

Published February 21st, 2018

## Local students perform at Carnegie Hall

By Pippa Fisher



From left, Campolindo High School students Aman Malhotra, Kevin Deng, Brigitte Jia and Andrew Torres find some time for sight-seeing in New York. Photos provided

Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Guam and Qatar.

Four talented Lamorinda students were among the finalists chosen from all over the world to perform in February on New York's most famous stage. And all four musicians attend Campolindo High School.

This year those selected included CHS students Junior Andrew Torres (clarinet), Junior Aman Malhotra (viola), Senior Brigitte Jia (violin) and Senior Kevin Deng (trumpet).

The High School Honors Performance Series annually invites music directors from high schools to nominate outstanding students, who must then submit an audition tape and resume of their musical achievements, along with an application explaining why they would like to be in the HPS.

The finalists travel to New York to rehearse and perform with other elite musicians under master conductors at Carnegie Hall. This year there were students from 45 U.S. states as well as from Canada, China, Hong Kong,

Lafayette resident Jorge Torres, who is a parent of one of the finalists, says it is no coincidence that four of those selected are Campolindo High School students, which he says was one of the largest numbers from any one school. He credits the inspirational teaching of CHS music teacher Johnny Johnson.

"Even though the kids weren't officially representing Campolindo, I think their selection reflects the high caliber of musicianship being taught at the school," says Torres. "Johnny Johnson is doing great things with instrumental music at Campo."

Torres points out that Johnson's students are consistently selected for several extracurricular groups, including the Diablo Wind Symphony. "Given that instrumental music is an elective, it's a testament to Johnny's talent as an instructor that year after year, his students continue to take music."

Torres' son Andrew agrees. "Mr. Johnson has made a huge difference in my love for music. He has a great demeanor and is very positive and encouraging. I have gained great knowledge and skills from Mr. Johnson and from the Diablo Wind Symphony conductors, Diane and John Maltester."

The four CHS finalists all agree that performing at Carnegie Hall was awe-inspiring.

Aman Malhotra said that meeting new musicians from around the world and preparing for a performance a few days later was quite an experience. "Having to learn to understand each other and work together as an ensemble in two days required a lot of rehearsing and focus, but our work paid off."

The students raised the money for the five-day trip themselves through sponsorship and donations from family and friends. Torres said his son financed his trip in part through his wages as a lifeguard.

While the trip was focused on the music, performance and meeting other like-minded students, there was some time set aside for sight-seeing, including a nighttime cruise on the Hudson River, a visit to Central Park and a Broadway show.

All four students say they intend to pursue music in some form after high school.



Elite young musicians are brought together from all over the world to perform at Carnegie Hall with the High School Honors Performance Series.

Reach the reporter at: [pippa@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:pippa@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA