



JAPAN MUSIC TOUR

Konnichiwa! Greetings from Japan

37 students, 6 staff and our principal Mr Whelan were part of the Japan Cherry Blossom Music Tour which ran in the recent holiday break. There was great anticipation in venturing to Japan in order to perform for the Japanese community and to experience the Japanese culture.

The students had worked hard to prepare a mixed repertoire of band pieces and vocal pieces and hit the ground running with their first performance on the night of landing in Japan. Thomas Hassall students performed for the local community in function rooms, community performance halls and train stations, as well as at our sister school of Minano and Fukoroi. The response from the audience was warm and encouraging and the tour even made the local news in the city of Tokorozawa. Watch it on this [link](#).

Lots of new experiences were had from sleeping on traditional tatami mats on the floor, tasting traditional Japanese food, crowded trains and Disneyland!

We're very proud of the conduct of our students, their concern and care for each other and their commitment to their performances during our time in Japan was commendable.

Here's what a few students had to say about the tour.

I really enjoyed both the train station performances. It was fun for us to play for the general public as they walked by going about their day-to-day lives. The Japanese hospitality/generosity was

incredible. They are a collectively minded society a lot more so than we are. One story that comes to mind is when I left my hat at a restaurant so we went back an hour later and didn't even have to ask for it, they had it there ready to give to me if I came back. I think it's fair to say I enjoyed the process of trying new foods a lot more than I actually enjoyed the food itself. I did enjoy the fact that they had fried chicken at every corner store and the pocky sticks that many of us bought in Japan. Our homestay was difficult as no one in there family spoke English and we couldn't speak Japanese. While it was a hard experience, Google translate came in handy and I feel we did well to overcome this issue.

- Matthew P

My favourite performance was at the primary school where we met a group of students who played the Japanese drums and had the wonderful opportunity to learn and play them! I enjoyed Disneyland, Karaoke and trying different varieties of food! and my favourite was sushi and the sashimi.

- Arya K

My favourite performance was my own, because I was able to grow in confidence and my own style more with each song, and now have grown musically because of that. I enjoyed the atmosphere and the style and dedications of living in Japan and respect/public discipline in Japan. My favourite food was the hot pot our host family had made for us the night we arrived. I enjoyed our homestay because of the warmth and kindness we were shown by Mr and Mrs Goto, and the connection/relationship we formed during homestay. They both felt like family even only after 2/3 days.

- Tim W

