



Music Changes Everything

THE CROWDEN LETTER

SUMMER 2021

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the Crowden Letter

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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."

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 Alletzhauser.