

Remarks
Presented by NAITO Yasushi, Consul-General of Japan in Perth
On the occasion of the “Jazz Picnic in the Park” hosted by WA Youth Jazz Orchestra
Hyde Park
Sunday November 5, 2023

Good afternoon;
Thank you for the opportunity for me to say a few words.

The “Jazz Picnic in the Park” is a great event for jazz fans to spend a Sunday afternoon in the beautiful setting of Hyde Park with your close friends and family. As I was joining the fantastic jazz parade in the park and saw the purple Jacaranda blossom which reminded me of my previous diplomatic posting in South Africa.

I used to go to Jazz Festivals in Cape Town where Abdullar Ibrahim, also known as Dollar Brand, taught me not only on jazz but also cosmology, how his ancient wisdom of African Koisan indigenous ancestry resonates with Japan’s old wisdom of “Satoyoma” and how we co-exist with the nature with a deep sense of gratitude and awe respect. Abdullar Ibrahim learned it through Kobudo practices for more than half a century and his jazz piano “Water from Ancient Well” expresses the resonance. The inspiring traditional welcome by the elder at the outset reminded me of that.

I wish to congratulate the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra for organizing the event as part of Perth International Jazz Festival. I extend a special warm welcome to the young musicians from Showa University of Music in Japan. They have this proud collaboration team name called SHOWAYJO. SHOWA plus WAYJO goes SHOWAJJO. It is useful to know the abbreviation of Western Australia, WA in Japanese is precisely meaning Japan, or peace and harmony.

They started their collaboration and mutual visits back in 2014. At a time, one of the student saxophonist Izawa Akane of early SHOWAYJO group excelled her artistry and returned with her own band to feature in the Perth International Jazz Festival in 2019.

Even at the time of the pandemic, WAYJO and SHOWA students did not give up to collaborate. They produced a musical collaboration online exchange project called “Wings Over the Pacific”.

I also had an opportunity to listen to the YouTube clip, and it was an amazing piece of inter-cultural exchange highlighting the creativity, musical excellence of next generation of jazz, as well as an impressive message that nothing can stop them from the fun of jazz collaboration. And today is the celebration of reunion of SHOWAYJO in person after 4 years!

Last week, the Premier, the Hon Roger Cook MLA, and the Deputy Premier, the Hon Rita Saffioti MLA, visited Japan to promote more investment and to strengthen the bilateral relationship with

Japan even further, taking the first ANA direct flight finally resumed after 3 years and 7 months suspended by the pandemic. With those developments, we are glad to anticipate more human interactions between Japan and Western Australia. And the timely return of SHOWAJO is so symbolic.

We are looking forward to hearing the resonance of rhythms and the friendship later in their collaboration. Enjoy the touch of sound from Japan.

Thank you for your attention.

End