program, said “The strong focus on hands-on activities gives the young child a sense of accomplishment every time they manage to do something by themselves.”

Joy Tots is available 2, 3, or 5 times per week and Mommy and Me is a once- or twice-weekly 50-minute class, run by Principal Jerry Hanus. Committed to the belief that it is of great importance to start bilingual education as early as possible, Mr. Hanus is also available to give advice to parents interested in raising bilingual children.

See <http://www.joytotheworld.info>.

Romper Room at EISPA

Embrey International School of Performing Arts (EISPA) is introducing a new class for babies this month, called “Romper Room.”

On Mondays and Fridays between 2:30pm and 3:30pm, parents and children can enjoy music and movement games inspired by the popular America television series. Suitable for children just before they learn to walk, the class includes lots of singing and dancing, with parachute- and puppet-based activities, among many others.

Classes cost ¥2,000 per session. Call EISPA on 03-5724-3228 or email info@eispa.jp for a free trial lesson.

Awesome Ants at PAL

PAL Preschool and Kindergarten International School were happy to welcome 12 new students to their “Awesome Ants” class last month. Established in 1998, PAL provides educational programs for young children, and recently developed their afternoon Awesome Ants program, which is to appeal to parents who want their children to maintain existing or learn new English skills.

The new program starts at 1:30pm and finishes at 5pm, and incorporates a variety of activities that balance phonics, reading and writing, calendar work, arts and crafts, singing and dancing, games and physical exercise, and story time, as well as free play.

All students are encouraged to complete one worksheet per day, aimed at encouraging an interest in reading and writing, as well as speaking.

Teacher Makiko Koide said, “I’m always amazed at how fast students learn languages, and we can hear them talking until 5pm every day now!”

TAIP's free art workshops

RBR is holding free art workshops for teachers on June 6, at their studio in Moto-Azabu. There will be two 30-minute sessions, starting at 12:30pm and 1:30pm, exclusively open to teachers working at schools belonging to TAIP (Tokyo Association of International Preschools).

Topics covered will include card-making and other craft tips, and the workshops are sponsored by Sticker Lovers.

TAIP members can register online at <http://www.rbrart.com/bs-taip.html>. A third workshop, starting at 2pm, is open to parents. Contact joei@rbrart.com for more information.

Oxfam's Hunger Banquet

On May 27, Oxfam Japan's International Volunteer Group brought poverty to the plates of guests at their Hunger Banquet, held at Tokyo International School. The Hunger Banquet is an interactive event aimed at vividly illustrating inequalities in the world.

When guests arrive, they draw a ticket that assigns them a first world, second world, or third world income tier and a corresponding meal. The people in the first world group are served a fancy meal, the people in the second world group receive rice and beans, and the people in the third world group receive only rice.

The meal is followed by a discussion, providing a wonderful learning opportunity for everyone involved. For more information about Oxfam's Hunger Banquets, email Dalynna at oxfamjp.ivg.coordinator@gmail.com. — SAMANTHA WOODGATE



Nagoya International School students keen to participate in summer activities with their teachers. The NIS summer program is developed for native English speakers, returnees, and bicultural or dual-national children from the local area. BRIAN WEBB

Summer activities at Nagoya International

Nagoya International School's summer program starts on June 21 and runs until August 6, and consists of four weekly sessions.

Designed for children aged 5 to 12 years, the program includes a range of activities such as arts and crafts, web design, movie production, IT, cooking, sports and games, and singing and dancing, all designed to provide students with a dynamic environment that helps them to learn as well as have fun.

The NIS summer program incorporates activities that challenge the student through five main areas — creative, cognitive, collaborate, cultural, and cardiovascular. Actual activities vary on a weekly basis and are taught mainly by NIS teachers, although sometimes in collaboration with staff from the Nagoya YMCA.

The application deadline for the first two sessions is June 11. For more details see <http://summerprogram.nisjapan.info/>.

The Kinderqueen visits ABC International School

Students at ABC were treated to a visit from the Kinderqueen on May 12. Kathryn Claire travelled from the United States to Tokyo to entertain ABC's children, parents, and teachers with over an hour of songs, stories, and music. Students made their own crowns beforehand so they could wear them during the performance, and audience participation was "happy and boisterous!" according to Director Elizabeth Minahan.

Also in May, ABC celebrated "Book Week," during which children brought in their favourite books and welcomed parents and friends to read to them. A highlight of the week was when the children came to school dressed as their favourite book character.

Toward the end of the month, ABC held their Spring Family Picnic in Shinjuku Park, with bubbles, tug-of-war, and potato sack races. Everyone is now looking forward to more exciting outdoor activities coming up during ABC's summer program from June 28–July 23. Contact Ms. Minahan on 03-5793-1359 or abcintl@gol.com for more information.



ABC students in their crowns, enjoying a visit from the Kinderqueen last month. ABC INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

English Studio's spring picnic in the park



Three-legged fun at English Studio's picnic. ENGLISH STUDIO INTERNATIONAL KINDERGARTEN

At English Studio International Kindergarten (ESIK) last month, teachers, parents, and students ventured across the road to Rinshin No Mori Park and enjoyed their annual spring picnic, blessed with beautiful weather and some extremely delicious dishes prepared by their very talented parents.

The picnic was ESIK's first event of the new school year and allowed new parents and students to get to know each other. Mr. Wilk played the guitar as students played some of their favourite games and then showed off their athletic ability with a three-legged relay race.

Parents were then invited to participate, and it wasn't long before teachers joined in on the fun, with Mr. Wilk quite literally running rings around Ms. Mujaya and Ms. Raos.

It was a wonderful day and the ESIK community is looking forward to more equally successful events as the year continues. — SHANE THOMPSON

International School of Asia offers summer camp in Karuizawa

This July, International School of Asia, Karuizawa (ISAK) will offer its first summer camp. Approximately 30 boys and girls from international middle schools and Japanese junior high schools will spend two weeks living and learning together in Nagano, one of Japan's best-known summer vacation spots.

Joining them will be scholarship recipients from Nepal, Myanmar, and the Philippines; counsellors from Ivy League universities in the United States; and teachers from top private high schools in the United States and Canada.

This mix of a diverse Asia-centred student body and a North American style of discussion-based teaching is the expression of what the Foundation for ISAK hopes will become a unique school for educating a new generation of compassionate leaders — emphasising caring, a deep knowledge of Asia, and innovative problem-solving. ISAK is scheduled to open a boarding school in 2012.

The Foundation has secured a 30-year lease for land from the village of Tsumagoi in Gunma Prefecture. Edward Suzuki, the award-winning architect who designed Nishimachi and St. Mary's, will be designing the facilities.

For middle school students, a few spots are still open for this year's summer camp. For more information and application procedures, email info@isak.jp. — LISA HOSOKAWA

Change of hours at New International School to benefit working parents

New IS will offer an extended school day option from the 2010–11 school year for the benefit of working parents.

Currently, classes end at 3:40pm, 3:50pm, or 4pm, depending on age. Next year, they will end daily at 3:35pm or 3:45pm, with an option to remain at school until 4:55pm in art, music, recreation, or study centres.

There will also be clubs such as the *oya-ko* (parent–child) violin club and the New IS Players, which puts on a musical production every year.

Finally, the school's URL will soon change from <http://newinternationalschool.com> to <http://newis.ed.jp>, as befits the school's non-profit status.

— STEVEN PARR

Opportunities in Asia for Stanstead College?

Stanstead College's Headmaster Michael Wolfe and Director of Advancement Dugie Ross visited Tokyo in early May as part of a three-week tour of Asia. During their visit they met with education experts based in Japan.

Founded in 1872, Stanstead College is an international co-educational boarding and day school in Quebec. The school's 200 students come from many different countries throughout the world, including Japan.



Natsu, Manami, Yui, Ayumi, and Sho enjoying their culture festival. KATOH GAKUEN

Katoh Gakuen's culture festival in Shizuoka

Katoh Gakuen in Numazu, Shizuoka Prefecture had its *bunkasai* (cultural festival) on Saturday, May 15. The students in the International Baccalaureate Bilingual Middle Years Program focused on community and service activities with the theme of "Education in Different Countries."

Posters, videos, and information from schools and national educational systems from around the world were on display. A variety of games were also created to raise funds for a library in Mongolia.

Everyone involved felt that the day was a great success, and the students had a wonderful time learning about other educational systems from all around the world. — MICHAEL BOSTWICK

Family Day at Makuhari International School



Students and parents enjoying Family Day at Makuhari International School. BRIAN HALL

On the morning of Wednesday, May 12, over 100 kindergarten parents visited Makuhari International School to celebrate Family Day.

They watched a kindergarten performance in the hall before attending class to work on some art projects. Later they ate lunch with their children. It was a fun time for all, and parents enjoyed seeing the kindergarten in action, as well as sitting on the grass and eating with their friends and children. — PAUL ROGERS

HOPE@Nanzan Club raises funds for Haiti

On January 12, 2010, when disaster struck the poor island nation of Haiti in the form of a massive earthquake, millions of already impoverished people were thrown into a devastating crisis. It is in these moments when compassion and a desire to help affect us all. The students at Nanzan International School in Toyota City were not an exception.

They had already formed a HOPE Club in their school and were raising money to buy a cow for the Cow Bank Program in Cambodia. But when they heard that two of HOPE's hospital partners in Haiti had run out of supplies, students responded by immediately launching a fundraising drive in order to purchase disaster relief packs through HOPE International Development Agency.

In five days the HOPE@Nanzan Club raised ¥211,411 for the relief effort in Haiti. The passion and zeal displayed by each member was inspiring to witness. Grade 11 student Hitomi Ito said, "We couldn't have done it without everyone's help. When I think that we are making a big difference in someone's life, I feel proud to be a member of Hope@Nanzan Kokusai High School." — LOWELL SHEPPARD

ASIJ seniors prepare for college

Over the past three years, 33% of graduates from The American School in Japan have attended Barron's Most Selective colleges, and 23% chose a college outside of the United States. Once again, many ASIJ students have been accepted by top tier schools in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan.

This year's seniors join recent graduates at Princeton University, Yale University, Harvard University, Cornell University, U. Pennsylvania, Columbia University, Dartmouth College, The Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, Duke University, MIT, UCLA, U. Michigan, U. Chicago, Georgetown University, Oberlin College, Vassar College, Durham University, Cambridge University, University College London, Imperial College, U. Melbourne, U. Toronto, McGill University, U. British Columbia, Parson's School of Design, Central St. Martin's School of Art and Design, Waseda University, and Sophia University.

The ASIJ community wishes the seniors well as they make their final choices and prepare to head off to university. — MATT WILCE



Seniors from the Class of 2009 during last year's Senior Walk, an ASIJ tradition that dates back to 1963 and culminates in the unveiling of the class stepping stone. This year's Senior Walk will take place the day before graduation, on June 4th. ASIJ

Japan School Jobs

Montessori Teacher, Yokohama

Treehouse Montessori School is looking for a qualified kindergarten teacher who holds a Montessori diploma and can work part time or full time. Prospective candidates should email a resume to Head of School Jenny Vyvial at jenny@tms-school.com.

Japanese Language Teacher, Chiba

Makuhari International School is seeking a temporary Japanese language teacher to cover maternity leave from Sept. 2010 to Aug. 2011. Job description and details available on request. Send resume with letter of application to Paul Rogers at head@mis.ed.jp.