



Community Voice  
By Sadia Ashraf

Rick Gott said that the One Voice project started with the simplest concept, "what if we can connect the next generation of kids with each other through art?"

# OneVoice



(top) Rick Gott takes part in a selfie session with the visiting Chinese student performers.

Natomas Charter School's Performing and Fine Arts Academy has recently completed Phase II of its One Voice – China Project. Our magazine wrote an article late last year regarding this collaboration between the school and Jinan Preschool Edu-

cation College (JPEC), located in Sacramento's Sister City – Jinan, China. Students from both schools worked together to design and facilitate original

multi-media visual and performing arts production which was presented at Natomas Charter School in March of this year.

The program included original choreography, poetry and song, monologue and vignettes, digital animation

and original music - telling the stories of the youth's common experiences. "The performances were packed by spectators," said Ting Sun, Natomas Charter School Co-Founder and Executive Director. There were songs and dances, Chinese paper cutting displays, drawings and other visual art throughout the night – with a finale that ended in the beat of drums.

Rick Gott, Music Director, stated that he was very excited to be part of such an amazing project. Gott composed three of the musical performances that were included in the program and used the likes of Gandhi, Confucius and Rumi as lyrical inspirations. He, along with his friend, Owen Myers worked with the students to bring together the musical performances. "The Chinese students brought beautiful things to the stage," said Gott.

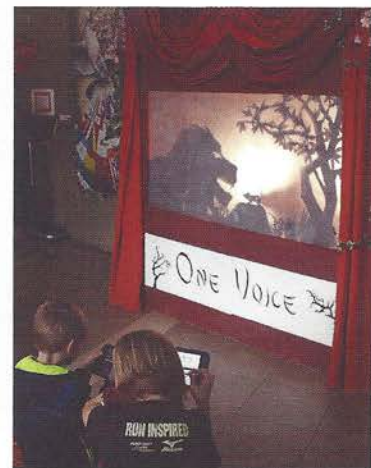
He said that it was very cool to be inside the orchestra pit with the students, collaborat-

ing and composing throughout the project. Gott has taught at Natomas Charter for 19 years now and was involved in the project with his wife Karen Pollard who is the Creative Director of One Voice.

Included were special guests from JPEC including the vice principal, the dean of Arts Education, three teachers and seven students. Hundreds of students were involved from Natomas Charter in the



(above) Visiting Chinese students and students from the Performing Arts School in Natomas performed on stage at the Benvenuto Performing Arts Theater.



(above) Chinese Shadow Puppets. They were inspired by a traditional art form and created by Jim Vetter's students.

production, planning, directing and performing of the event.

Jim Vetter, Natomas Charter Visual Arts Teacher, was also involved in the project where he and his drawing class took up the challenge of researching and constructing the Chinese Shadow Puppets for the show. He writes that they were inspired by how the traditional art form is constantly adapting to engage modern audiences. "The process was rewarding and our performances were well received," writes Vetter.

Sun stated that she was happy that the event was a huge success and looks forward to its next phase.

The final phase of this project will begin later this year in the fall extending into mid



(above) Qin Zhongliang, JPEC Teacher and Translator; Shi Xia, JPEC Dance and Vocal Teacher; Sun Lanling, Natomas Charter School Executive Director; Yi Wen, JPEC Theatre and Vocal Teacher

next year. The project team will recruit additional students for a "redesigned performance for a Chinese audience," based on the event that happened here. The project plan states that they will partner with various schools to prepare the logistics and organize venues to perform in three cities, Jinan, Beijing and Chongqing in April, 2017. They anticipate having six public performances over a two-week period that will reach an audience of over four thousand.

The One Voice project was originally developed in 2010 when Natomas Charter initiated its first "arts sister school" with the Sungurbey Academy in Nigde, Turkey according to information provided by the school. The document states that the project's mission is "to promote insight and understanding across all ethnicities and cultures by artistically illustrating core values that American teenagers share with teenagers around the world." Some of the musical compositions in One Voice China were adapted from the Turkish project.

Gott said that the One Voice project started with the simplest concept, "what if we can connect the next generation of kids with each other through art? We

found that at the heart of it all, the core values are the same, despite all the unrest currently in the world." He will also be involved in the third phase of the project when he, along with other

teachers, will go to China.

This project is making strides in bridging different cultures and languages using art. We look forward to what's next for this project and will continue to bring you updates on it. We admire the students and teachers who have worked tirelessly to bring art to the forefront for our youth.

### LearnMore

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