

# Japan America Society of Minnesota



# 通 信

The Tsūshin is a membership publication of the Japan America Society of Minnesota

June 2018 Vol. 27, No. 06

## Harukaze Concert 2018: Musical and Floral Metamorphosis

The Japan America Society of Minnesota (JASM) hopes to serve as a bridge between the peoples of the United States and Japan through high quality annual events. This year's Harukaze "Spring Wind" greatly serves that purpose with this concert at the Park Square Theatre on Sunday, June 10, 2018.

Harukaze 2018 will be a unique artistic experience of performances by talented musicians and displays of the ancient Japanese flower arranging tradition of ikebana, provided by master Yoshie Babcock and the Sogetsu Ikebana Study Group.

### Nobuyoshi Yasuda / conductor

Nobuyoshi Yasuda was appointed as orchestra director at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in 1991 and music director of the Chippewa Valley Symphony in 1993. He made his international conducting debut in 2003 and his Japanese debut with the Osaka Philharmonic in 2004. A native of Takarazuka, Japan, he holds a Bachelor of Music from Japan's Soai University as well as a Master of Music from Indiana University, Bloomington.



Nobuyoshi Yasuda

### Asako Hirabayashi / harpsichord-composition

Harpist and composer Asako Hirabayashi's first recording on Albany Label, an entirely self-composed and performed program, was selected as one of the five best classical CDs of the year 2010 by the Minneapolis Star Tribune and received seven favorable reviews internationally. Her recent achievements include winning the 2016 McKnight Fellowship for Composers. She holds a doctoral degree from the Juilliard School.



The "Cerulean Fire" Duo  
Margaret Humphrey and Asako Hirabayashi

### Margaret Humphrey / violin

Margaret Humphrey maintains a vibrant freelance career in the Twin Cities as well as performing as a core member of the Minnesota Opera Orchestra. Touring nationally, she frequently performs with Tempesta di Mare in Philadelphia, the Kingsbury Ensemble in St. Louis, and Bach and the Baroque series in Pittsburgh. Ms. Humphrey has recorded on the Chandos, Dorian, and Ten Thousand Lakes labels.

The following musicians will also perform:

- Donald Livingston / harpsichord
- Tami Morse / harpsichord
- Gail Olszewski / harpsichord
- Huldah Niles / violin-viola
- Elizabeth York / violin
- Coca Bochonko / viola
- Tom Rosenberg / cello
- Josh Schwalbach / bass

We are looking forward to listening to the many talents that will be brought to this performance.

**Check out the JASM website or call 612-627-9357 for more information and to purchase tickets.**

#### When:

Sunday, June 10, 2018

- 3:00 p.m. .... Registration and Sogetsu Ikebana viewing
- 4:00 p.m. .... Concert begins

#### Where:

**Park Square Theatre, Andy Boss Stage**  
20 W 7th Place, St. Paul, MN 55102

#### Price:

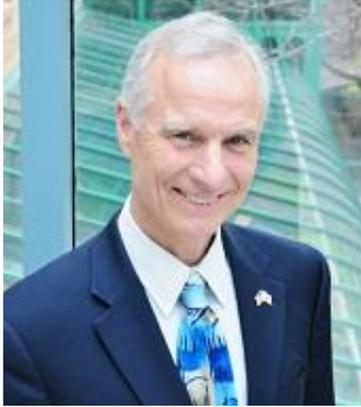
- \$15 ..... Non-Member
- \$10 ..... JASM Member
- \$5 ..... Student (with ID)
- Free..... Age 6 and Under

**Special thanks to the sponsors:**

Noriko and Takuzo Ishida



## Building Bridges in June 2018



*Ben van Lierop*

"Hey, Ben, are you looking forward to retirement?" is a question I have been getting ever since it was announced that I would be retiring at the end of June. My answer is usually something like this: "I have mixed feelings. I am looking forward to being able to spend more time with my family in Minnesota and with my family in Japan. I would also like to be involved in some new

activities around my lifelong interests in Japan and Korea. I would also like to do some volunteer work, such as tutoring in Northeast Minneapolis, and to continue to pursue my hobbies. I love running, biking and singing in our church choir. However, I naturally also feel some sense of loss when I consider leaving the work I have enjoyed as a leader of JASM since 2006.

I have been very fortunate at JASM to be engaged in activities, plan events and work with people who also want to serve as "bridges between cultures." This has been the best and most fulfilling job of my career. I will miss the J-Quiz program, where I have seen the excitement of high school students who are learning Japanese language compete in the exciting J-Quiz competition. I believe these high school students will become the future Japan experts and dedicated leaders with an international perspective. I have enjoyed working with JASM volunteers, especially at the Obon Festival where hundreds of families come to the JASM booths to participate in traditional Japanese festival activities and learn more about Japan. In addition, I have been inspired and humbled by the generous support of many individuals and corporate members who have contributed financially to JASM through the annual Mondale Award and Scholarship Gala. The growing financial support from this gala has enabled JASM to give four scholarships for the past two years. It had also provided support for other JASM programs. In addition, generous private donors are helping JASM to establish an endowment which will enable JASM to grow even stronger in the future.

I want to express enormous thanks to former Vice President and Ambassador Walter Mondale, the JASM Honorary Chairman. As you probably know, Mr. Mondale continually expresses his personal pride in and affection for JASM. In my work for JASM, I have been deeply impressed by Mr. Mondale's love of Japan, his desire to always learn from others by asking questions, his active listening style and his quick wit.

I have been inspired and humbled by the friendships that I have made with excellent JASM leaders such as Ken Port, John Babcock, David Smith, and Liz Brailsford. I am also grateful to JASM leaders such as Mirja Hanson, Takuzo Ishida, Dick Stahl (Honorary Consul of Japan in Minneapolis), Dean Potter, and Evan Williams (longest .

## Building Bridges in June 2018 (Continued)

serving Honorary Consul-General of Japan in Minneapolis) who have generously provided their insight and wise counsel in my work for JASM.

I will miss working with a talented group of people: JASM Program Manager Yoko Ueno, the enthusiastic JASM interns, and the JASM Board of Directors. I feel fortunate that as the Executive Director I have been able to work with a wonderful group of colleagues who have supported my passion for building bridges between Japan and Minnesota. It has been a good run, and I am thankful for the opportunity that I have been given to serve as a leader of this vibrant and exciting organization.

At the same time, I am encouraged and inspired by the leadership of Marc Bleher and the current members of the JASM Board who have chosen Rio Saito to become the next Executive Director of JASM. Everyone who has worked with Rio knows that she has great energy, a deep passion for the mission of JASM and many creative ideas for leading JASM in the future. I intend to be active as a member of JASM and support the efforts of Rio and her team as they encounter opportunities and share in the new challenges that come their way in serving the Japan America Society of Minnesota.

Finally, I want to express my deep and heartfelt gratitude to all of you, the members of JASM, for your abiding support. Your commitment and dedication to the building of bridges between the U.S. and Japan makes it possible for JASM to do good work and fulfill its mission.

I will be leaving my role with heartfelt gratitude.

Ben van Lierop

JASM Executive Director

### Membership News

#### Thanks to the following new JASM members:

*Jessany Williams*

*Lori Vertin*

*David Schulz*

#### Thanks to the following corporate member renewals:

*Anime Twin Cities, Inc.*

*Daikin Applied*

*Deloitte Tax*

*Dorsey & Whitney, LLP*

*Frederickson and Byron*

*Mall of America*

*Metropolitan Airports Commission*

*Saji-Ya Restaurant*

*The Voyager Group*

#### Thanks to the following renewing JASM members:

*Setsuko Rittmiller*

*Kazue Merritt*

## Corporate Roundtable Features Ralph A. Inforzato



Ralph Inforzato

JASM is very pleased to welcome Ralph A. Inforzato, the chief executive director of JETRO Chicago, to serve as the speaker for JASM business series event, the Corporate Roundtable on **Wednesday, July 11**. Mr. Inforzato will speak on the topic of transformational economic dynamics within the Japanese investment landscape.

In August 2017, Ralph A. Inforzato was appointed the chief executive director of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in Chicago. As chief executive director, he oversees JETRO Chicago's activities designed to facilitate trade and investment between Japan and 12 Midwestern states served by JETRO Chicago.

For the last thirty-three years, Mr. Inforzato has been involved in significant JETRO related business development projects: Japan-US Biotechnology Initiative (2002-2010), which has sent more than 500 representatives from North American life sciences companies, universities and research institutes to Japan, enabling them to initiate research collaboration and business development in the Japanese biotechnology and pharmaceutical communities. He is directly involved in the teams that implement JETRO's Japan service robotics business development projects and JETRO's Monozukuri program, a series of seminars focused on Japanese manufacturing philosophies for engineers in North American technology companies.

*Details will be announced on the JASM website.*

*Please thank our members with your support!*

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Minneapolis Japanese School  
Minneapolis Institute of Art  
Minnesota Orchestra  
NDSU-Emily Reynolds Historic Costume Collection  
U of MN Dept. of Asian Languages and Literatures, Japanese Language Program  
Winona State Univ. Global Studies Dept.

## Corporate Membership Spotlight: Daikin Applied



JASM's Corporate Membership Spotlight shines on Daikin Applied for the month of June!

“Daikin Applied designs and manufactures technologically advanced commercial HVAC systems for customers around the world. Customers turn to us with confidence that they will experience outstanding performance, reliability, and energy efficiency. Daikin branded products, solutions, and services are sold through a global network of dedicated sales, service, and parts offices.”

Our key contact at Daikin Applied is Ms. Sayuri Testa.

JASM is proud and thankful to have Daikin Applied as a Corporate Benefactor member. Their commitment to quality products, environmental stewardship and continued investment in Minnesota makes them a standout company amongst their peers both locally and worldwide.

## Harukaze Spotlight: Asako Hirabayashi

Johann Sebastian Bach, George Wagenseil, these two great baroque composers have one thing in common with Asako Hirabayashi. They both composed pieces for four harpsichords and strings. In the history of music, only these three composers created works with this instrumentation. The following is a retelling of Asako Hirabayashi's path to this achievement and more.



*Asako Hirabayashi*

Asako Hirabayashi has been passionate about music since her early childhood. She started playing piano and composing at age seven. She has always wanted to be a pianist who plays her own compositions. Her favorite recording was Horowitz playing Scarlatti and Scriabin. When she was in high school she realized that her hands were too small to play Liszt. This meant that competing with her male counterparts would have been too hard. So, instead of following a performance path, she chose to graduate as a composition major in Japan.

However, the desire to become a performer never left her. As the harpsichord was starting to be introduced in Japan she attended a recital performed by Eiji Hashimoto. He played Scarlatti on a harpsichord and she was very impressed and fascinated by the sound effect of the instrument. Since the keys on a harpsichord are smaller than the piano's, she was able to reach them more easily. Additionally, the harpsichord was rare at the time and she wanted to play an instrument that was not played by many people.

She moved to Minnesota in 2001 and performed with Margaret Humphrey in many concerts. They officially decided to start the duo "Cerulean Fire" in 2012. Their mission is to provide the highest quality of music as well as increase the general public's awareness and appreciation of concerts with historical instruments.

Asako has been a member of JASM since she moved to Minnesota. As a member she has been participating, volunteering, performing, and coordinating at our events. Her friend Eiji Ikeda, a violist of the Minnesota Orchestra, started the Chamber Music series at the University Club decades ago. He started to collaborate with Sogetsu Ikebana Group and produced a "Music and Flower" show every spring until he retired and moved to the West Coast in 2014. He asked Asako to take over this spring show and ever since, she has worked to put together this collaborative event.

Asako's *Concerto for Four Harpsichords and Strings* (2010) was commissioned by Asako's friends and colleagues of the Le Musique Nomade (four harpsichordists ensemble) and Bemidji State University. It was premiered at Bemidji State University and became one of the Le Musique Nomade's regular repertoire.

Asako's composition that will debut at Harukaze is a new version of the same piece.

Asako Hirabayashi is helping to spread the word about Japanese culture through a unique event that combines two senses: sight and hearing. We are very proud and grateful to count Asako as a member of JASM. We look forward to enjoying the Harukaze Concert that she helped put together, and we hope you are too.

## Kennedy High School Fosters Japanese Pen Pals

In the digital age, one might assume that the pen pal, a correspondent known only through exchanged letters, would be a distant memory of a less developed time. Many students might scoff at the idea of writing letters to unknown persons; and yet, students at Kennedy High School in Bloomington are discovering the immense joy of having a pen pal, especially one in a different country.

In the Japanese language class taught by Frances Bressman-Egan, the pen pal project is an essential aspect of student study; by taking the time to craft a handwritten letter to a student in Japan, the students not only get valuable writing practice, but an opportunity to share elements of their own culture while learning about Japan in a tangible way. Toshishige Yamasaki, the Japan based high school English teacher who started the pen pal project, describes the "human warmth" conveyed by the letters that are painstakingly written by students who are still undertaking the daunting task of learning a new language. The time, effort and difficulty involved in the process is all imbued into the final product: a short letter written from one student to another in an attempt to learn and understand the other's life despite the great distance that lies between their worlds.

Frances Bressman-Egan is a JASM member who has routinely trained teams to participate in J-Quiz and whose dedication to the construction of bridges between the U.S. and Japan is unwavering. Through her efforts with her students, Ms. Bressman-Egan continues to foster interest in Japan. Furthermore, by participating in the pen pal project, she enables students, both American and Japanese, to form a lasting and powerful bond through the study of a foreign language.



*A Kennedy High School student with a letter she received from Japan*

To learn more about these students, check out this article by the Star Tribune: <http://www.startribune.com/bloomington-students-find-handwritten-letters-make-heartfelt-link-with-japanese-peers/481312171/>

## 月例日本人会のお知らせ

毎月日本語図書館で日本人会の昼食会（Monthly Nihonjin-kai）を行っています。電話などでお誘い合わせの上、お友達やお知り合いと一緒においで下さい。可能の方はどうぞ料理を1品ご持参願います。ミネソタ州在住の日本人達で良い事を考え、ご馳走と日本語で楽しい時間を持ちましょう。

日程：毎月第2月曜日正午より

場所：日本語図書館

(4231 Bloomington Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55407)

また、毎週土曜日午後2時から、日本語図書館のお手伝いして下さる方の集まりがあります。是非ご参加ください。この図書館には、漫画や宗教誌約2500冊や約2500本のビデオDVDがあり、希望者にはセルフサービスで日本人会と同じく無料で貸出しています。お問い合わせは下記までどうぞ。

Yoko Breckenridge

Cell phone: (612) 839-0008

E-mail: Yoko@yoko4home.com

Nihonjin-kai monthly meeting on 2nd Monday, at noon.

4231 Bloomington Ave S Minneapolis, MN 55407

## Daikin Applied Expands MN Operations

Renowned HVAC manufacturer and JASM Corporate Benefactor member Daikin Applied is currently planning to open a cutting-edge plant in southern Minnesota. The new plant will be located in the city of Faribault and aims to open in 2019. Daikin currently operates two facilities in Minnesota: one in Faribault and another in Owatonna. Having been in Faribault for over 50 years, Daikin Applied is significantly invested in the community.

There are approximately 900 people employed by Daikin Applied in southern Minnesota. Will Fort, president and general manager of the Minnesota plants, noted the “highly skilled people in the plants, expert product design and marketing teams in our Plymouth headquarters” have served as a significant factor in Daikin’s decision to continue operations in Minnesota.

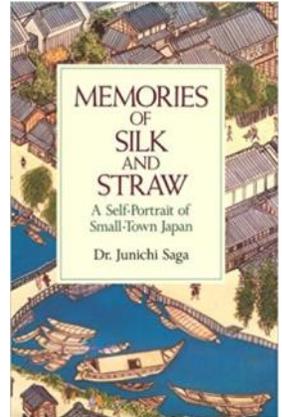
Furthermore, Matt Alexejun, senior director of human resources for manufacturing mentioned that “we know that our company only grows when our people grow.” As a result, Daikin Applied will “extend that commitment into the community by offering programs and training opportunities at local high schools and colleges.” JASM is incredibly proud to receive the support of Daikin Applied, a company that has showcased its commitment to Minnesota time and time again. We wish Daikin Applied continued success as the work on their new plant progresses and culminates in an efficacious opening!



## Tom Haeg’s Book Review:

“*Memories of Silk and Straw*”; Dr. Junichi Saga, Kodansha International, 1990; 258 pages.

Over several years, internist Dr. Junichi Saga interviewed hundreds of elderly Japanese patients in his hometown of Tsuchiura. His intent was to record and preserve their memories about life in rural Japan just as modernity was gradually eroding their pastoral well-being. But this is no nostalgic flashback. Instead, we learn more about extreme poverty, hunger, child labor, prostitution, disease, homelessness, and these are just a few of the tolerated inconveniences told by Saga’s subjects.



We are reminded that Tsuchiura, although a small and seemingly unremarkable town in Japan, was not unique. There were thousands of Tsuchiuras all over Japan. They represent a Japan finally coming to grips with societal vicissitudes after centuries of isolation. The storytellers tirelessly connect the dotted lines from the shoguns, Meiji Constitution, Imperial Japan, World War II, and Allied Occupation.

The book’s first printing was in Japanese titled “Tsuchiura no sato” (“My Hometown Tsuchiura”). However, when the author arranged for it to be translated into English, he changed the title because “...it seemed to me the stories revealed something about modern Japan very little understood by the rest of the world, and perhaps not even the Japanese themselves.” The autobiographical narratives bear witness to familial disruptions, economic uncertainties and political qualms inimitable to an erstwhile Japan and less appreciated by foreign observers.

What I found most refreshing about “Memories” was the unabated truth consistently told by geisha, gangsters, farmers, fishermen, carters, midwives, rice cracker maker, merchants, blacksmiths, the so-called little people, not historians. Their narration exudes a simple authenticity coupled with a seamless and incontrovertible observation of brutal feudal existence.

While “Memories” reads well, with special thanks to the brilliant English translator Gary O. Evans, a few of the stories are somewhat redundant. For example, we can be reminded only so many times re poverty. Otherwise, this documentary, semi-autobiographical non-fiction tome is quite delightful. And don’t just take my word; it was voted Best Book of the Year by Japan’s foreign press.

“Memories” is currently available to JASM members for check out in the JASM Library.

Tom Haeg

## JASM Tour in Japan

I am currently participating in a special tour of Japan sponsored by the Japan America Society of Minnesota (JASM) and the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts. Since I'm traveling with my notebook and don't have access to my home computer, the format for this month's article will be a bit different.

Twenty three of us gathered at Fukuoka, Kyushu, Japan, on May 18<sup>th</sup> to begin our two-week adventure. The tour was designed to visit traditional pottery studios and explore sites of both ancient and contemporary Japanese architecture. Kyushu is the second largest (and southern) island of Japan. The city of Fukuoka is located at the northern end of the island, facing the Sea of Japan.

Deep green mountains can be viewed in every direction as we travel between them to visit the individual pottery studios where we observe the old-fashioned ceramic artists at work. The potters must have a "fire source" to bake their handmade crafts, which involves a special combination of fire and clay. The pieces we have seen are primarily for Japanese Tea Ceremonies – the large tea cups and bulky plates and bowls that you have probably seen sitting on a shelf somewhere.

I hear 80% of the Japanese population here lives on just 20% of the land. They make their homes on a small portion of flat land at the bottom of the huge mountains near streams.

This place holds many memories for me. We arrived on this very shore from Manchuria as "HIKIAGESHA" (war refugees) aboard a US Cargo ship in the fall of 1947 when I was just 12 years old. I still remember there were many jelly fish floating in the sea water. All of us passengers had tears in our eyes as we saw Japanese land getting closer and closer.

This return visit as part of the tour group under JASM Director Ben van Lierop's *expert guidance*, has been a much happier experience. Our group traveled by chartered bus to the bottom of the mountain where we enjoyed watching the gifted Japanese Potters in action. We have also been visiting museums, staying in first-class hotels and toured a famous Japanese Garden.

As I write this article, we are staying at the "Hotel Granvia in Kyoto," waiting for the morning bullet train ride to Tokyo to tour more museums.

For me personally, this tour has been the easiest trip to Japan I've ever made in the past 55 years! (And that includes dozens of trips). Everything has been very clean and well-organized. We have been well-fed and are thoroughly enjoying each other's company!



**Yoko Breckenridge**  
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## New JASM Intern: Daphne Iskos

Hello! I'm Daphne, one of the new event coordinators/ graphic creators here at JASM. I'm a rising sophomore majoring in Japanese and minoring in linguistics at Macalester College. My interest in Japan stems from my fascination with the Japanese language. I hope to expand my knowledge of Japanese culture through the fulfillment of the duties I will complete in the course of my internship. I look forward to playing an active role in the JASM community. よろしくお願ひします!



*Daphne Iskos*

## New JASM Intern: Romain Jousot

Hello, my name is Romain. I am one of the two Event Coordinators and Graphic Designers here at JASM. I got in touch with Japan about 10 years ago when a Japanese exchange student came to my university back in France. He taught me many things related to Japan. I worked for about 5 years in the hospitality industry in many countries (UK, France, NZ, Australia, Japan). I love working with people/ guests and helping them have the best experience. Bridging the two cultures by making people aware of their differences and similarities is where I align with JASM. A perfect fit!



*Romain Jousot*

# Advertise in the Tsushin!

## Advertisement Rates

Style	Size	Cost/issue
1/4 page	5 x 3.5 in	\$50.00
1/2 page	5 x 7.5 in	\$90.00
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Classified	80 character line	\$10/ line (min. 2 lines)

Ad production and design available in both Japanese and English for an additional charge. Deadline for completed ads and classifieds is the 20th of every month.

*Advertisements are 10% off for JASM Members  
A one year Ad subscription guarantees one month for free!*

**Questions? Contact  
the JASM Office  
Tel: 612-627-9357**

## Japan America Society Calendar

### June

**Harukaze Concert 2018, Sunday June 10**

\*If you would like to let JASM know about an upcoming event, email us at [jasm.interns@gmail.com](mailto:jasm.interns@gmail.com)

## Japanese Speaking Club

The Japanese Speaking Club is an informal meeting place for those wishing to practice Japanese.

We encourage those just beginning the language as well as native speakers to gather at **Corner Coffee** in Uptown, Minneapolis to meet new people, discuss experiences in Japan, or simply to speak Japanese.

Come when you can, leave when you must.



**Date/Time:** Every Saturday at 3:00 p.m.  
(however, most people do not show up until 3:30)

**Place:** Corner Coffee  
1414 W 28th St, Minneapolis, MN 55408

## Rainy Season in Japan

The early June arrival of the Tsuyu or the rainy season should bring lots of wet weather to Japan in the next few weeks. Tsuyu (梅雨), also known as plum rain for the fruits that bloom alongside the rains, is caused by the combination of cold northern winds and warm southern winds. The resulting meteorological pattern produces abundant rains. In the Kanto region, the rainy season typically starts on June 6th and ends on July 20th. The Kansai region sees the beginning of the rainy season on June 6th with the end on July 19th. Whether you're in Japan or the United States, try to enjoy the rain when it falls but do your best to stay dry!



Image Courtesy: [Keromi Keroyama](#) used under the [Creative Commons License](#)

## Become a JASM Member online!

*Support our mission and become a member!*

1. Go to [mn-japan.org](http://mn-japan.org)
2. Click on 'Membership' at the top
3. Select your membership type and read the benefits and instructions.

You can also become a member using your smart phone!

## Japan America Society of Minnesota

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Name (2nd adult of a household membership) \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please make checks payable to JASM)

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(2 adults plus children under 18)	

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# Japan America Society of Minnesota



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## 通信

Tsūshin  
June 2018

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

*(Please report any inaccuracies you find in this publication to [jasm.interns@gmail.com](mailto:jasm.interns@gmail.com))*

## 2018 Japan Tour and a Preview of Harukaze!

