

On Their Own
S.F.'s New Century Brass Band members share their thoughts and determinations.

KEN: With our present brass band chief leaving, it's a good opportunity for each of us to make a fresh start and consider what Brass Band training is. What is it that you all want to see happen with our band for next year and beyond?

ALEX: It's important that each person make this an opportunity to try to take on more responsibility. Even though there are people who are taking care of things now, they won't be here forever.

BEN: In the drum section, sometimes we're too dependent on a particular person being here. We need to be strong enough to play on our own. That way we can also open up to more new, younger members.

KEN: Can you handle playing lead and learning tri-toms, Joji?

JOJI: Sure!

KEN: What do you think about traveling and performing like we did in Florida? We could go to Japan or Hawaii.

EUGENE: Sounds good!

NORI: Before we go anywhere, we need to each develop our life-condition so that we can be encouraging. Otherwise, it would just waste time and money.

SHO: I think we should get some new music.

MICHAEL: I feel the important thing is to play music that displays the qualities of the Buddha, that we express qualities like compassion and courage and have people cry or feel chills down their spines.

JEWEL: I want to do new music, too, and perform for the public, not just for the SGI. Maybe at a San Jose Clash soccer game!

PETER: I want to play some Count Basie tunes.

SEIKI: I want to play songs that younger people can relate to.

KAZU: I think it's encouraging to hear pop songs or a song that you know.

JIMMIE: Songs on the radio are OK, but music is more powerful when we know the story behind it.

BRANDON: I like anything that has a nice melody and a good beat, like "Shining Star" [Earth, Wind and Fire] or other '70s music. The important thing is that we continue to rely

on and encourage one another. We have to expand [our membership] so that we can be even more encouraging and also show people that we'll do what we set out to do.

ROB: In the past we were basically told what to do. It's great that it's more democratic now, and we can talk like this. We should appreciate this.

KEN: Yes. We've been working hard to open things up to everyone's opinion, as that was a major weakness in the past. From now, the band's progress will be determined by how much we develop and challenge our weaknesses, and how much we fight together to make the band, the SGI and the world match our ideals.

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