

ChildAid Asia Incubation Programme



Report

Organized by

Little Creators

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Friendship Concert – ChildAid Asia Incubation Programme

The inaugural edition of the Friendship Concert was presented in lino Hall, Tokyo, on 12 January 2015. There were more than 600 audiences present for both shows. H.I.H Princess Akishino, together with the Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to Japan, H.E. Mr. Chin Siat Yoon and his wife, graced the concert's second show. The Friendship Concert brought together 58 performers from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan. The concert was very well received by members of the audience. It was a heartwarming concert presented by children from across Asia, collaborating and displaying their talent through music and dance.

It was a memorable experience for the six children from Tokyo Metropolitan Shakuji Gakuen (a nursing home in Tokyo), who were also the emcees for the concert, when they met H.I.H Princess Akshino. It was an honour for them to meet H.I.H Princess Akshino. The children felt that there was recognition of their talent and an acknowledgement of their presence. They were comforted by the fact that there are people in the community who cared for them. This is one of the aims of Little Creators.

The Friendship Concert was supported by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Tokyo Metropolitan Government and other distinguished organizations. Tokyo Metropolitan Governor, Mr Yoichi Masuzoe, kindly contributed a message in the souvenir program sharing his support for the cause and sending his best wishes for the concert. Like the previous year, Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet Office and Parliamentary Secretary for Reconstruction, Mr. Shinzo Koizumi, also sent a congratulatory message via cable.

The Little Creators aims to create a community that will provide a support network for children and youth from underprivileged backgrounds, guiding and mentoring them, as they become successful young adults. Your support for our cause is much appreciated and we hope that you will continue to partner us in this journey.

Friendship Concert Schedule

Jan. 8	16:00	Welcome Session at Shakuji Gakuen
Jan. 9	AM	Yu Neng Primary School's visit to Senzokuike Elementary School
		International participants' visit to <i>Nori</i> Museum
	PM	Visit to Ikegami Honmon-ji and cultural experiences
	NT	Rehearsal at Tokyo Metropolitan Theater
Jan. 10		Rehearsal at Tokyo Metropolitan Theater
Jan. 11	AM	Rehearsal at Tokyo Metropolitan Theater
	PM, NT	Rehearsal at lino Hall
Jan. 12	AM	Rehearsal at lino Hall
	13:00	Friendship Concert, show 1 at lino Hall
	14:40	Exchange Program between Yu Neng Primary School and Misono Kodomo-no-le
	16:30	Friendship Concert, show 2 at lino Hall
	19:00	Farewell Party at lino Hall

*The school exchange program and cultural experience programs were made possible with the support of the Ota Ward Tourism Division.

ChildAid Asia and Friendship Concert Reasons to organize two concerts

ChildAid Asia was inspired by the charity concert organized by two of Singapore's national dailies called, ChildAid. The first edition of ChildAid Asia Tokyo was held in 2011. Similar to the Singapore concept, ChildAid Asia Tokyo is a fundraising concert by children for children. Young talents from Japan and around Asia are invited to perform at the concert and to raise funds for their less-privileged peers. These funds are used to provide children residing in nursing homes the opportunity participate in arts and international exchange programme.

The three editions of ChildAid Asia featured talented young musicians, many of whom are musically gifted and have been practicing their craft at an early age. Whilst this showcases a quality performance, it limits the opportunities for budding talents to perform too.

The Friendship Concert is designed to allow more children, especially those with little prior training in the arts, to participate in the concert. Little Creators decided to organize this after listening to the appeals made by the children from the nursing home. These children would thrive on the opportunity to perform on stage and meet new friends from around the region. It would boost their confidence and fulfill their dreams.

The Friendship Concert consists of Dance, Presentation and other performing components besides music to include children who may not be musically inclined. In addition, Little Creators organized arts and cultural exchange programmes prior to the concert, focusing on allowing the children to interact. The concert programme also consisted of collaborations between children from different countries. Some of the children from the nursing home also took on the roles as host and helped their newfound friends adapt to their new environment.

While ChildAid Asia is a bigger concert in terms of the number of participants, venue, and focuses mainly on classical music, the Friendship Concert is smaller in scale and allows children from the nursing homes to contribute more to the concert.

Little Creators will stage ChildAid Asia and Friendship Concert in alternate year.



Concert Report

■ Participation of Needy Children

One of the objectives of the Friendship Concert was to encourage as many children from the nursing homes to participate.

◇ Emcees and Presentation of Participant Countries

Six children who expressed interest to take on the role of emcees for the concert were tasked to select one country and to introduce it to the audience. The children began researching on the country they chose, wrote their script and learned how to present it to the audience. Each child had their own strength and challenges, and some even shared it with their audience during their presentation.



◇ Hosts

The six children from Shakuji Gakuen also played host to their international friends. They even practiced conversing in English. Despite their reservations and language barriers, they were determined to ensure that their friends had a good time.

◇ Chorus

Many of the children from Shakuji Gakuen participated in the chorus and sang the theme songs on stage.

◇ Visual Arts

Visual arts pieces by children from Misono Kodomo-no-le, a nursing home, were displayed on the stage's screen and in the souvenir program.

◇ Audience

Children from Misono Kodomo-no-le, Shakuji Gakuen and Futabaen came to see the show and showed their support for their peers.

■ Discovering Young Talents

There were many pianists and vocalists who auditioned for the concert. As such, the concert programme was designed to include music pieces to accommodate to the vocalists and pianists. The finale of the concert was a music piece presented by one of the children earlier during the audition titled, "The Sound of Music".



One of the vocalists who performed was Mayu Azuma. Maya has been invited to perform at the *Child Aid Asia @ KL* (August 21 to 23, 2015) and *Child Aid Asia @ Jakarta*.

■ Interaction among Singaporeans, Malaysians, a Indonesian, a Philippian and Japanese

16 Singaporeans, 2 Malaysians, 1 Indonesians, 1 Philippian and 38 Japanese (excluding children from Misono Kodomo-no-le) performed at the Friendship Concert.



Almost all the music pieces performed at the Friendship Concert were collaborations by children from different countries. Each of them practiced individually in their home country and practiced together when they met in Tokyo for the first time. Some of the music pieces had different arrangements and this took awhile for the children to perform in-sync. It was a good learning experience for them as they learned to understand various music interpretations.

The biggest collaboration was the song ‘Do Re Mi’ from “The Sound of Music” . This was performed by two pianists, four solo vocalists, and 22 dancers from Yu Neng Primary School and Theater Joy. It was challenging for pupils from Yu Neng Primary School because they only learned the choreography upon reaching Tokyo. They practiced hard and put up a brilliant show. The exchange programmes conducted prior to the concert were useful in breaking the ice and putting the children at ease as they practiced on their items.

Despite the language and cultural differences, the concert was successful in bringing the children together. The children shared their plans for the future, seek advised from their peers and inspired each other to achieve greater heights. The children discussed which universities to attend to and where should they go if they want to be professional musicians. It was a good opportunity for the children to exchange knowledge and information.

When the farewell party was held at 12 January after all the programmes and concerts ended, all the participants took pictures together and penned messages in the souvenir programme book. They spontaneously began to form a circle and sang the theme song of the concert. It was truly an endearing sight. Truly, the Friendship Concert was a meaningful exchange and one, which will remain in their hearts.

■ Supporters

One of the most meaningful supports we received was from the alumni of the previous editions of ChildAid Asia concerts. They were actively involved in working backstage, distributing lunch boxes, cleaning the rehearsal rooms, giving advices to the performers, turning music score pages for them on stage, and collecting donation at the lobby. During the farewell party, the alumni (a conductor, a pianist, a flutist, a violinist, a guitarist and a singer) presented a birthday song for the participants who were born in January. It was a beautiful birthday gift, and we began to realize that the support network community we aimed to build had already been developed.



The Parents group of alumni helped to dress the six emcees in Kimonos because it was the children's wish to wear one. They helped to prepare meals, which is always difficult because the children have different food requirements because of religions and allergies. Since they also attended rehearsal sessions at Shakuji Gakuen and the workshops held at Misono Kodomo-no-ke, they had known the children from the nursing homes already and they talked to those children as if they were their aunts and uncles. The more support we get, the more fruitful our activities become.



The students from Japan College of Social Work supported the concert as volunteers. There are some who returned as supporters after watching the previous editions of the concert. The total amount of money donated was 174,075 JYN. This will go towards funding the arts and cultural programme for the children from socially and financially-disadvantaged backgrounds.



【Exchange Programmes】

1) Shakujii Gakuen X Friendship Concert performers

Organized by: Tokyo Metropolitan Shakujii Gakuen,

NPO Little Creators

Venue: Tokyo Metropolitan Shakujii Gakuen

Date: January 8, 2015 16:00-17:30

All the participants from Japan and the other countries introduced themselves and played some games together to break the ice. The pupils from Yu Neng Primary School introduced to their friends how to make rainbow looms, and the children from Shakujii Gakuen taught their guests how to play traditional Japanese games such as a spinning top, a bamboo fly and spinning a plate.



2) Senzokuike Elementary School X Yu Neng Primary School

Organized by: Ota Ward Public School Senzokuike

Elementary School, NPO Little Creators

Venue: Ota Ward Public School Senzokuike Elementary School

Date: January 9, 2015 10:10-13:30

Senzokuike pupils introduced their school and school activities to Yu Neng pupils. The pupils from Yu Neng were also welcomed by the Brass Band. In return, the Yu Neng pupils presented a dance choreography to their hosts. Yu Neng pupils also visited the lessons, and experienced Japanese calligraphy. Both schools are now exploring options of being affiliated schools.



3) Misono Kodomo-no-le X Yu Neng Primary School

Organized by: NPO Little Creators

Venue: Iino Hall, Foyer

Date: January 12, 2015 14:40-15:10

As an icebreaker, children from Misono Kodomo-no-le and Yu Neng Primary School were tasked to form a line in order of their birthday dates and without speaking. In the beginning, they were nervous and did not communicate with each other. Gradually they started to communicate using hand gestures. Yu Neng pupils also presented a painting for their friends. This is an exchange of an earlier gift by the children from Misono Kodomo-no-le, which they created in fall 2014.



【Cultural Experience】

With the support of Ota Ward Tourism Division, the international performers had an opportunity to experience Japanese culture.

1) *Nori* Museum and the restaurant SAKURA

What is *Nori* (sea weed) made of? How do they make it? — The international participants actually made *Nori* and learn about typical Japanese ingredient. They then had a typical Japanese lunch at the restaurant SAKURA, which was recently registered as the world cultural heritage.

2) Ikegami Honmon-ji and Tea Ceremony

They visited Ikegami Honmon-ji and learned the history, customs and architectures of Japanese Buddhism temple. At Roho Kaikan, a tea ceremony was held. It was hard for many to sit on the floor, but they learnt the essence of tea ceremony and enjoy the tea.



3) Origami

At At Roho Kaikan, they also learned how to make Origami crane, boat and airplane. They were told to fold Origami paper and to match the corners. Some of the children missed this instruction and soon realized that their airplane wouldn't fly. They learned then that it was important to listen and adhere to instructions given by the elders and this was part of the Japanese culture.



【Feedback from the Audience】

Asian children deepen exchanged through music and their songs, performances and dance were excellent. I was very moved. It was a hateful concert. Every year, you come up with interesting concert, and I look forward to nest years' s concert as well. Thank you for the wonderful stage! (female, Tokyo, 60 years old)

I was impressed because everyone performed very well. Playing the instruments was good, too. I think it is good that Japan and other countries have exchange events. There are some songs I knew, which was great!

(female, Tokyo, 12 years old)

Thank you for the wonderful time! The children who performed very heard moved me. Children' s shiny hope to the future matched well on the simple stage. A big hand from the bottom of my heart! (female, Kanagawa, 60 years old)

It was an excellent concert. I am glad that I came. Thank you. Collaboration pieces by children from many countries was very impressive, especially “the Sound of Music Medley” and “Bridge across the Sea” . I do not understand English but Guru, emcee, was cheerful and had a good tempo. Janine' s voice was beautiful and fresh. I was I got very excited about the performances by children who are same age as my 12-year-old daughter.

(female, Tokyo, 45 years old)

Thank you! Thank you for the beautiful sounds and songs. I realize that there is no border in the world of music. I also never expected the violin can perform Play that Funky Music. It was astonishing, Thank you for clear voice and cheerful dance. I had a good time!

(female, Tokyo, 20 years old)

【Feedback from the performers】

1. Before the Friendship Concert project actually started, what were you expecting?
And did it come true?
2. What was the biggest challenge for you to realize the project?
3. What made you happy by taking part in the project?
4. Is there anything that you could have done better or more?
5. If you participate in the project, what would you like to do next?
6. If there is any comment about the project, please let us know.

Japan

■ **Mayu Azuma** (Vocal, 11 years old, F)

1. Even though I do not understand the languages that international participants use, I wanted to make friends and to spend fulfilling days with them.
2. Practicing “Indigo Days” was a big challenge since we only had one official lesson together; however, between the other lessons, we got together and practiced a lot. In addition, I do not understand English but we could understand each other with gestures.
3. I am happy because I could support some people by my singing. Also I was happy to get to close to many people in spite of our language barrier. We could make a friendship bridge beyond the borders.
4. I did everything I could have done, but I could have more progressive to get to know the others.
5. I would like to sing solo. I would like to practice more for the collaborative pieces. I want to speak English and deepen the friendship. I want to sing a whole song perfectly without losing my concentration. But most of all, I want to devote myself more to the project.
6. On the day of the greeting session, I was excited about up coming days. And after I spent full 5 days with everyone, I learnt there are people who do not eat meat, and who are not able to live with their parents. I realized how happy I am. I could get to know people from many countries because of “music” and I realized how important “music” is. It was a great experience I had. Thank you very much.

■ **Risa Oikawa** (Shamisen, 16 years old, F)

1. International exchange. And I did it.
2. It was the first time for me to perform Shamisen with someone else, so it was a challenge, and I made the best effort for that.

3. I am happy that I made many friends in and out of the country. Also I was happy to perform Shamisen in front of those who had no idea about this instrument.
4. None.
5. I would like to perform Shamisen once more.
6. There are many first experiences for me, such as 2 performances per day; therefore, I was uncertain about many things and I think I cause some trouble to people supported me. But I enjoyed very much performing Shamisen in such a nice circumstance, looking at performances in the different genres by the same generation or the younger. Thank you very much.

■ **Maasa Uchida** (Electone performer, 13 years old, F)

1. Interaction with other participants, especially international ones. Also I was looking forward to meeting children from Shakuji Gakuen as well as to singing with all the participants.
2. One of my roles was to support participants' singing, so that I was careful with not making any mistakes. In addition, I wanted to express my feeling to them and interact with them.
3. I am happy to be given a chance to get to know Japanese performers as well as international ones, which is a very rare occasion. By performing in the concerts, I became more confident of myself. I am really grateful.
4. I should have actively talked to other performers. The time is always limited, so I would like to talk to others. In addition, I wish I would have spoken English more.
5. It may be difficult to collaborate with an electone, but I would like to collaborate with other instruments. I did collaborate with others at the opening and the finale, but I would like to collaborate more in different ways. Most of all, someday, I want to perform the piece I wrote in front of audience.
6. It was my first time to participate such a concert so that I was a bit nervous. Rather I was honored to perform with international participants. I was also amazed at everyone's talent. How lucky I am to perform with them! The vocalists are all so excellent! And I felt happy to get to know children from Shakuji Gakuen who I do not have a chance to meet. I appreciate there is such a concert.

■ **Yuka Kato** (Piano, 12 years old, F)

1. Collaboration with international participants. All are very friendly, and I spent joyful moments even in the dressing rooms. We could all rely on each other, and I think we

created music with joy.

2. It was a challenge for me to perform non-classic music since I have never performed it in front of audience except my schoolmates.
3. I am happy to have made many friends through music. I usually play the piano by myself, but there are so many staff and people who support us to make a concert, and I felt the responsibility as well as happiness.
4. I thought I might have sparkled much for the opening and the finale.
5. I would like to try something unique, for example dancing while playing the piano, which Akia Kondo did in the concert.
6. I had a great time. I had much encounter and discovery. Music is really enjoyable and can encourage and empower people. I was also moved by performance of my collaborators. Thank you very much.

■ **Hiroki Yamaguchi** (Shamisen, 16 years old, M)

1. I was wondering how I, together with all the other participants, could make a concert. I am so glad that we could make this concert very lively since all the participants are quite characteristic and charming.
2. Chorus. Everyone was singing so loud which knock me out, but I did try singing as loud as possible.
3. I am happy to learn about Asia. My view to the world has changed.
4. I really wish I could have talked to them. All are so friendly. That is why I still regret that I could not have talked to them more.
5. I would like to be more active next time since I feel that would enlarge my view to the world.
6. I had a huge culture shock. I am moved by my experience of Asia (the foreign world), which I never had a chance to learn before. I am thankful that I was given the opportunity to participate in the concert.

■ **Nanako Otsuka** (Piano, 17 years old, F)

1. To enjoy music with all the people in the hall. I felt all the audience and performers got united, and so moved.
2. It was a challenge for me to communicate with the others in English since I am bad at English.
3. I am happy because I could get to know the Asian children through music.
4. I would like to study English more and to express many things to the other.

5. I would love to perform the music pieces such as the Sound of Music that everyone knows.
6. Every moment from the greeting session to the concert became unforgettable memory. I could enjoy music and share the joy of music with music lovers. The concert made me appreciate the fact that I have studied music for so long. From now on, I would like to let people know the beauty of music.

Selected Group of Dancers from Theater Joy' s “the Adventurers” 2014

■ Chiaki Aikawa

1. To interact with international participants. Yes, it happened.
2. The challenge was to memorize the choreography and to dance well. Also communicating in English was a challenge.
3. I am happy that I made lots of friends in and out of the country.
4. I should have asked everyone to write down his or her name and remembered it. (I could not catch their names well in speaking.)
5. I would like to prepare singing and dancing more.
6. I could be on stage feeling the others, which is the best experience I have had before. I am also lucky that I could get to know international participants through singing and dancing although we did not use the common language.

■ Anju Iwasaki

1. To sing with those who come from Asian countries!! And, yes, it came true of course.
2. It was hard to sing in English first but gradually I got used to it. At the end, I could sing songs with children from Asia, which made me very happy.
3. I am happy that I got closed to those who are from other countries.
4. None.
5. I would like to dance more!
6. I enjoyed the concert very much. Spending wonderful time with everyone beyond the languages became my life long treasure. I would love to participate it again.

■ Minami Kishi

1. To meet people from many countries. All became so close.
2. To sing songs in English.
3. I am happy because I got friendly with many people, felt comfortable to use English and got to know about other countries.

4. I should have talked to the others more actively from the beginning of the project.
5. I would like to be on stage more.
6. I had a great time. It became my good experience that I talked to international participants.
Thank you.

■ Saaya Seo

1. To interact with children from Shakuji Gakuen and Singapore. It did come true.
2. To speak in non-Japanese languages.
3. I am happy because I became friends with many people including members of Theater Joy.
4. None.
5. I would like to study English and talk in English more.

■ Kyoka Tanaka

1. To interact with international participants. Since we share the same dressing room with Singaporean children, we could become good friends.
2. The challenge was language. Sometimes I could not understand what the international participants said, so I asked help to teachers.
3. I am happy to get to know Asian cultures. It was interesting that each country has different reaction to one thing.
4. I should have taken more photos!!
5. I love English, so I had been very excited since I was selected to take part in the project. All international participants are very kind, and we all feel joy to create the concert. At the rehearsal rooms and in the backstage, we did high-touch, waved hands and called out each other. In addition we learnt a lot from the soloists who performed very well. I want to take part in it again. Thank you!!

Singapore

■ Lois Mallare (Vocal, 15 years old, F)

1. Japan has always been one of my dream countries so it was a dream to visit Tokyo. I didn't expect there to be so many people involved in the concert, but I'm glad they were there because everyone was so supportive, from the performers to the backstage crew, and they did their best to cater to us and help us during the concert.
2. One of the biggest challenges was learning a Japanese song. I had not heard of the song

before and had difficulty remembering the lyrics. I had to sing it as a duet with one of the Japanese performers, which made me more uncertain because she knew what she was singing while I had to rely on the lyrics onstage, and that made me feel that I was not as good as her and did not do the song justice. Luckily, we rehearsed together and she was patient and helped me with my parts.

3. I managed to make many new friends and it was so much fun spending time with them. Even though I do not know Japanese, many of them knew basic English. Even if we did not speak the same language, we still communicated through body language and our actions. Our misunderstandings also created humour so there was no big problem.
4. I wish I could have had more time with the Japanese participants. They seem very lively, but they did not stay at the hotel, so we only see them during rehearsals. I took some time to warm up to them, and only realised I would not see them again after the concert, and it made me regret not getting to know them better, especially the children from Shakuji Gakuen.
5. I'd love to go sightseeing with the other performers from the different countries, including those who already live in the host country. It would give us more time with one another instead of only seeing everyone during rehearsals.
6. More food during rehearsals and bump-in :) and we should have group activities!

Indonesia

■ Clarissa Tamara (Electric Violin, 15 years old, F)

1. My expectation by this concert is to get new friends and getting close to one and another.
2. Yes, it did.
3. The biggest challenge for me is the communication. I can't communicate as easily as I would like. My English is not good, it just makes me difficult.
4. I am happy because I can find new friends, can share together, joked together, performing together. We passed all together.
5. I don't have any regret.
6. I will do better.

The Philippines

■ Janine Baduria (Vocal, 16 years old, F)

1. I was very happy to meet new Asian friends who were all friendly as they were talented.
2. I was surprised that the Japanese orphans seem to be well taken care of in contrast to

the orphans that we have in the Philippines.

3. I do not regret anything and I want to continue developing myself and support the consortium of ChildAid Asia.
4. I was impressed that the production staff was all volunteers.
5. My mom and I enjoyed the hotel we stayed in and we thank you for personally meeting us and seeing us off at the airport.
6. All in all, it was a great experience for me, and I look forward to being a part of other ChildAid Asia projects in the future.