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## Campo Student Makes Major Music

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Inno Asuncion Photo Doug Dunderdale

To borrow a phrase from a Frank Sinatra song, Inno Asuncion has the world on a string. Make that four strings - four viola strings. The Campolindo High School senior is co-president of the Student Music Council, a member of the Campolindo Orchestra, plays in a string quartet and manages a music mentor program for Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. He is also assistant principal violist in the Berkeley based Young People's Symphony Orchestra. Asuncion, along with three other YPSO musicians, performed in December with the Berkeley Symphony. YPSO and other youth orchestras will play in Davies Symphony Hall in January.

A love for music performances began in third grade, when Asuncion's class took a field trip to hear the San Francisco Symphony. In sixth grade he began studying violin under Joaquin Moraga Middle School's music teacher Adam Noel, but quickly switched to viola. It was, he says, "a very good decision."

Flash forward to high school, where Campolindo music director Harvey Benstein urged Asuncion to audition for YPSO. Asuncion was accepted, and has continued to rehearse and perform with their group of 100 musicians. This is his third year with the program.

As Asuncion's music contacts have broadened, so have his opportunities. He's played in a chamber ensemble, in Berkeley's Jr. Bach Festival, performed with the Pacific Mozart Ensemble choir, and for the Bay Area Youth Orchestra festival. Last June he traveled with YPSO to Alaska, performing in Fairbanks and Anchorage. He'd like to play in Campolindo's pit orchestra (their March musical will be "Fiddler on the Roof"), but right now he's focused on an April international field trip to Beijing, China. The Chinese Ministry of Culture and the International Fine Arts Institute invited Campolindo Orchestra to perform. He says nearly fifty Campolindo music students will make the trip. Fundraisers for travel expenses are ongoing, most famously the Rent-a-Student program (see related story in our December 8 issue.)

Bow in hand, Asuncion averages an hour or two daily of music practice. Right now it's more, as he prepares an audition for Stanford University. Admittedly, he spends more time on non music-related homework. But he likes music and says he finds that it "provides relief from academics," and teaches him "how to be a leader." Does he play any other instruments? "The ukulele," he laughs. In addition to his studies and music commitments Asuncion also plays varsity tennis.

Asuncion studies viola privately with Pamela Freund-Stripen. He credits the teachers he's had and his parents, Melinda and Albert Asuncion, for the support they've provided to his music career. Younger sister Gabriela, a Joaquin Moraga sixth grader, has taken up the cello after watching her brother's successes.

Music "might take me somewhere in college," he says thoughtfully. It seems it already has.

To learn more about the Campolindo Orchestra 2011 China Trip go online to <http://campomusic.org/china-trip-info/>

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