

The Newsletter of the Campolindo Instrumental Music Program

Brought to you by Campo Instrumental Music Boosters

FROM THE PODIUM

by Johnny Johnson,
Music Director

Unprecedented times. Unusual circumstances. Extraordinary era. We've nearly run out clichés to define this pandemic existence.

In my welcome letter last August, I proposed to you that this year would be "filled with new experiences" that would hopefully include "skill-building" and "important lessons." And I suppose it has been so.

But along with that, we have experienced the loss of our simple, daily routines that naturally included fresh-air strolls, the chatter of students milling about, familiar to-do lists, smiles, handshakes, and spontaneous small talk within six feet. It all means so much more now. Who knew that we were taking those things for granted?

Instead we have mastered the art of studying virtually, practicing independently, recording ourselves, and finding safe ways to make music together, and ... in a very different way ... performing.

Normally, this writing would include descriptions of our ensemble achievements, summaries of our most recent events, notes about individual students earning spots in honor ensembles or other awards, and other musical contributions to our community. Most of those events or achievements were unavailable to us this year. Happily, for this "extraordinary era" there are other achievements to note that are truly meaningful.

First, we managed to overcome the unique challenges of virtual rehearsal. It's a setting in which we cannot simply unmute and play together. Because each household internet connection generates a different rate of sound transfer, the result is cacophonous. Therefore most of this year we have been limited to playing along with recordings while muted, and fortunately various music vendors have provided an abundance of tools for making this work fairly well. We've supplemented that with solo work, small-group study, and special opportunities to engage and grow.



Mr. Johnson leads a hybrid jazz rehearsal. Students in the room are using special PPE: face masks for musicians and bell covers.

Our students were terrific teachers in our virtual setting, generously offering tech tips, making suggestions for improving the experience, and making significant individual contributions through demonstrations and presentations. Perhaps the one advantage of this experience was that it required each student to listen to themselves, assess their work, and determine the fixes. Still, we did miss the inspiration of in-person playing and the group spirit that has been so critical to our growth in the past.

A silver lining for me during these "unprecedented times" was to learn from the students during class presentations, something we wouldn't normally have time for, due to the compressed rehearsal schedules of concert preparation. During one period of time, each student presented either on a college or university they were interested in, their current favorite jazz tune, or on a specific genre or sub-genre of music. During another, members of the Symphonic Band and Concert Band developed presentations on the tune "Deep River" and the Orchestra presented on "Follow the Drinking Gourd." These presentations were rare moments indeed—when we heard each student's voice as they verbalized what was in their minds and in their hearts. Normally, we're in the business of expressing ourselves in ways that words can't, so hearing the depth of intellect and emotion in their words was a powerful experience.

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We continue to be blessed with the good fortune to work alongside professional, working musicians. Great thanks to our jazz coach, Ross Wilson, and our string coaches, Jeremy Cohen and Eric Price. Having these folks in our Zoom meetings throughout the fall and early spring really helped to keep things lively in our virtual environment. We were doubly blessed to have them in person once the hybrid schedule kicked off. Ross and Jeremy further deserve a huge Thank You for their hours and hours of work in preparing the virtual band and orchestra recordings.

Despite our relative isolation this year, we saw some amazing student-led work take place—from the tutoring program, reaching out into the community to help young ones in the area continue progressing on their instruments, to socially-distanced-and-masked string quartet rehearsals in breezeways and in the quad, to saxophone sectionals in the CPAC, to jazz combos and percussion sectionals in M1. It's as if these students were joyously proclaiming, "We will make music. We WILL make music!"

Now, as we look forward to a return to normal, I feel the need to caution everyone on the limits of playing instruments together as we may still be affected by pandemic restrictions in the fall. As you know, we sit very close together when we play, and our classroom (M1) is designed thusly (i.e., there is not enough room to spread 65 to 75 players six, or even three, feet apart). This might mean playing outdoors when fall arrives. We do have CPAC and other large rooms to use, but we must also share these with other programs on campus.

Another word of caution is regarding the nature of wind instruments and the fact that blowing air through an instrument is a known "super spreader" of aerosol particles. For this reason, the guidelines for wind band rehearsals is quite different from that of strings. We don't yet know where those guidelines will stand in the fall, but we are hopeful for something normal.

One thing I'm very sure about is that we will be talking about this school year full of "unusual circumstances" for many years to come. I greatly appreciate the support we've received from parents, students, and administrators on this sometimes difficult journey.

You all have my best wishes for a lovely and pleasurable summer. See you in August!

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED THIS YEAR'S INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM

MUSIC BOOSTERS BOARD AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President: Amy Kikugawa

Vice President:

Treasurer: Bill Doherty

Concert Attire:

Homecoming Snack Shack:

Hospitality: Reena Malhotra

Jazz Dinner Dance: Chris House and Wei Barck

Newsletter Layout: Tina Riepe

Photography: Vadim Mikulinsky

Pops Potluck: Kindra Sampson

Publicity: Siv Ricketts

Senior Gifts:

Webmaster/Emails: Nanci Thomas

Welcome Back BBQ: Cynthia Manji-Granicher and Alyson Tonomura

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC STUDENT COUNCIL

Co-Presidents:

Connor Johnson (band)

Julianna Meneses (orchestra)

Co-Vice Presidents:

Amrita Malhotra (band)

Andrew Navruzyan (orchestra)

CAMPOLINDO HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Principal: John Walker

Associate Principal: Laura Lee

Associate Principal: Vanessa Knight

Principal's Secretary: Melissa Haldeman

Counseling Department Chair: Duane Magno

FROM OUR OUTGOING BOOSTER PRESIDENT AMY KIKUGAWA

When I became Booster President, I already knew that the Instrumental Music program was a very special program. But now, in May, I realize how lucky we are to have Johnny Johnson leading the program. During this past year, Johnny has gone above and beyond to ensure that, despite being isolated, our children developed their musical abilities and continued to perform as a group. By providing various software programs that allowed students to play along with recorded music, encouraging solo and chamber performances, and permitting students to meet on campus in small ensembles (once hybrid schedules started), Johnny found ways to allow our children to play music together. As a result, our children were able to maintain the camaraderie and sense of community that has always been the cornerstone of the Instrumental Music program.

As members of the Music Boosters Board, we support the Instrumental Music program in a myriad of ways, including planning the beginning of the year BBQ, Fall Potluck, post-concert refreshments, Jazz Dinner Dance, and more. This year, our roles were limited as the COVID 19 pandemic eventually cancelled all of these events. However, many Board members continued to assist the Instrumental Music program throughout this year. Special thanks to:

- Tina Riepe, who oversaw the preparation and layout of our newsletters, and Nanci Thomas, our Webmaster. They have been integral in making sure that we could continue to communicate with you about the Instrumental Music programs this year. I'm sorry to see both of them leave the Board with the graduation of their children.

- Chris House and Wei Barck, chairs of the Jazz Dinner Dance, who explored various options for holding the event in light of the COVID restrictions. They met with Mr. Johnson regularly in hopes of creating some opportunity for our annual Jazz showcase to be held.
- Cynthia Manji-Granicher and Alyson Tonomura, who were always ready to lend a helping hand in response to my last minute requests.
- Bill Doherty, our long-time Treasurer, who retired this year and is looking forward to travelling and visiting family. Bill has made sure Campo Music Boosters has stayed fiscally sound and financially healthy. It will be hard to find someone to fill his shoes, so I am grateful that he has agreed to help train his replacement.

The Boosters Board is an integral part of the success of Instrumental Music program, and we are currently looking for parents to join next year's Board. Becoming a member of the Boosters Board is a great way to meet other music parents, be a part of your student's high school years, and support the Instrumental Music program. I hope you will consider joining the Board! Please contact me at lawyermom@gmail.com (Amy Kikugawa) if you are interested or have any questions.

I'm looking forward to next school year with great anticipation and excitement. As more and more people are vaccinated and the rollback of many COVID restrictions continues, we will once again be treated to fantastic Orchestra, Band, and Jazz performances. And I hope to see you all at the Jazz Dinner Dance, where we can dance the night away and celebrate the Instrumental Music program and our musicians!

2021-2022 Boosters Board and Committee Jobs

Please consider joining the 2021-2022 Campolindo Music Boosters Board. There are many ways to get involved. See below for the list of positions. For more information, please contact Amy Kikugawa at lawyermom@gmail.com.

President/Co-President: 1 or 2 people

Vice President(s): 1 or 2 people

Treasurer: 1 person

Concert Attire: 1-2 people

Homecoming Concessions: 2-3 people

Hospitality (Band): 2-3 people

Hospitality (Orchestra): 2-3 people

Jazz Dinner Dance: 2-3 people

Newsletter Layout: 1 person

Photography: 1-2 people

Pops Potluck: 1-2 people

Publicity: 1 person

Senior Gifts: 1-2 people

Webmaster: 1 person

Welcome Back BBQ: 1-2 people

PARTING THOUGHTS

Thank you to the parents of graduating Seniors who shared their music memories and reflections on the role of music in students' lives. Their comments, in no particular order:

Keith Millar – Band has been an incredibly important part of Keith's high school experience. He has always loved music – playing, composing, listening, learning – and the quality of this program, along with the fellowship and consistency of the band experience over the past four years, has been invaluable. While there are many things I love about the program, the very best thing about it is Johnny. His dedication to and love and support of his students, combined with his depth of knowledge about and passion for music, are what makes this program so successful and enjoyable for everyone. This was especially true for me last spring when the pandemic suddenly sent everyone home and into uncharted territory. His daily emails with links to different music and a few thoughts about each one were deeply personal and filled with hope and grace. Some of them, especially the last one of the school year, brought me to tears. It was truly an insight into why his students love him so much, and how he uses music to enhance their lives and help them become the best versions of themselves.

– Susan Gelmis

Dale Zhang – I remember watching the graduating class of 2018 during Dale's freshman year and thinking it would be a long time until he graduated, but here we are, and the time has flown by! I've been impressed every year with how well the orchestra plays complex pieces and the range of music chosen by Mr. Johnson. I was amazed at how good the kids sounded when I went to that first Winter Concert. To think those are JUST high school kids! Of course, their proficiency and musicianship are the direct result of Mr. Johnson's commitment to helping them learn and grow through their high school orchestra experience. Dale has certainly grown as a musician in his time at Campolindo. When it came time to choose between piano and cello, he chose cello and has really grown to love it. After his freshman year he expressed an interest in taking private lessons, so we found a teacher. He worked hard over the summer and moved from second-to-last chair to fifth. While that example says something about Dale's drive to improve, it also speaks to how Mr. Johnson motivates his students to be their best, even if they aren't planning to continue in music after high school. Thank you, Mr. Johnson for all you've done for Dale, and for all of the students in the music program!

– Julie Rinkenberger

Natalie Mangoba – Music has been an important and meaningful part of Natalie's life since a young age. She began playing piano in first grade and participated in recitals throughout grade school. In fourth grade she took up the flute and played in the Camino Pablo band. Throughout middle school she learned to collaborate with others to create beautiful music in several different styles in the JM concert and symphonic bands. In high school she enjoyed mastering more difficult pieces through four years of band and two musicals at Campolindo. As she became a more advanced musician, she auditioned for and was accepted into the Diablo Wind Symphony, the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra, and the Contra Costa Honors Band. And although the flute is her primary instrument, Natalie also enjoys playing the guitar.

We are so grateful to Adam Noel and Johnny Johnson for keeping Natalie's love of music alive and teaching her to share it with others. Attending Natalie's music performances has been one of our favorite things to do. We have been fortunate to be able to share these events with her grandparents and other extended family.

Natalie will be attending UC Santa Barbara in the fall. We love you and are so very proud of you, Natalie! We are sure that music will continue to be a joyful part of your life!

– Cecilia and Leo Mangoba

Corbin Strong – Music and the Campo Music program have provided many gifts to my son. Here is the condensed list. It is not possible to play well without constant practice, so he has learned perseverance. After eight years of practice, he has learned that perseverance and hard work can lead to success. And, between those first two discoveries, he learned that oftentimes 95% of your best is not enough to outshine 110% of someone else's.

He has found something that gives him joy and the doubled joy of good friends to share it with. And, if he keeps practicing, he will be able to recapture that joy for the rest of his life. He has had a place to go when school (or his parents) were frustrating. He has always had an unmet challenge to play a little faster, a little higher, or with a better tone.

Most of all, Corbin was gifted with hundreds of interactions with adults about a topic that mattered to him. Not listening to a lecture. Not speaking to someone a few times in passing. But substantial long-term contacts with role models and mentors. It was a great internship for adulthood. Thank you, Adam Noel, Jonathan Knight, John Maltester, Ross Wilson, and, of course, Johnny Johnson.

– John Strong

Megan Riepe – We are so grateful that Megan has been able to be part of a school band since fourth grade. What a long way she has come from her first attempts to get a sound out of her flute! We were so proud when we could hear her playing in those elementary school concerts in the multi-use room at Camino Pablo. Then, before we knew it, it was on to middle-school concerts at JM, where Mr. Noel always offered up an eclectic mix of musical choices and reminded us of the cognitive and emotional benefits of playing music.

Then there were flute lessons and the switch from the beginner instrument to the “fancy flute” and the piccolo. All of which helped Megan get ready for the level of difficulty of the pieces she got to play at Campolindo in the Concert Band, the Symphonic Band, and the pit orchestra for the musical. It was always a joy to hear her play in the CPAC, even if we couldn’t see her because she always seemed to end up behind the podium.

Thank you to Mr. Johnson for providing such a wonderful music education, and for keeping the program going over the last year and a half in a rather impossible situation. We will be forever grateful for all he did to help Megan explore different types of music, including the requirement of writing performance reviews which resulted in our family enjoying many wonderful symphony, ballet, and musical theater performances together. At least in Megan’s case it seems that Mr. Johnson has met his goal of creating life-long music appreciators.

– Tina and Mark Riepe

Antonio Thomas – Music has always been a part of Antonio’s life, and it’s been a joy to watch his passion for it grow over the years. We got our first indication of interest when we met with his first grade teacher. She told us that she played classical music when the kids returned from recess to help calm them down. She said Antonio would stop her and ask about the music—what the name of the song was and who wrote it. She said no one had ever asked her that before in all her years of teaching first grade.

Fast forward to middle school, Antonio joined the jazz band and was first introduced to Bob Athayde at Stanley Middle School and his summer jazz workshops. It really felt like that was the place Antonio found his calling. Playing with middle school, high school, and professional musicians showed him a path that he could walk and improve each year.

Antonio was excited to join the music program at Campo, and it seemed like fate that his first year, Mr. Johnson would arrange a trip to his hometown of New Orleans for the Campo jazz students. Antonio came back from that trip and could not stop talking about the music, the history, and the lively atmosphere of the town. We

are so grateful to Mr. Johnson for providing such a unique opportunity.

The Campo music program gave us a lot of great memories over Antonio’s four years. One of our favorite events of the year was the Jazz Dinner Dance. MCC was a great setting and gave Antonio so many different opportunities to play music he loves surrounded by friends and family. We also looked forward each year to the musical and were excited that he got to play in the pit orchestra. The seasonal concerts were wonderful as well, and we missed all these performances last year as we did our best to stay safe during the pandemic.

It seems so appropriate now that Antonio goes off to college in the city he was first introduced to by the Campo music program, New Orleans. We are excited for his future and grateful for the opportunities he had these last four years.

– Paul & Nanci Thomas

Stephen Vojta – Our son, Stephen Vojta, has always had a passion for music and it has always been a very important part of his life. Music was his playtime, both at home and with his friends. He just simply enjoyed making music. He started off on the piano and then added the string bass and more recently voice. The Campolindo Instrumental music program was an incredible experience for Stephen, and we have such fond memories of it. The annual Jazz Dinner Dance at the Moraga Country Club was always a favorite of ours. It was such a fun event with all of the great music and dancing. He also played in the orchestra pit for the musicals and needless to say *The Phantom of the Opera* will always be remembered. But the proudest moment for us was watching the performance of Schubert’s “Trout Quintet” that Stephen organized with his very talented orchestral colleagues—such beautiful music which will never be forgotten!

– Alexander and Fabiola Vojta

Melisa Dundar – It all started at fourth grade when Melisa came home excited and announced to us that she wants to play the violin. After that it never stopped. With Mr. Noel’s guidance and help, these elementary school budding musicians took those notes and melodies and turned them into beautiful pieces. Every year we look forward to school concerts. When Melisa began high school her interest shifted to viola, and I think viola and Campolindo orchestra helped her find her love of music. We are ever so grateful for all the time and effort put into our kids by Moraga’s school music teachers. They take elementary school kids with no prior music education and by the time they graduate high school they become musicians. Thank you!

– Dundar Family

Connor Johnson – From the time Connor was a wobbly toddler, music has been a joy in his life. He started out wildly shaking maracas in a Music Together class, and transferred this energy to Suzuki piano lessons at age four. Whereas other parents have to encourage, nag, and cajole their children to practice piano, Connor played without prompting. Not necessarily what he was instructed to practice, but he would pick out songs he had heard or created in his mind. Later in junior high school, his piano teacher nurtured this love of music composition, while the jazz band cemented his love of jazz music and the trombone. At Campolindo, Mr. Johnson provided just the right amount of encouragement, structure, and creative freedom Connor required to take his trombone skills and music theory to the next level. Mr. Johnson has helped Connor develop not only as a musician, but also guided his leadership skills as Connor took on roles as section leader and band president. For Connor, music continues to be his happy place: it gives him a voice he can use to share his feelings and thoughts through his art, when words will not suffice. As Connor embarks on the next leg of his journey in music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music to study technology and applied composition, we rest easy knowing that Campolindo has prepared him well for any challenges ahead. We are so incredibly proud of you Connor, and know you will color the world with your music.

– Matt and Jennifer Johnson

Benjamin Hinchliff – After playing cello for two years, Benjamin firmly announced he wanted to play upright bass near the end of fifth grade. We admired his conviction — he assured us that bassist Mr. Noel had no influence. Then began lessons with Mr. Price, and we became transportation and logistics experts. As he progressed, his hands grew very befittingly, and he found his groove for the last seven years. He’s also seen wider mutual benefits of the music community — a broken music stand crisis at JM became his Eagle Scout Project opportunity, repairing 60+ stands with a self-prototyped fix in time for Spring Concerts and saving expensive replacement. We’ve thoroughly enjoyed his journey from Bass Bashes, Summer Orchestra/Jazz camps, and memorable CPAC concerts, to living room Zoom classes playing to a cultured cat and helping troubleshoot technical glitches. It’s been extraordinary to witness Benjamin’s musical and personal growth. We’re extremely thankful to Mr. Noel, Mr. Price, Mr. Johnson, and the many professionals and volunteers who’ve given their time and talent. Benjamin knows there’s always a place for music in his life!

– Ruth and Giles Hinchliff

Nick Stephen – What has music meant to Nick? It was the jazz program that drove him to get up before dawn for most of the last six years. It was the highlight of his time at Campo. It’s become his passion and purpose.

Best memories? Seeing Nick in a tuxedo looking like he just stepped out of a 1920s Gentleman’s Gazette. Listening to our son perform and realizing just how special he and the Campolindo music program are.

Music found darkness.

Melody enters like light.

Purpose discovered.

– Ed Stephen and Jodie Torena

Mason Gruebele – Why the French horn? Why not the flute or the trumpet? These were questions I asked myself at every concert freshman year. I can’t even see my son playing! If he’d chosen the flute or trumpet, he’d be front and center and I’d be able to see my little boy turned young man sporting a tux actually playing (those flute and trumpet parents sure are lucky). By winter concert of sophomore year I gave up attempts to capture him playing on film or video, I mean what was the point? Now I was forced to sit back, relax, and...listen. The sounds I heard were amazing! By letting go of my need to see Mason play, I learned to listen for him. Eventually, I was able to recognize the medium tone of the French horn and began feeling him in the music.

Growing up, I never had the opportunity to attend concerts and my schools didn’t have music departments. So listening to the beautiful music—seeing all of the students working hard individually, yet collectively—and realizing my son is a part of that magic, makes me thankful for Mr. Johnson and the Campolindo Music Program. During his four years in the music program (and five years previously at JM and Rheem), Mason has learned the important life lessons of personal accountability and teamwork, and I have learned that just because someone is not in the spotlight, doesn’t mean their job is not important.

Best of luck in your next chapter, Mason! We love you and are so proud of you.

– Love, Mama, Daddy and Madi

***Congratulations to all our Seniors.
We wish them each the very best
as they embark on a new journey!***

