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Japan PD Highlights

Flutist's Unique Use of Electronic Music Excites Audiences during the Holidays



Flutist Jane Rigler prepares to treat the Doshisha Women's College audience to her unique style

Dr. Jane Rigler, composer, flutist, and teacher at the Interdisciplinary Music Program at the University of Colorado, performed a country-wide holiday music program in Japan. The novelty of Ms. Rigler's music is in her use of a small microphone, which attaches to a computer, and triggers electronic sound. Through this method, she elegantly controls the sound processing of the flute/computer while performing.

Dec 13, Kansai: Ms. Rigler performed at Doshisha Women's College, where audience members expressed appreciation for the musician's avant-garde style and creativity, as well as her explanations of what several of the pieces "meant". Ms. Rigler also played traditional holiday tunes, drawing active participation from the audience as they sang along with her performance.

Dec 14, Tokyo: As part of Tokyo American Center's initiative to reach out to new and younger audiences, Ms. Rigler's performance was a perfect match for a music-focused high school in Kawagoe City, Saitama. Ms. Rigler was the first American musician the students had met, and they joined her in singing along to her performance. Many students came to talk with her after the concert, to tell her how impressed they were with her performance and her unique technique.

Dec 19, Nagoya: The Nagoya American Center held an art collaboration program with Ms. Rigler and digital arts students from Trident Computer School, one of Japan's best-regarded computer art technical colleges. The venue, Nagoya's Apple Computer Store, provided iPads to the audience for their active participation in the performance. Ms. Rigler improvised scores to three stylistically unique art works created by the students. While the event reached the general public, it was also an excellent opportunity to engage Nagoya's youth, and to encourage them to study in the United States. As a follow up to the program, Ms. Rigler agreed to compose a score to one student's short film that will be submitted to an American competition.

Dec 20, Sapporo: Sapporo American Center hosted a joint event, featuring a presentation on Operation TOMODACHI (the U.S. Government's recovery efforts following the March 11 disasters) by Sapporo PAO John Taylor, followed by Ms. Rigler's performance. Several people mentioned that they were brought to tears during the presentation on Operation Tomodachi and that this was different than anything they had seen in the media. Other comments included: "America is our true friend. I hope it stays that way forever." In response to a question on what they will take away from the event, one attendee answered: "An appreciation for Americans' generosity."

Dec 22, Naha: Ms. Rigler also performed at Consul General Raymond Greene's residence to an audience of sixty key contacts. While guests feasted on turkey, Ms. Rigler entertained them with a variety of both traditional and original holiday melodies. Ms. Rigler engaged the audience and had them clap and hum along with her flute to effect the sound of multiple instruments.



Ms. Rigler performing at the Toho Music High School

Future Space Scientists Flooded NASA Scientist with Questions on Space



Never ending questions from the audience for Dr. Allen

Jan 6 – The Tokyo American Center Hall was packed with young future scientists, who came to learn about the keys to the mysteries of our Solar System from NASA scientist and scholar Dr. Marc Allen. Dr. Allen's lecture included a slideshow of beautiful images from space, as well as two videos of the animated Mars landing of the "Pathfinder." Dr. Allen's lecture inspired these science-loving students, many of whom asked about his career path and advice on becoming scientists. He emphasized that while math and engineering are important, studying English is also a key component to success.



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Fukuoka PO Cubas Sends On-Air Greetings and Best Wishes to Consular District

Jan 1 – Consulate Fukuoka Principal Officer Jason Cubas delivered New Year's Greetings to the Kyushu/Yamaguchi district over Love FM radio, a Fukuoka-based multilingual station with a potential audience of over 3 million people across northern Kyushu Island. In his remarks, PO Cubas looked back at the tragic events of March 11th and paid tribute to the heroism and resolve of Japan's people in the aftermath of the unprecedented disaster. He also mentioned encouraging signs for 2012, including new direct flights between Fukuoka and Hawaii, and the 100th anniversary of Japan's gift of cherry blossoms to Washington D.C.



PO Cubas at Love FM recording studio

Boarding the 'Academic Express' in Kansai

Dec 21 – The Kansai American Center (KAC) Information Resource Center organized a group-session for prospective students from various Kansai-region universities, as well as high school students and parents. The Director gave a presentation on U.S. higher education, explaining how to search for information about American universities and colleges using USG websites and social media. Visiting Ashland University professor Jeffrey Wurm also addressed participants, detailing the benefits of studying in the United States, the admission process, and career-benefit opportunities. Visitors took advantage of the guest lecturer by inquiring about English proficiency requirements, letters of recommendation and scholarship opportunities.

U.S. Election Interest in Chubu



Dec 5 – Nagoya PAO Stephen Wheeler spoke to 150 undergraduate students of policy studies at Aichi Gakuin University about the 2012 U.S. presidential elections. PAO Wheeler discussed the election process and detailed top U.S. and global issues that will help shape the outcome. Questions from students focused on differences between the U.S. and Japanese electoral processes and current economic and political issues in Japan. Aichi Gakuin University is a mid-level school which is trying to expand opportunities for students to study in the United States in cooperation with the U.S. Commercial Service in Nagoya.

Furthering Understanding of U.S.-Japan Relations in Sapporo

Jan 7 – Sapporo Consul General John Ries spoke about U.S.-Japan relations since the March 11 disaster and took questions at Sapporo's Lifelong Learning Center. The CG's lecture, the first in a four part series on negotiation, also covered how allies conduct diplomatic negotiations. Over 50 members of the general public attended, and the event generated positive coverage in northern Japan's largest newspaper, Hokkaido Shinbun. Sapporo University Professor Shoji Mitarai, chairman of the Japan Institute of Negotiation and a Japan-America Society member, served as moderator.



Sapporo Consul General John Ries talks about Japan – U.S. cooperation after the March 11 disaster

Gifted and Talented: Young Pianist a Hit in Kansai

Dec 10-11 – Musical prodigy Matthew Whitaker, who can play back on the piano any music he hears, despite being sight-impaired, performed at two events hosted by the Kansai American Center (KAC). The young



Young musical talent Matthew Whitaker with the CG and his husband, Emerson Kanegusuke

performer impressed audiences at both events, the first which took place at a Sakai city facility for the disabled, and the second at CG Linehan's residence. KAC arranged for press coverage of the second concert, where Yomiuri TV conducted an interview with Mr. Whitaker and his parents. Their united message to Japanese audiences was that anything is possible, as long as one follows one's dream.

Naha Staff Spreads Holiday Cheer at American Corner

Dec 20 – Naha's Public Affairs Section (PAS) celebrated the holidays at the American Corner in Urasoe with a reading of "The Night Before Christmas" and a demonstration of the "read to me" function on the iPad using an uploaded version of "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas." PAS Naha concluded the event with Christmas cookies and caroling. The audience was excited to learn about the holiday books in the American Corner's collection and the various American holiday recipes available in cookbooks and magazines on display in the American Corner.



PAS Naha staff reading "The Night Before Christmas" to an audience