

My project involved attending the National Flute Association's Annual Convention in Chicago over the summer. My faculty mentor was Kelly Sulick, my private lesson teacher at U.Va. When I returned from the convention, I chose specific pieces that I heard performed there and worked with my teacher on applying what I learned at the convention to my flute playing.

The convention is an event for flute players of all skill levels to gather to perform, socialize, and learn. It's the biggest event of the year for flutists, and my teachers have always recommended that I go to it. However, it is held in a different city around the country each year, and without the generous funding from the Miller Arts Scholars program, I would not be able to attend.

At the convention, I attended various workshops, seminars, and performances, including "Understanding How Our Hands Work to Improve Technique," "The Telemann Fantasias and How to Bring Them Alive on the Modern Flute," "Realizing a Far-Out Musical Dream: Robert Dick Plays Jimi Hendrix," "The Scientific Method of Practicing," and "Learning Jazz as a Classical Flutist." I also got to see Sir James Galway, a world-renowned flutist, perform in concert, and I attended an interactive workshop with beatbox flutist Greg Patillo. Throughout the four days, I filled my program booklet with notes from each of these events, writing down advice from lecturers and performers and keeping a list of pieces I might want to learn. The convention was an incredible experience that exposed me to so many different styles of playing the flute and allowed me to interact with some of the greatest flute players in the world.

When I returned back to U.Va., my teacher and I spoke about what pieces I might want to work on and how I would proceed to demonstrate what I learned at the convention. We decided that my first piece would be the Taktakishvili Sonata, which I heard in an incredible performance by Irina Stachinskaya. The Taktakishvili Sonata was a very long, challenging piece with many character changes. I worked on making different sections of the piece sound distinct by changing my playing style to fit the different moods. My teacher's style isn't to tell me how I should play a piece but rather to guide me in making musical decisions for each piece I play. She would ask me "What is the character in this line?" and I would have to decide what I thought it was and how I was going to portray it through my playing. Even though the notes of the piece were difficult, figuring out the intricacies in character that the composer was trying to portray was the greatest challenge I faced in this piece.

I also decided to learn the Telemann Fantasia #12 after hearing a recital of all twelve fantasias by Elizabeth Walker. The Telemann Fantasias are short pieces and are not necessarily difficult in terms of learning the notes, but learning how to play the traditional Baroque style on the modern flute can be challenging. One key difference is that Baroque flutists did not use vibrato. They included trills and other ornaments to enhance their sound instead. Another challenge I faced in the particular fantasia I chose was jumping quickly between large note intervals. When you play the flute, you have to adjust your embouchure slightly for every different pitch to keep the sound consistent. This is something you learn to do subconsciously for closely-spaced notes, but it takes a lot of practice to get notes to speak when they switch over large intervals, especially jumping from the middle register to very low notes. It's also more difficult the faster the notes are. My teacher gave me several exercises to help with this, including long tones over intervals spanning wider than an octave. Once I could do those, the piece was much easier.

I had planned on starting to learn to play jazz flute after hearing an incredible concert by jazz flutist Nancy Stagnitta. This genre is also widely different from classical music; Nancy Stagnitta's advice was not to think of how to play jazz on the classical flute but to think of

yourself as playing a completely different instrument when you play jazz. The style is so different that your general approach to playing the instrument needs to change. As I tried learning some basic elements of jazz, I realized how complex the genre is and how much there is to learn. I decided that instead of including the jazz element in my project this year, I could expand it and make it into an entirely separate project to pursue in the upcoming year.

At the end of the year, I recorded the Taktakishvili Sonata and the Telemann Fantasia.

Examples of my work can be found on my YouTube page at the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7e-DrI-ICB8>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctBPffQH_AQ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGf545C8Ggk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWEhvkvSefg>

I'd like to thank the donors of the Miller Arts Scholars program who provided me with the funds to go on this incredible trip. Attending the convention was a fun and educational experience, and I'm a better flute player because I went.