

the Crowden Letter

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Music Always at the Core as Crowden Transitions Leadership

After nearly two decades of leadership, Doris Fukawa announced that she is transitioning from her role as Crowden's Artistic and Executive Director this year.

Two longtime pillars of Crowden's leadership team, **EUGENE SOR** (Crowden's new Artistic Director) and **MARION ATHERTON** (currently our Interim Head of School and longtime Chief Operating Officer), are

already off and running in their new roles leading our organization.

"We are so pleased to have Marion and Eugene expertly step in to their expanding leadership roles," said Jim Marks, Crowden's Board Chair. "The Board is looking forward to working in tandem with them as we continue to strengthen Crowden's transformative impact on young people and move forward into a bright future."

Under Doris's leadership, Crowden has grown from serving several hundred people each year to well in the thousands. During her tenure, Crowden launched the John Adams

Young Composers Program, renovated our state-of-the-art Hoefer Auditorium, and established both our endowment and the Ann and Gordon Getty Fund.

We were able to sit down recently with Doris, Eugene, and Marion... here's some of what they had to say:

"This is my 39th year here at Crowden overall, and I continue to love our school, organization, and community dearly," said Doris as she reminisced. "I am deeply proud of everything we have accomplished together. Even though I am transitioning out of active involvement in Crowden administration, I



will always remain a part of the Crowden community and will continue to teach and coach at the Music Center. I am certainly enjoying spending more time with my family and returning to my roots as a teacher.”

Marion chimed in, “I am grateful to Doris for her many years of mentorship, and I so appreciate her ongoing help in planning our upcoming 40th anniversary. Eugene and I look forward to partnering with our many invaluable supporters to ensure that Crowden’s reach goes further and is more accessible. With the help of our community, we will continue to work with chamber music in remarkable ways, to nurture and inspire more people than ever before, and to ensure that Crowden will flourish for future generations.”

Doris noted that “Crowden is in terrific hands with my longtime colleagues Marion Atherton and Eugene Sor, who have a deep understanding of what music

at Crowden means, why it’s so unique—especially for these formative stages of young people—and why our educational philosophy is so important to share. The remarkable creative community that has always distinguished Crowden, and especially our rich legacy of mentorship across generations, remains more active and vibrant than ever.”

“Since meeting Anne Crowden and discovering her gem of a school back in the late 1980s, I have had the honor of sharing countless thrilling moments with our Crowden community,” Eugene reflected. “The joy of working with our students, faculty, and extended creative network has been the fulfillment of a fantastic dream. It is a gift to be a part of this musical family and also my privilege to continue to build upon the important legacies of both Anne and Doris as Crowden’s new Artistic Director. As a teacher, I experience first-hand each day how the values instilled in each Crowden student through the immersive chamber music training we specialize in also

constitutes the backbone of The Crowden School’s outstanding academic program. I am in daily awe of how here at Crowden, always centering music truly does change everything, in school and life alike.”

Marion agreed: “I am so inspired by our students—their joy and excitement are contagious! I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve in this new role, and to help lay the groundwork for Crowden’s continued strong future.”

Noting that Crowden is in the early stages of planning its 40th celebrations next year, which will feature exceptional alumni from all walks of life, Doris concluded, “I am excited to celebrate this milestone with the entire Crowden community, especially as both Crowden and I look forward to our next chapters. See you at Hertz Hall in 2024!” ♪

LEFT: Eugene Sor and Marion Atherton stand outside our Hoefer Auditorium. RIGHT (top to bottom): Doris teaches one of her private lesson violin students; Doris sits at her desk in “Anne’s Studio.” All photos by Heidi Alletzhäuser.

Crowden on the Move: Strategic Updates

As part of our **nationwide search for a Head of School** to join the school by fall 2023, our seasoned search firm Carney, Sandoe, and Associates held an extensive site visit this September, observing classes and interviewing community members. Parents, faculty, staff, and students participated in a series of open meetings to express their priorities and hopes for our next Head of School. ♪

The Crowden School has started on its path to **accreditation with the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS)** by enrolling in their New School Services Program, a program that supports schools who are preparing for accreditation. This yearlong program will provide us with access to Board training events, discussion groups with other CAIS schools, and an annual membership conference with workshops on topics of interest. It has been wonderful to connect with our colleagues throughout the state, and we are excited for these first steps on the journey to accreditation. ♪

Crowden's **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee** is collaborating with CircleUp Education, an organization of Cal alumni that helps schools and organizations to interrupt implicit bias, restore community wellbeing, resolve conflict and misunderstandings, and inspire deeper connection and inclusion. Their first project has been to survey Crowden School students, parents, and faculty/staff on our school climate, to help identify pain points in our school culture so we can best address them. ♪

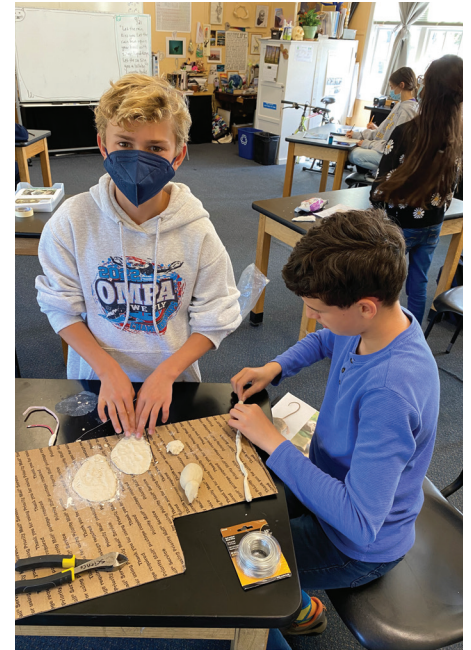
The Crowden Board of Trustees welcomed **DEBORAH SPAULDING GRAHAM** as its newest member this fall, while thanking departing members **HARRY LOUCKS**, **MARIA PONCEL**, and **JACOB PAK**. New officers for the coming term will be: **DR. JAMES MARKS**, Chair; **ERIC HALL-STEIN**, Vice Chair; **DEBORAH SPAULDING GRAHAM**, Treasurer; and **DONNA EYESTONE**, Secretary.

In Memoriam

Crowden mourns the loss of two longtime community members, **ELISABETH "LIZ" ENGAN** and **JENNIFER "JENNY" BERLEKAMP**. Liz served on Crowden's community education faculty for over 20 years, teaching hundreds of young children in our Early Childhood Music classes. Jenny was a steadfast and early supporter of Crowden from back in our days holding classes in the church basement. She served as a Crowden Board member in the late 1980s and early '90s. Our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of Liz and Jenny. Both are greatly missed. ♪



This fall, Crowden students, faculty and staff, and volunteers took our mobile Instrument Petting Zoo to Solano Stroll, a popular local street fair. We helped curious passersby of ALL ages learn to make sounds on our string instruments. At press time, Crowden was preparing its much larger Instrument Petting Zoo for our 23rd annual Community Music Day. Photos by Michelle Lee.



Students Drive Inquiry in Crowden School Science Classes

In The Crowden School's science classrooms, students follow their curiosity through inquiry, process, and analysis—working together and designing research based on their own questions.

Starting with a general appreciation for the world around us, The Crowden School's science curriculum teaches students to test the scientific method through hands-on, lab-based learning experiences. Working collaboratively in groups, students develop models and experiments through the process of inquiry and discussion. This helps our young scientists discern the role of qualitative and quantitative data, and make conclusions tied to that data.

Like all Crowden School faculty, our science teachers bring in their particular areas of expertise to inspire their classes. In long-time faculty member Karen Ginsberg's Upper

School science classes, for instance, lab work often revolves around local Bay Area species and habitat, drawing upon Karen's extensive experience as a climate researcher. This fall, Karen secured a grant from the Toshiba America Foundation that will enable Crowden students to conduct original research, in real time, on the connections between local weather and water quality. Soon-to-be-armed with a research-quality weather station and water quality field test kits, the students will be sharing their data for use by other schools and students. Similarly, Lower School science teacher Tyler Powles has a passion for creating environments that cultivate curiosity. As in Karen's classes, Mr. Powles' third through fifth grade scientists ask questions that lead to inquiry-based models. In their current unit on interrelationships in ecosystems, fifth-grade students' questions are driving their investigation of the apparent disappearance of the body of a dead raccoon over time. As one current fifth grade parent recently shared on social media, "Our fifth grader is thoroughly inspired by [Mr. Powles] every day. He really knows how to captivate students and keeps them engaged and curious."

Science students find opportunities for discovery everywhere at Crowden. Even sharpening a pencil in Karen's class requires students to convert calories into kinetic energy into electricity. And this transfer of energy is not an activity that one student can accomplish alone. Just like in their music ensembles, collaboration is required: one person riding a stationary bike enables a second student to sharpen the pencil.

"Anytime a teacher is willing to say, 'I don't know, what do you think?' it's amazing what happens next!" Karen observes. "Data-driven science projects are designed to give students tools and ideas for authentic, long-term investigations, and help them increase the meaning and relevance of their science education/understanding."

The results are students who find interest and possibility in the world everywhere, and feel confident in exploring below the surface using process and analysis. ♪

PHOTOS (left to right): Third grade students collaborate with help from Mr. Powles (Heidi Allethausen); Seventh graders work on the concept of scaled models as a means for sharing detailed observations and knowledge. For this lab, they could work in paper or clay to model native species found in or near San Francisco Bay (Karen Ginsberg).



New Residency for John Adams Young Composers Program

We are proud to announce that the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players is serving as Ensemble-in-Residence for the John Adams Young Composers Program this year!

SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS is the west coast's most long-standing and largest new music ensemble, having performed more than 1,200

works by over 600 composers, including 300 premieres. The organization has commissioned over 80 major works from composers such as John Cage, Earle Brown, Olly Wilson, Michael Gordon, Du Yun, Myra Melford, Julia Wolfe, and John Adams himself.

The residency began this fall with a visit by composer **DAVID COLL**. Each month this semester, a member of the SF Contemporary Music Players will give a masterclass on writing for their instrument, then later play through the students' music and offer advice on technical issues related to their instrument. In January and June 2023, SF Contemporary

Music Players will perform student compositions in public concerts here at Crowden.

"We are delighted to build this partnership with the John Adams Young Composers Program," says SF Contemporary Music Players Executive Director Richard Aldag. "In my own experience and in conversations with composer colleagues, there is a recurring theme of wishing that a program like this—that provides mentorship for young composers by seasoned performers of new music—would have been available when we were studying." 🎵

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

Crowden School Visits Berkeley Town and Gown Club

Eugene Sor and two Crowden School string quartets visited the local club to share the transformative impact of music at the center of collaborative learning.

Berkeley's Town and Gown is a private women's club that strengthens ties between

"the Town" and UC Berkeley. They host a monthly meeting and invite a variety of guest speakers and performers. We were thrilled to receive their invitation to speak and play at their October meeting! Our students performed works by Villa Lobos and Schubert for a packed audience of around 80 members. Eugene shared Crowden's history, then spoke in depth on how the Crowden School's incorporation of daily music practice supports the development of successful, thriving global citizens. To better demonstrate how playing music in groups develops crucial and advanced

communication skills in our students, Eugene gave a short "master class" demonstration, coaching our two string quartets in front of the rapt audience. Ever our best ambassadors, our Crowden School students enjoyed joining members for a light reception in the courtyard of Town and Gown's historic Maybeck-designed clubhouse (including fresh lemonade made especially for them). In the words of our hosts, those in attendance were grateful for the "glorious program" and "loved the music played by (Crowden's) outstanding students!" 🎵

Alumni Connections

Our incredible alumni are connecting in the real world, and returning to give back to Crowden in myriad ways.



Ari Goldberg poses with fellow Crowden classmate Grace Camperi ('18), who stopped by campus during Ari's project. (Heidi Mattson)

Alum Gives Back for Eagle Project

When Crowden School alum **ARI GOLDBERG** ('18) began planning his Eagle Scout Service Project, he thought of his alma mater and how he could give back to Crowden. Eagle Projects are the culmination of Scout leadership training, and require Scouts to demonstrate leadership of others while performing a project for the benefit of the community. For his project, Ari decided to come back to Crowden to improve our campus Science garden! Ari first fundraised, then organized and led volunteers in multi-faceted improvements, including repairing our PE supply chest, building new benches, and a comprehensive clean-up and beautification of the soil and space. Volunteers included Crowden School students, parents, faculty, and fellow alum classmates. We are so proud of you for making Crowden a better place with your service, Ari—we know the world is next. ♪



Audrey Vardanega (courtesy of audreyvardanegapianist.com)

Sundays @ Four Alumni Concert

Our December 11 *Sundays @ Four* chamber music concert features the highly anticipated return of pianist **AUDREY VARDANEGA** ('09) to our Hoefer Auditorium stage. Audrey will be joined by acclaimed cellist Peter Myers for a sparkling program of Leoš Janáček, Frédéric Chopin, Benjamin Britten, Bright Sheng, Michio Mamiya, and Béla Bartók. We expect a crowd peopled with Crowden alums and alumni families for this bravura concert. Tickets are still available at crowden.org/sundays! ♪



Gabriella Smith (courtesy of gabriellasmith.com)

Alumni Commissions

We are excited to hear about some upcoming world premieres and a new album composed by Crowden alumni! First up, John Adams Young Composers Program alum **ANAÍAS AZUL** released their first album, *Vulnerable*, thanks to a Seed Commission from the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. The bilingual five-song EP in English and Spanish debuted this October and is available at anaisazul.com. Next up, we'll be in the audience for a new work by Crowden alum **THEODORE HABER** (Crowden School

'13, John Adams Young Composers Program) this December, when Crowden faculty cellist **DOUG MACHIZ** has dedicated an entire concert by his Friction Quartet to Crowden alumni composers. The concerts feature the Friction commission by Theo, along with works by Samuel Adams and Gabriella Smith. Learn more at frictionquartet.com. And speaking of Sam and Gabriella... In May 2023, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and conductor Gustavo Dudamel will premiere the latest work by **GABRIELLA SMITH** (Crowden School, John Adams Young Composers Program), *Lost Coast*, commissioned by the LA Phil for cellist Gabriel Cabezas. This is Gabriella's second commission from the renowned orchestra; her first premiered this past February. Finally this February 2023, the San Francisco Symphony will debut a still untitled work from **SAMUEL ADAMS** ('00), commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony for pianist Conor Hanick, in concerts pairing Sam with Bruckner. ♪



Crowden Artistic Director Eugene Sor hugs his former student, Jessica Blixt-Logan, at our recent benefit event. (Usre Alleyne)

Alums Speak on the Importance of Sustaining Crowden

Crowden alums **JESSICA BLIXT-LOGAN** ('09) and Samuel Adams ('00) spoke to an audience of Crowden supporters at our most recent benefit event this spring. Jessica, one of Eugene's former cello students, shared her reflections on

attending Crowden at a very formative age, and how she holds dear those lessons and memories as she pursues her teaching career in Mathematics (Jessica is teaching Math at Albany High!). Sam underscored the importance and ongoing relevance of the bonds created between classmates as they learn and grow together at Crowden and beyond. It was heartwarming and affirming to hear these inspiring young people credit our school and community with making such a lasting, positive impact on their values and lives. ♪



Leila Yokoyama rehearsing in orchestra during our 2021 summer Chamber Music Workshop. (Michelle Lee)

News from the Orchestra

Congratulations to Crowden School alum **ALBERT YAMAMOTO** ('11), newly named first violinist of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra under internationally renowned music director Robert Spano!

We enjoyed reading Crowden alum **LEILA YOKOYAMA**'s ('19) recent article "How to Join a Youth Orchestra (and Make the Most of It)" in *Strings Magazine* online! Leila drew upon her string orchestra experiences here at Crowden and as a violist in the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra to advise aspiring youth orchestra

players on how to navigate auditions, concerts, and everything in between. We loved reading her helpful advice for teen players anywhere, honed right here at Crowden!

Crowden School alum **DAVID MCCARROLL** ('99) has been named Concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. David has been based in Berlin in recent years, as a member of famed Vienna Piano Trio, and will be Pittsburgh's first official concertmaster in seven years. His predecessor? Fellow Crowden School alum **NOAH BENDIX-BALGLEY** ('97). As Pittsburgh Symphony's music director Manfred Honeck explained to the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, "When Noah left seven years ago, we had already created a special sound in the first violins, a special style. We had many wonderful players audition for the job, so many excellent players, but we wanted to connect once more with that sound." Not too surprising—for us—since both are former students of Anne Crowden and our Crowden School. ♪



Milo Klise, Niko Umarr Durr, and Eamon Riley after their concert (photo courtesy of Anna Umar)

Crowden Concert "Reunions"

Oakland Civic Orchestra recently presented "Reunion," a concert featuring Brahms, Beethoven, and an original world premiere by **NIKO UMARR DURR**, alumnus of both The Crowden School ('09) and our John Adams Young Composers Program. Two Crowden School alumni cellists, **MILO KLISE** ('19) and **EAMON RILEY** ('18),

performed as soloists in Niko's work, *A Zephyr in Gemini: Serenade for Two Cellos and Orchestra*, and the conductor, **MARTY STODDARD**, is even a former Crowden faculty member (and former director of our John Adams Young Composers Program).

In June, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra presented four Crowden School alums in a single concert! The Baumer String Quartet, featuring alums and sometimes summer faculty members **NATHAN OLSON** ('00), **AARON REQUIRO** ('95), and **DAVID REQUIRO** ('99) as well as violist **JT POSADAS** (also a sometime summer faculty member), performed the Dallas premiere of Crowden alum Samuel Adams' work *Sundial for String Quartet and Percussion*. *Classical Voice North America* noted that "Sundial is a testament to the importance of staying in touch with friends from middle school." We agree!

And speaking of staying friends from middle school... Crowden School alumna **KANA LUZMOOR** ('14) was back in Berkeley this summer, organizing her second year of outdoor concerts at Strawberry Creek Park to benefit the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, a nonprofit dedicated toward improving the lives of AAPI immigrant communities throughout the Bay Area. Kana curated a series of varied programs that featured fellow Crowden School alumni **MILO KLISE** ('19), **JUN LIU** ('16), **SORIA NGYUGEN** ('14), and Kana herself in the Hidden Cafe String Orchestra. ♪

Stay In Touch!

Wherever you are, and whatever you are doing or enjoying, please share your news with us at crowden.org/alumni. We'd love to be in touch with you.

Seeking Alumni Captains

We are seeking Alumni Captains from across the decades to act as advisors as we refresh our *Opus 18* alumni giving program! If you've been looking for a way to re-engage with Crowden, or want to nominate a protential alumni captain from your year, please drop us a note to learn more: alumni@crowden.org

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, 2021 and September 30, 2022. Kindly notify us of any inadvertent omissions. Thank you!

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April 29, 2023
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Music Changes Everything

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