



# DGS Band Strikes a Chord in Kagoshima



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DIOCESAN GIRLS' SCHOOL

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This year opened with a bang! We received an invitation from the Kagoshima Prefecture Government through the Hong Kong Education Bureau in September inviting our Concert Band to the 43rd Kagoshima Prefecture Wind Festival as the featured guest ensemble. With less than two months to prepare for this performance, our girls got to work rehearsing for a 30-minute programme. One of our pieces among our repertoire was Satoshi Yagisawa's "Hunting Scenes", which

our band performed at the Hong Kong School's Music Festival in March 2016. However, most of the pieces were completely new to our members, and with quite a number of new students taking part in this trip, a lot of ground work had to be done to build our ensembleship and our sound within those few weeks.

This was the first trip to Japan for the musicians. Twenty-nine girls, accompanied by our Headmistress Mrs. Lau, and band conductors Mr. Leung, Miss Chiang and Miss Hui, took an afternoon flight to Kagoshima on Saturday, 5th November. When we landed, we were greeted by a colourful banner welcoming us to their city, and soon were treated to a shabu-shabu buffet dinner.



The Festival was held on Sunday, 6th November. We arrived at Kagoshima Joho High School early in the morning for our joint rehearsal. We were amazed by how well they played their instruments. They paid so much attention to detail, and had powerful energy whenever they were asked to play. We also shared lunch with their students, and connected over selfies and the pineapple-pen song. In the afternoon, we performed at the Festival in the Taniyama Southern Hall. Our band was among eighteen bands that performed, and each performance was well-received. We also performed Frank Ticheli's "Shenandoah" with the KJHS students. After saying goodbye to our new friends from KJHS, we returned to our hotel for a dinner with the Government officials, who surprised us with a visit by the international sumo-wrestling champion. Our trip finished with a visit to the Sakurajima volcano on Monday before we left Japan, bringing home wonderful memories from these three days.

For the Internet lovers, you may check out two of our girls' video recaps of the trip. Their YouTube channels are "Rach!" and "RimFilms Productions".



# An Evening to Celebrate Speech Day 2016

Despite the windy and slightly colder weather, the DGS Auditorium was filled with warmth, smiles and never-ceasing applause to congratulate the prize recipients of Speech Day 2016 on Friday, 25th November. The evening was a joyous ceremony, in recognition of our Secondary 6 graduates and other students, who strove hard in the past academic year to reap excellent results under the five pillars of the Diocesan Education. It was also a time of reflection and praise, to thank God for bestowing DGS with numerous blessings in His grace and honour.

The Speech Day Ceremony began with a report by our Headmistress, Mrs. Stella Lau. She outlined the many academic and non-academic achievements DGS had attained in the previous school year, as well as a variety of new programmes and initiatives. She then took this opportunity to share her views on parenting. With reference to an analysis by Alison Gopnik, a psychologist, Mrs. Lau drew comparisons between the work of a parent and a gardener and a carpenter. She urged parents to be more like the former rather than the latter, emphasizing the importance of allowing children to explore their capabilities boldly and to overcome challenges independently. Ultimately, this would provide children with the breathing space to grow and develop, in the same way as how a gardener would tend to plants that are subjected to the many environmental conditions beyond his/her control. A carpenter-like parent, on the other hand would limit the development potential of young minds so that they become only what parents would like them to be. This goes counter to the very aim of education and parenting, which is to enlighten the youth of today, and empower them for the unknowns of tomorrow.

We were especially honoured to have Professor Gabriel Leung, Dean of the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, join us in our celebration. In his address, Professor Leung gave a diagnosis of the underlying and often overlooked dilemma of inequality in society, highlighting that education can be a double-edged sword that empowers young minds while catalyzing social injustice. Citing examples of discontent brewing in polarized global communities, Professor Leung reminded us that while we, as privileged young women, should be grateful for our achievements, we should also utilize our abilities and education to contribute to society, to close the gap between the haves and have-nots, and to push forward for an equal playing field enjoyed by all, "earnestly equal while excellent".

After waves of unyielding applause for prize-recipients, the Head Girls and Assistant Head Girl gave their Votes of Thanks on behalf of the student body. They expressed gratitude to the guests, headmistresses, teachers, parents, and schoolmates for their constant support. The Right Reverend Andrew Chan drew an official close to the Ceremony with the Benediction, reminding us of God's blessings on DGS, and a prayer for continued guidance and care.



# DGS Swimming Team Clinches 29th Consecutive Overall Championship



For the members of the DGS swimming team, the Division One Inter-School Swimming Championships, held each October, is the most exciting competition of the year. This year was no exception: the team once again captured the title of Overall Champion, making it our 29th consecutive win in the championships.

This was not an easy accomplishment. Swimmers undergo intense training throughout the year, arriving at school as early as 5 a.m. every day for training. Students continue training after their lessons end in the afternoon. In addition, Typhoon Haima hit Hong Kong on October 21st, which meant the need to postpone both the inter-schools heats and finals. The change of dates meant that the finals fell just one day after another major competition, which left our swimmers feeling quite stressed and tired.

Our team was able to persevere, though, and the hard work and efforts paid off. As a result, the swimming team won the Championship for both A grade and B grade, as well as clinching the 1st Runner-Up for C grade, ending the day with an astonishing score of 554 points. In addition, our team set four new meet records: three in individual events, and another in the 4x50 meter freestyle relay. The year's success would not have been possible without the effort of our teachers, coaches, and old girls who have worked especially hard to keep the team functioning in tip-top condition. We are indebted to our parents for their infinite well of support, and to our Headmistress Mrs. Lau, whose encouragement and assistance has made all this possible. With continued support and hard work, we remain confident and reasonably optimistic that we can extend our record with a 30th consecutive championship next year.

