



Jesse Ryan Fisher

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

March 11, 2017



Celebrating Jesse Ryan Fisher

Jesse was born June 8, 1987 in New York Hospital in Manhattan. He was premature by more than eight weeks, and was expected to spend two months in the neonatal intensive care unit. Instead, he surprised his parents (again) by meeting the medical criteria for discharge after only 11 days.

His first home was a music studio in downtown Brooklyn. Jesse's parents, David Fisher and Jan Ryan, were typical young New Yorkers who worked professional jobs while nurturing shared musical and cultural interests. Outings for the threesome grew to include museum visits, walks in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and across the Brooklyn Bridge, live music at local restaurants, the Ringling Brothers Circus, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and even a city council meeting.

So how did Jesse come to grow up on Maui? The family had to leave their neighborhood in Brooklyn when it was torn down for an urban redevelopment project. Most of the residents and businesses relocated elsewhere in New York, but Jesse's family was ready for someplace greener. In 1988, they celebrated Christmas on Maui with David's brother Guy. Jesse, 18 months old, had a thrilling encounter with Uncle Guy's puppy and worked his charm on many new people. The natural beauty and kindly spirit of the island felt right, and Jan and David made the decision to move to Maui.

In the spring of 1989, David and Jan called in the movers, sent Nimby the cat ahead to start her quarantine, packed up their station wagon, and headed west with Jesse in his car seat. They took a meandering, scenic route, staying with relatives and friends along the



June 8, 1987–January 17, 2017

way. In San Francisco, they put the station wagon on a boat and themselves on a plane, arriving just before Jesse's second birthday.

On Maui, the family circle grew to include other children and their parents. Among the first were Denise (who babysat for Jesse) and her son, Scott, who was also two. There were neighbor girls who didn't mind playing with a younger kid, and classmates from Montessori preschool. Guests at Jesse's fourth birthday party included Christian, Levi, and others who remained close in later years. His circle of friends widened further at Haiku Elementary School. It was there that he got his first theatrical part, as the lead in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

At Kalama Intermediate School, Jesse joined the band program. He loved playing saxophone and was never more at home than when hanging with friends in the Kalama band room. Outside of school, he

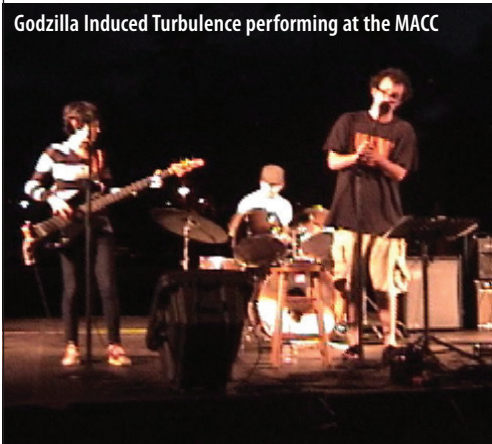
joined a precociously good rock band led by Bryan. From then on, there was usually a band in his life.

When it came time for Jesse to go to high school, the natural sequel would have been to attend King Kekaulike High School. However, a large contingent of Jesse's friends from Kalama, including the talented and charismatic Ginger and Marikah, chose Baldwin High School instead, in order to participate in its vibrant theater program established by Sue Anne Loudon. Jesse chose Baldwin for the same reasons. It was his first significant life decision that was largely self-directed.

During his four years at Baldwin, Jesse was deeply involved in Baldwin Theater Guild and took part in most of its productions. He played musical roles in *The Wiz* (Lion), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Naphtali), *Grease* (Roger), and *Hibiscus Pomade*. He played in a teenage band called The Bipolar Express, and in two mixed-age bands, The Wailuku Garage Band and Island Schmyland, with his parents and their contemporaries. Later bands were Godzilla Induced Turbulence and Evil Whale Eye. He also kept up with his coursework.

Around junior year of high school, he once again chose his own unique direction. He did not pursue a theatrical career (although he later acted in Bryan's first fulllength movie, and in the Maui Onstage production of *Sweeney Todd*), but he also rejected the default option of applying to a roster of liberal arts colleges in pursuit of acceptance at a prestigious one with good financial aid. Jesse liked the idea of a broad education, but saw the expense of a private college as unconscionable, especially if it involved

Godzilla Induced Turbulence performing at the MACC



Jesse with his parents, Jan and David

With the puppet from *The Emperor and the Nightingale*.



taking on a large debt. His solution was to live at home, get an Associate of Arts degree from Maui Community College and defer specialization until the last two years of college.

The summer after graduating from high school, Jesse took part in a two-week exchange program with a homestay on Okinawa. Taking Japanese in high school had been a nod toward building a resume for college, but the program changed that mindset. He came back with a *sanshin* (an Okinawan three-stringed instrument), an epic volume of photos, and a passion for all things Japanese. He joined the Obon ensemble at Rinza Zen Mission in Paia where he received sanshin instruction from Norman Kaneshiro.

At MCC, Jesse sought out Japanese students who had come to Maui to study, finding common ground with them at Kumu Keli'i Tau'a's Hawaiian culture classes at the Maui Language Institute, where he played ukulele. Jesse also found inspiration in his Japanese teacher, Hiroko DeLeon, who encouraged him to spend his junior year abroad at Konan University in Kobe. In addition to contacts with faculty and students, he lived with two different host families and studied with a famous calligrapher. He also met and fell in love with a spirited young woman. He enrolled at University of Hawai'i at Manoa upon his return, having already completed much of the basic coursework for a Japanese language major.

Graduating in 2009, Jesse faced the uncertainties of an economic recession as well as his own questions about how to harness his interests to a viable career. He tried a number of different jobs and locations. He was accepted as an assistant language teacher in the Japan Exchange

Teaching program, which took him to the remote island of Tsushima. He found he enjoyed teaching young children and was proud to introduce them to elements of his own culture. He was earning enough to travel often within Japan, and to Korea and Europe as well. He continued to make friends, old and young, Japanese and foreign, and of course, he joined a band and performed with a community theater group.

After his return to Maui, Jesse visited some longstanding friends to see how they were doing with their new locations and new choices. He explored moving to New York City, Portland, Seattle or Colorado. Back on Maui, he apprenticed in permaculture and put his new skills to work on his family's land. He also got his one and only professional acting job, touring most of the elementary schools in the state as a puppeteer in Maui Academy of Performing Art's production of *The Emperor and the Nightingale*.

Next, he took another turn as an English teacher in Asia, this time with preschoolers in Taiwan, where his friend Nick was breaking into filmmaking. Jesse's Taiwan experience was overshadowed by a devastating illness that sent Nick to the DC area for expert treatment. Jesse returned to Maui and started substitute teaching in the public schools and saving up for another foreign adventure.

This time he knew he wanted to be in Japan, and he found his opportunity as an assistant language teacher with Interac in Hikone, starting in March of 2016. There he made new friends and rejoined old ones in Kyoto, Osaka and elsewhere in Japan. He even visited friends in Sendai. By January of 2017, his financial situation and prospects were looking up. Hikone, with its famous



With Kali and their sanshins



In a kimono fashion show



At a wedding in Nagoya



Giving thanks for lunch

scenic castle and beautiful temples, was beginning to reveal itself as an ideal place to live, and he was beginning to hope he could meet "the right woman" even without moving to a big city. In the last of his near-weekly video calls with his parents, he was ebullient, full of good news about his recent activities, and delighted by the record-setting snowfall Hikone had received. The next day, rather than test his limited snow-driving skills, he walked to and from work and posted lovely photos of white covered landscapes and children playing. In the early hours of the following morning, Jesse passed away in his sleep from a previously unsuspected heart condition.

All who knew Jesse will cherish the memory of his freshness and spontaneity as a songwriter, performer and teacher, and his unfailing warmth and good cheer as a friend. ∞

Organ Prelude

Conch blowing and Bell Tolling

Chant from the Kumulipo (Hawaiian Creation Chant)

The Rev. John Hau'oli Tomoso

See text on the pages following the service.

Opening hymn – 482 Lord of all hopefulness

1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,

whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could des - troy,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace,
whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm,

be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,
be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,
be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,
be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,

your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Celebrant

I am Resurrection and I am Life, says the Lord.

Whoever has faith in me shall have life,
even though he die.

And everyone who has life,
and has committed himself to me in faith,
shall not die for ever.

For none of us has life in himself,
and none becomes his own master when he dies.

For if we have life, we are alive in the Lord,
and if we die, we die in the Lord.

So, then, whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's possession.

The Lord be with you.

People

And also with you.

Celebrant

Let us pray.

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our brother Jesse. We thank you for giving *him* to us, *his* family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding: Deal graciously with Jan, David, and all Jesse's family and friends in *their* grief. Surround *them* with your love, that *they* may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reading from the Old Testament, Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

Musical Offering - Sensei Norman Kaneshiro

Title: The Scent of Plum Blossoms (Ume no Kaori)

The spring blossoms are in full bloom in the fields and mountains.

All the different flowers, how beautiful they are!

○春は花盛り野にも山にも咲いており 色々の花が咲いている美しいことよ!

Every morning and evening I water, wondering when my plum blossoms will perform their seasonal debut.

朝夕水をかけて育てている梅の花が咲く季節はいつくるのだろうか

Will the wild mountain plum blossoms wait to bloom?

Will the ones I am growing never bloom?

○奥山の花も時期を待つて咲くのだ 育てている梅も咲かないでいられようか

Every morning and evening I water, for the scent of the first plum blossom is the most lovely of all!

朝夕水をかけて育てている梅が咲いている初花の香りが愛しいことよ!

Reading from the New Testament, Revelation 21:1-7

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

Hymn - 669 Commit thou all that grieves thee

1. Com - mit thou all that grieves thee And fills thy heart with care
2. The Lord must be thy ref - uge If thou wouldst feel se - cure;
3. Thy lov - ing heart so faith - ful, O Fa - ther, know-eth well
4. Hope on, then, weak be - liev - er, In troub - le un - dis-mayed;

To Him whose might and glo - ry The star - ry skies de - clare.
His work must thou con - sid - er If thine is to en - dure.
The needs of all Thy chil - dren Who in Thy shad - ow dwell.
The gloom - y night is wan - ing, Thy fears shall be al - layed.

He shows the winds their cours - es And points the clouds their way;
No prof - it will it yield thee To pine in grief and care;
And what Thy wis - dom choos - eth Thy might will sure - ly do;
Pos - sess thy soul in pa - tience, Be firm in God's em - ploy,

... hymn continues on next page

Will He not guide thy foot - steps And be thy staff and stay?
 But God will lend His bless - ing In an - swer to thy prayer.
 Ac - cord - ing to Thy coun - sel Wilt Thou Thy work pur - sue.
 And thou in ra - diant beau - ty Shalt see the Sun of joy.

Reflections - Rev. Keith McCrary

The Gift of Jesse – Jan Ryan and David Fisher

Homily – The Rev. Heather Mueller

Hymn - Sleepers Wake

1 "Sleep - ers, wake!" A voice a - stounds us, the
 2 Zi - on hears the watch - men sing - ing; her
 3 Lamb of God, the heavens a - dore you; let

shout of ram - part - guards sur - rounds us: "A -
 heart with joy - ful hope is spring - ing, she
 saints and an - gels sing be - fore you, as

wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, a - rise!" Mid - night's peace their
 wakes and hur - ries through the night. Forth he comes, her
 harps and cym - bals swell the sound. Twelve great pearls, the

... hymn continues on next page

cry has bro - ken, their ur - gent sum - mons clear - ly spo -
 Bride - groom glo - rious in strength of grace, in truth vic - to -
 ci - ty's por - tals: through them we stream to join the im - mor -

ken: "The time has come, O maid - ens wisel
 rious: her star is risen, her light grows bright.
 tals as we with joy your throne sur - round.

Rise up, and give us light; the Bride - groom is in
 Now come, most wor - thy Lord, God's Son, In - car - nate
 No eye has known the sight, no ear heard such de -

sight. Al - le - lu - ia! Your lamps pre - pare and
 Word, Al - le - lu - ia! We fol - low all and
 light: Al - le - lu - ia! There - fore we sing to

has - ten there, that you the wed - ding feast may share."
 heed your call to come in - to the ban - quet hall.
 greet our King; for ev - er let our prais - es ring.

Prayers of the People – The Rev. John Hau’oli Tomoso

For our brother Jesse, let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ who said, “I am Resurrection and I am Life.”

Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress; draw near to us who mourn for Jesse, and dry the tears of those who weep.

Hear us Lord

You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend; comfort us in our sorrow.

Hear us Lord

You raised the dead to life; give to our brother eternal life.

Hear us Lord

You promised paradise to the thief who repented; bring our brother to the joys of heaven.

Hear us Lord

Comfort us in our sorrows at the death of our brother; let our faith be our consolation, and eternal life our hope.

Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to you our brother Jesse, who was reborn by water and the Spirit in Holy Baptism. Grant that his death may recall to us your victory over death and be an occasion for us to renew our trust in your Father’s love. Give us, we pray, the faith to follow where you have led the way; and where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Father of all, we pray to you for Jesse, and for all those whom we love but see no longer. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May his soul and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

The Commendation

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,
*where sorrow and pain are no more,
neither sighing, but life everlasting.*

You only are immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you ordain when you created me, saying, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant Jesse. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

Amen.

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn - 529 In Christ there is no east or west

1 In Christ there is no East or West, in
2 Join hands, dis - ci - ples of the faith, what-
3 In Christ now meet both East and West, in

3 him no South or North, but one great fel - low -
e'er your race may be! Who serves my Fa - ther
him meet South and North, all Christ - ly souls are

6 ship of love through - out the whole wide earth.
as his child is sure - ly kin to me.
one in him, through - out the whole wide earth.

The musical score is written for three voices (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass) and piano accompaniment. It consists of three systems of music. The first system contains the first three lines of the hymn. The second system contains the next three lines. The third system contains the final three lines. The piano accompaniment is written in the bass clef and provides a harmonic foundation for the vocal parts. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

Organ Postlude

All follow the crucifer to the grave site.

Graveside service is on following page.

The Committal

Song at grave site – E kolu mea nui (Three Great Things)

‘E kolu mea nui ma ka honua	Three great things on earth
‘O ka mana’o’i’o, ka mana’olana	Faith, hope, and love
A me ke aloha, ke aloha kai ‘oi a’e	The greatest is love
Pomaika’i na mea a pau	All things are blessed
Pomaika’i na mea a pau	All things are blessed

Everyone the Father gives to me will come to me;
I will never turn away anyone who believes in me.
He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead
will also give new life to our mortal bodies
through his indwelling Spirit.
My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope.
You will show me the path of life;
In your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God our brother Jesse, and we commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless him and keep him, the Lord make his fact to shine upon him and be gracious to him, the Lord lift up his countenance upon him and give him peace.
Amen.

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever, amen.*

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.
Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
Thanks be to God.