

Jazz Flute Study
Arts Scholars Award Application
Brigid McDonald

Project Description:

For my Arts Scholars Award this past year, I attended the National Flute Convention in Chicago and chose some pieces I could work on that would highlight some things I learned at the convention. There were several workshops on jazz and improvisation, which I tried to incorporate into my project this year, but I found it very difficult. There are many elements of flute playing that are completely different between the jazz and classical styles, and classically-trained flute players have to essentially neglect everything they know about vibrato, tone, and reading music and start from scratch. My flute teacher knows a bit about jazz, but we both thought that I would make more progress learning from a jazz specialist. I decided to remove the jazz component from my third year project and make it into an entirely new project to pursue in my fourth year.

I've spoken with UVA music professor John D'earth who is a jazz trumpet player. He has agreed to give me lessons over the summer on jazz styles and techniques that I can apply to my flute playing. I'll be in Charlottesville for 10 weeks this summer, so hopefully I'll be able to get at least 5 lessons in (though 10 would be ideal). I know Charlottesville has a vibrant live music scene, so I'm hoping to take advantage of this by attending concerts and other jazz performances throughout the summer. Cvillejazz.org is a great resource for event listings, and I know John D'earth's band plays at Millers on the Downtown Mall every week.

At the end of the summer, I'll attend the National Flute Convention again. It's in Washington D.C. this year from August 13-16. Though the program for this year isn't listed yet, last year's convention featured a wide variety of performances, lectures, workshops, and performance opportunities in a range of genres, including jazz. Some jazz events that usually happen every year include a big band jazz flute reading session with Allie Ryerson (open to all participants), an interactive workshop with Project Trio on improvisation and beatbox flute, and a masterclass with Robert Dick. The convention will be a great opportunity for me to meet, hear, and work with some of the best jazz flute players in the world.

To document my progress throughout the summer, I'll make recordings of myself playing a piece or two every two weeks. These will be raw recordings of my playing so that I can genuinely see my improvement. I'll also take notes after each performance I attend in Charlottesville and at the National Flute Convention. In the fall, I'll find some performance opportunities such as open mic nights around Charlottesville or a tea-time recital through the UVA music department. Also in the fall, I'll make recordings of a few more pieces (and/or record my performances) as final outcome recordings. I'll work with an accompanist (or accompanists) to create a more polished, finalized recording as a culmination of my efforts.

Timeline:

Spring semester 2015: incorporate all major and minor scales into my practice, review basic music theory to prepare for lessons

June-August 2015: take jazz lessons with John D'earth (weekly or biweekly), create biweekly recordings to document my progress, attend jazz concerts/live music events in Charlottesville

August 13-16 2015: attend the National Flute Convention in Washington D.C.

Fall semester 2015: work with an accompanist to make some final recordings and perform a few times, continue to work on jazz in my lessons with Kelly Sulick

Spring semester 2015: continue to work on jazz in my lessons with Kelly Sulick, prepare for the presentation of my award

Budget:

\$200 for attending jazz concerts

\$300 for accompanists

\$100 for books/sheet music

\$500 for lessons (assuming 10 lessons at \$50 each - John D'earth hasn't confirmed exact prices with me yet)

Convention fees:

\$50 National Flute Association membership fee (required for attendance)

\$145 convention fee

\$500 for lodging

\$150 for gas money

\$200 for food

Total: \$2145

Participation in the arts:

I'm the first chair flute player and flute section leader in the Wind Ensemble, and I play the piccolo in the Cavalier Marching Band. I've taken lessons with Kelly Sulick for 6 semesters, and I've performed in studio classes and in the music department's Tea Time Recitals. Last year, I took Theory I through the music department. Also, my first year, I played in the pit for the First Year Players production of The Mystery of Edwin Drood. I've found the arts community on grounds to be vibrant and diverse, and I've enjoyed going to the performances and exhibitions of my colleagues both in and out of Arts Scholars.

Outside of UVA, I participated in a weeklong workshop with Project Trio in New York City in summer 2013. I learned to beatbox flute from the inventor of the technique himself, Greg Patillo, and I worked on improvisation, composition, and playing in chamber ensembles. Last summer, I attended the National Flute Convention in Chicago.

Participation in the Arts Scholars Program:

I've been very involved in the Arts Scholars program during my time at UVA. Last fall, I led a collaboration for a piece for the Arts Scholars Showcase in which Julia Rauen and I played a flute duet accompanying Becky Galt's dance. My first year, I volunteered for the Progressive

Performance. Though I haven't held a formal leadership position, I do consider myself a leader in the program. First year, I organized dinners with all the Arts Scholars after class every week. It was a great way for us to get to know each other outside the hour we spent together during class. I attended the seminar in my first two years. Though I haven't been able to attend the seminar this year, I've been working on my third year project throughout the year by learning pieces and rehearsing with my accompanist to make a recording. Arts Scholars has been one of my most important activities at UVA and has truly been influential in shaping my perspective on myself as an artist. I'm very thankful for the opportunity to receive funding to pursue my passion.

Links to current work:

Charanga by Michael Colquhoun: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qUEp-gE2Eo>

Syrinx by Debussy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jYURKAoO5s>

Prokofiev Sonata movement 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jYURKAoO5s>