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Club Activities

Toyohashi Tech Jazz Club

Either you love jazz or it grates on you. There is no question where the sentiments of TUT's 30-member Jazz Club lie, for most of them also belong to the university's Popular Music Club, so playing jazz means doing double duty for the music they enjoy. They meet for three hours a week and form groups to practice and play live sessions in the clubroom in front of club members and visiting international student fans of jazz. To give everyone a chance to play, the musicians change according to the pieces being played. Music is chosen from The Jazz Standard Bible, which contains many popular jazz numbers.

"We also give live performances in bars in the city," says Ruyma Itabashi, leader of the club and a third year student studying chemistry. "Though the audiences are small, it is still a great experience to perform live like that."

All types of jazz are played, so the range of instrument used is also varied and includes wood and electric bass, saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, guitars and drums. "The club only has a few of its own instruments, and most members end up buying their own," says Itabashi. "Prices range from around 50,000 Yen to as high as 300,000 Yen. My guitar cost 200,000 Yen."

Itabashi began playing the guitar at junior high school and over time taught himself to play instrumental pieces then some jazz numbers. He also intends to keep playing after graduating.

"I like jazz because it is creative and you can improvise," Itabashi explains. "You can add your own interpretation to a piece, whereas with rock music, you play according to the sheet music."

Itabashi says playing together with other members and getting feedback helps each of them to better understand the theory of music, as well as how to improvise. Jazz, he adds, is nothing if not creative?

