

**Hagiwara Junior High School and Joso Gakuin High School
Were Greatly Appreciated in Wind Music Country, America,
at the Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic**

by Yo Goto

The TBA Clinic, held in Texas for over a half century, equals the Midwest Clinic! The Midwest Clinic, which is held in Chicago every December, is famous as a big-scale wind music convention in America, but the country is full of the same kind of conventions. We realize that Americans have broad vision for wind music education when we know how big and how substantial the conventions in each state are.

Most of these conventions are sponsored and managed by music education organizations in each state, and they actually research and present general music education and direction not only for wind music but for orchestra, chorus, and ensembles as well. However, Texas is special. In addition to a convention for music education there is a clinic exclusively for wind music, sponsored by the Texas Bandmasters Association. It would be just like Texas to work so actively for wind music.

The TBA clinic, held at the end of every July, had its 56th event this year. It has a proud long history like Midwest. In recent years, the location has been fixed at Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, in the beautiful southern city of San Antonio; this year's clinic was held July 26th to 29th.

Although it is an event sponsored by Texas, directors and those concerned with wind music gather from other states as well. The fact that some command bands from the American military appear in concert each year indicates a high level of status. (Very few clinics have concerts by American military central bands, the top bands in America.) Many Japanese can not visit because it's held during the AJBA contest season, but the popularity in America equals to Midwest.

Compared with Midwest, which gathers wind music enthusiasts from around America and other countries and which is a kind of social event for researching and collecting information, the TBA clinic has a strong atmosphere as a place where directors can study. All the participants are very serious and many clinics address practical problems.

We find interesting topics like "How to save time for busy directors", "How directors can escape from stress", "Legal advice for wind music directors", "Overcoming the first year", "Let's protect students from injury (by a sports doctor)", and so on. There were many practical presentations by band directors.

As you know, the American school term starts in September, so it is natural that directors facing the new year cannot help but be serious. In America the budget for next year is effective from July, so they can plan a budget. The directors carefully select instruments or music, walking around nearly 300 exhibition booths. Many companies actively present new products at their booths.

Publishers such as C. L. Barnhouse are already exhibiting new music for 2004. Many composers like J. Burns, R. Sheldon and D. Holsinger come to Texas to promote their own works and publishers.

The Convention Center has many large and small rooms suitable for clinics, a huge exhibition hall, and a splendid theater which easily accommodates 3000 people. We can say that it is an ideal facility for this kind of convention. Since big hotels and shopping malls are adjoining, it is very convenient for meals, accommodations, and shopping. And day nursery with special staff is also provided. Actually, many directors join with their families. It is enviable for us that such a good environment is prepared for those who want to study seriously, which they certainly do.

American directors admired two bands that performed more smoothly and naturally than any other "Gold winning" performances.

Excellent groups like the US Army Band and Air Force Band presented concerts, but the highlight events were two performances by Japanese bands, Hagiyama Junior High School Wind Orchestra conducted by Katsuhiko Kajino, and Joso Gakuin High School Symphonic Band conducted by Tomoo Motozu. Their participation from Japan followed Hiroshima Yasunishi Junior High School which appeared five years ago and Yamaguchi Chofu High School and Kurashiki Green Harmony from two years ago. Through their brilliant performances, people of Texas have recently begun to appreciate the level of Japanese amateur bands. In fact, some directors in Texas have been to Fumon Hall to observe the All Japan Band contest finals.

Texas had expected much from these bands by previous experience, but the results exceeded expectations. Hagiyama captivated the audience with their cheerful and vigorous sound and substantial repertoire, in spite of their early morning concert. It was an exquisite moment when we could appreciate sympathy and identification with an audience without regard to their importance.

On the other hand, in the Joso Gakuin concert, the audience was amazed by an extremely beautiful sound and a high level of musical accomplishment. We'll seldom have the chance to listen to such a great performance. The audience listened intently while the performance took their breath away. It was hard to restrain one's reaction till the encore. It was a high grade classical concert and the hall was dominated by seriousness.

I have listened to these bands many times and every performance was great. But I felt that their presentation for these concerts was natural and full of the sympathy of the music more than any Gold contest performance. We don't know if the environment and experiences in a different country might bring out their abilities, or the Japanese concert hall is deprived of something.

After their concerts Mr. Kajino, Hagiyama director, and Mr. Motozu, the director of Joso presented special clinics showing their basic training methods, using their students as a model band. Each of them attracted great interest and were very warmly received. □