

“There are four major careers in music,” my clarinet teacher said. “You can be an educator, performer, composer, or conductor. Most serious musicians can do two or three if you are lucky, but you don’t want to do four of those.” This idea has sat in the back of my mind since my freshman year in college; I wanted to figure out which of the four would I be. This same professor also stressed the importance of being a diverse musician. I needed to make sure throughout my career that I could offer more than one talent as a musician; how else could I stand out in a pile of 250 applicants for a job?

I knew from an early age that I wanted to teach, but I had no idea where my other interests in music would fit into the picture. I began playing the clarinet when I was ten years old. I took up other instruments as time progressed and began composing at the age of sixteen. What first was a hobby became slowly my first love as a musician. However the clarinet still remains a large part of my life. I found my three niches: composer, educator and performer.

As an undergraduate, I was a member of the Wind Ensemble, Orchestra, and played in a woodwind quintet. I not only paid attention to my own parts, but I listened for what others played. I made note of who was playing with whom and utilized the combinations I liked. The best composers are also performers because they have an understanding of how the ensembles for which they write work. I also find it a good way to connect with other performers and develop relationships for collaboration.

I plan to continue performing as long as I can. I am in the New Music Ensemble while pursuing my masters and plan to participate in community music groups afterwards. I hope to be known as a performer as well as a composer when I become a faculty

member. This would also help foster a good relationship with my fellow colleagues; they would be more likely to perform my music if they know I can work well with others.

As a composer I plan to continue writing until the day I die. My passion for composing has only fueled my wish to not only be a composer, but also to make a contribution to musical society. I love rock music, and want to combine rock elements into classical music. I think this will be one way of bringing the public back to classical music concerts. Some composers forget that music was written in the past for specific people other than themselves; isn't it much more meaningful to write something that creates excitement in the audience?

I will help my future students get their foot in the door by setting up a local commissioning project; I participated in something like this as an undergraduate. My students will also become aware of local organizations that will help establish themselves.

I still keep what my clarinet teacher said in the back of my mind. While I do not want to be a "jack of all trades," I want to keep myself as diverse a musician as possible. Being a musician is more than just research in one area. It is about being the complete artist.