

**Shujitsu Jr. & Sr. High School Band, Okayama, Japan**  
Directors - Takumi Kobayashi and Kanako Numa  
**Clinician - Beth Bronk - Texas Lutheran University, Seguin, Texas**  
Translation - Aki Murakami - Brain Music, Hiroshima, Japan

About Shujitsu Junior & Senior High School

- Private School - 1,900 in Sr. High and 350 in the Jr. High
- In Japan, students take general music class during the school day (grades 1-8 emphasizing ear training and solfeggio)
- Band Club is extracurricular and does not meet during school day. Most students in Japanese bands are female.
- Rehearsal Schedule: 4:00-6:00pm every day during week, 9:00am-6pm on Saturday & Sunday. This is typical for high-achieving bands, but not all. Campuses generally close by 8:00pm.
- Beginners start in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at this school and are taught by peers and two teachers.

About the Conductors:

- Mr. Kobayashi majored in music and is a trumpet player. In addition to teaching music, he serves as an administrator for discipline issues at the school.
- Ms. Numa, alumna band coach, also majored in music and is an oboist.

Typical Weekend Rehearsal Includes:

- Reflection - at the beginning and end of rehearsal students have quiet time where they reflect on how they can do their best in rehearsal.
- Motivational words
- Students Clean School
- Student-led sectionals
- Individual practice time
- Student-led band rehearsals
- Band director-led rehearsals
- More sectionals and individual practice
- Humor and fun!

Mindset & Expectations

- Character Training - the main reason for club activity
- Personal Responsibility
- Self-Regulation, Uniformity, Watching the leader
- “Senpai, Kohai” System: Peer Teaching, Feedback, and Evaluation  
“Senpai” are the upperclassmen/mentors and “Kohai” are the underclassmen/protégés.  
The job of the senpai is to look after, take care of, encourage, and guide the kohai.
- “Kaizen” - or continuous improvement. Everyone is encouraged to come up with small improvement suggestions on a regular basis. This is not a once a month/year activity. It is an ongoing mindset.
- Everyone is expected to do their best and follow rules.

- Working hard is valued and reinforced. Maximum effort is expected.
- The band is one “instrument”, so they strive to phrase exactly alike.

Tuning is an on-going process.

- Clip on tuners/tuners on stands are used, but students are encouraged to listen, tune chords, and eliminate interference beats.
- Students sing everything they play and use imagery and audiation prior to performance.
- Both Equal Temperament and Just Intonation are used.
- Yamaha Harmony Director is used for pitch modeling and metronome.
- The use of the Harmony Director in modeling both balance and Just Intonation is integral in the development of harmony training, and plays a vital role in the outstanding resonance and tuning demonstrated by the band.
- A=442 is the standard.

Student-led basic training: Director is still in faculty room for an hour or two after final bell, and will then come in for musical rehearsal

Examples of Daily Ensemble Warm-up/Skill Development Process with student feedback:

- Unison Training – Band plays, student feedback/suggestions
- Harmony Training -Balance & Chord Tuning –Band plays, student/director feedback/suggestions
- Scale Training in Differing Styles – Band plays a few scales in different styles/articulations
- Chorale Training – optional as needed

Example of a student-run sectional – the majority of fundamental training is learned in this manner, and Senpai (student leaders) serve as role models and mentors. Everyone is allowed and encouraged to give feedback to the group.

Performance example with full ensemble – a light selection to conclude session.

Questions? As time allows....

#### Regarding Club Membership in Japan

After school clubs, like band club, are done for the development of character, humanity, a sense of teamwork, etc., not to train future musicians or athletes. Though, company and community bands are very popular and offer a lifelong hobby. The Japanese work and social culture values loyalty, and accordingly, students belong to one club, and give it their all. Students are primary organizers of the club, handle most of the logistics, focus training and recruitment, and have a strong sense of ownership. Better band clubs have an extensive organizational structure, where everyone is given some sort of responsibility. Time spent with the club, like on weekends, depends upon the enthusiasm of the student staff or adult sponsor, or ambitions of the administration. Being voluntary, though, means the passion is real, no matter what the art.