



Music Changes Everything

THE CROWDEN LETTER

SUMMER 2021

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the Crowden Letter

THE CROWDEN MUSIC CENTER | 1475 ROSE STREET BERKELEY CA 94702-1255 | WWW.CROWDEN.ORG



Live Performances Return to Crowden

We welcomed audiences back to campus for live, in-person performances, 411 days after Crowden closed due to the pandemic.

Last year on March 12, we cheered on our Crowden School sixth graders at their solo performances concert. The very next day, Crowden joined the entire Bay Area in closing our doors with the first shelter-in-place orders. We have weathered the pandemic better than many fellow arts organizations—being able to

continue many of our programs and even make music on campus for this entire year. This is due to enormous efforts from every corner of our community, from our faculty and staff to donors to our students and their families. We are deeply thankful that our community has by and large stayed very healthy, and that we have achieved such a low instance of coronavirus exposure and infection. Still, how sorely we have missed sharing live concerts together, in person!

So it was incredibly moving to gather together on campus once again for live performances late this spring. For our very first in-person concert audience, we invited families of

our Crowden School graduating class to their Eighth Grade Solo Night recording. It was the perfect way to honor our Class of 2021, who have weathered a school year unlike any other in Crowden's history and sacrificed so much with grace, determination, and an unwavering joy in music. Families sat in socially distanced groupings as our eighth graders took the Hoefer Auditorium stage for their first public performance all year.

Then, on May 9, we opened our campus to members of the general public for a very special event, *Hear | Together*. Co-presented by Alternating Currents, a nonprofit that produces



outdoor concerts, NYC-based new music consortium Contemporaneous, New Music Bay Area, and the Ross McKee Foundation, *Hear | Together* was a day-long extravaganza of free, outdoor piano concerts. It was a joyous celebration of live music, the outdoors, and of the diversity and talent of Bay Area pianists and composers.

Crowden's Executive and Artistic Director Doris Fukawa explains how Crowden got involved with this ambitious event: "Two of our neighbors run the non-profit Alternating Currents, which presents outdoor concerts. They were just walking past Crowden, saw our little flags on the lawn to mark social distancing, and realized we were making music on campus.

Turns out, two of the event's primary organizers have connections to Crowden: pianist Sarah Cahill, the world renowned new music interpreter, is a longtime friend, and composer and pianist Dylan Mattingly is an alum of our John Adams Young Composers Program. We took a look at the regulations, realized it was possible, and it all snowballed from there."

The day's five concerts featured Cahill, Allegra Chapman of the Delphi Trio, jazz pianist Tammy Hall with soprano Leberta Lorál, Brazilian jazz pianist Marcos Silva, Mattingly, Crowden faculty member Elizabeth Dorman, accomplished pianists Monica Chew and Robert Fleitz, and Crowden students representing the breadth of our programming.

We moved two grand pianos outside, creating two different concert areas, one on each level of campus. Listeners, all socially distanced and masked, heard a range of music, from Brazilian jazz, American songbook standards, and classical masterworks to recent music by Fred Onovwerosuoke, Frederic Rzewski, Reena Esmail, Mary Watkins, and many others. The day culminated with Dylan's two-hour epic for solo piano, *Achilles Dreams of Ebbets Field*. The free tickets 'sold out' more than a week in advance.

"I cannot express the extent to which I have missed live performance and the artistic experiences that fill our lives with meaning," remarks Dylan. "It is the greatest joy to welcome this back into our lives and to share with



the Bay Area community in a celebration of life through music. Having spent so much formative time at Crowden, exploring and imaging what music can mean in the world and the profound effect it can have on a life, there couldn't have been a more perfect place and community to share this musical experience."

With some mastery of the many requirements still in place for live music under our belts, we turned to The Crowden School's Spring Concert, typically our largest concert presentation of the year. To give every family as many opportunities to hear their own students on stage, while also getting a taste of the scope of our music program across grades, we presented our first annual Spring Concert Festival.

TCS Music Director Eugene Sor organized five concerts over the course of four days. We also were able to invite families to hear our community youth ensembles spring concert in person.

"Out of the wonderful flood of emotions I felt during and following our month of first live concerts at Crowden in fourteen months, the biggest sentiment I still feel is an overwhelming sense of gratitude," Eugene muses. "Somehow when we arrived in May 2021, our students were able to play an unprecedented number of concerts together, and were able to play beautifully throughout. The return to live concerts is a testament to the strength and perseverance of our community. Seeing the students perform for live audiences was absolutely

thrilling after over a year away. But I think the most memorable aspect of the return to live performances is not the concerts themselves, but rather the incredible sense of commitment our community shared to get us to this point."

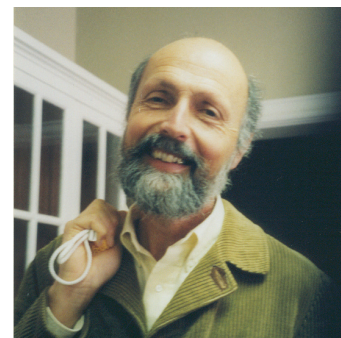
This summer, we are extremely excited to be presenting all in-person concerts for our workshops and summer camps! ♪

COVER PHOTO: Students from Crowden's community Youth Chamber Music program perform at Hear | Together.

PAGE 2 PHOTOS (left to right, top to bottom): composer and John Adams Young Composers Program alum Dylan Mattingly, Crowden Board Chair Cary Koh, pianist Sarah Cahill, Doris Fukawa; a student volunteer checks in audience members to Hear | Together concerts; Crowden faculty pianist Elizabeth Dorman performs on our Upper Courtyard; Crowden's Nautilus Trio, founded as part of our Youth Chamber Music program, performs on the Lower Courtyard turf.

PAGE 3 PHOTOS (top to bottom): Lower string players in third and fourth grade perform at the Spring Concert Festival; sixth grade orchestra takes a bow on our Hoefer Auditorium stage.

All photos by Heidi Alletzauser.



Remembering Piero Mancini

Piero Mancini, who helped Anne Crowden found our day school in 1983, has passed away.

It is with extreme sadness that we share the news of Piero Mancini's passing this spring.

"Our beloved father, grandfather, husband, and friend Piero Mancini left our physical world on March 29," shared his daughter Nerina. "He was in his beautiful home in Tuscany surrounded by his three children, nine grandchildren, and a warm Italian sun, with spring exploding all around. He passed in peace and serenity, accompanied by music throughout. His star will shine and accompany all of us."

Our founder Anne Crowden recruited Piero to establish the day school's academic program in 1983. Piero stewarded the school's academic curriculum from the early days in the old church basement to our current historic landmark campus, retiring and returning to Italy in 2001. His educational philosophy remains central to our day school today. Reminiscing at the time of his retirement in the June 2001 issue of this *Crowden Letter*, Piero laid out the school's approach to learning and child development, and it still rings true today:

This unique formula of blending an art (music in this case) with the regular academic curriculum is the secret for a balanced education. With the two hours

of music every morning, the children learn concentration, discipline, and team work to reach elevated goals. This is very precious at their age when energy needs to be channeled towards an expression of perfection and beauty. On the academic side, perfection does not necessarily consist of getting As in every subject. By its small class sizes and with the help of very dedicated teachers, the school aims at developing critical thinking, mature judgement, and a sense of social awareness that shows even in the cleaning of classrooms after school.

A memorial service was held virtually on Zoom, with Crowden's Executive and Artistic Director Doris Fukawa sharing a written tribute on behalf of Crowden. Many members of the Crowden community also attended, including Board Chair Cary Koh ('86), Trustee Joan Balter, Music Advisory Board member Bonnie



Hampton, Anne's daughter Deirdre Cooper, Sharon Jacobs (née Bogas, '94), Vanessa Langer ('93), Christo Logan ('97), Evie Koh Thibeault ('95), and longtime PE instructor Teale Matteson's wife Nanou.

"Piero helped Anne realize her dream school against all odds," remembers Doris. "He was deeply loved by generations of students and his colleagues, and helped transform many, many lives during his time at the school. Our deepest condolences to his wife Brigitte, children Tomaso, Sophia, and Nerina, his grandchildren, and his extended Crowden family." 🎵

PHOTOS (LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM): Anne Crowden and Piero Mancini prep for a Spring Concert; Piero teaching class in the church basement days; Piero standing just outside the classroom that bears his name to this day; Piero, Brigitte, and former Crowden Board Chair Noreen Axelson at Crowden's 25th Anniversary Concert at Zellerbach Hall. Last photo credit Patrick Roddie; other photos are archival.



Facilities Spotlight: Keeping Us Safe

None of Crowden's in-person learning this year would have been possible without two essential staff members: Rey Rodriguez and Jorge Mendoza.

Weathering the pandemic safely required many different transformations—including of our physical environments. Luckily, Crowden can rely on our long-term facilities team, Rey

and Jorge. Rey has been stewarding care of our campus since Crowden first purchased and renovated it in 1998, 23 years ago. Jorge has served on Crowden staff for 18 years. Their expert repairs, masterful carpentry, and creative problem solving have kept our historic landmark building safe and beautiful. Crowden's whimsical topiaries, those double basses and Suessian swirls, are Rey's special hallmark.

This year, Rey and Jorge re-imagined our indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure the possibility of our reopening. They transformed classrooms, rebuilt offices, installed plexi-glass

sheilds, marked every inch of campus for social distancing, and so much more.

Their early efforts adapting our building for the pandemic made all of our on-campus activities possible this year. We are extremely lucky to have you in our Crowden family! ♪

PHOTOS (left to right): Rey Rodriguez and Jorge Mendoza; one of Rey's topiaries in front of our building.

Photos by Heidi Alletzhauer.

Alumni Alert: Many of you have come out as your authentic selves after leaving us at Crowden. We want you to know that we are so proud of you! We see you and we love you.

Please make sure to let us know how you'd like to be addressed when we keep in touch with you:

Update us on your name and pronouns at alumni@crowden.org. Progress Pride flag colors by artist Daniel Quasar, 2018.

With Your Support, Music Changes Everything!

The Crowden Music Center gratefully acknowledges the support of the following Crowden families, employees, individual members, government agencies, foundations, and businesses between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Kindly notify us of any inadvertent omissions. Thank you!

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