

Word Count: 1000

Prompt: What role has music played in your life to date? How have your past experiences in music influenced your future goals and plans?

I first began composing after learning the basics of music theory from a middle school Music Technology class. From 2002 to 2006, I studied music theory and composition at Excellus Music School with Dr. Randy Norton. I continued my compositional studies at Latin College, under Professor Martina Andrews for 20th century compositional techniques and electronic music, and under Professor Anna Pratt for my senior honors thesis. I also took courses in music theory, music history, ethnomusicology, medieval cantors, contemporary opera, "Uptown"/atonal music, and the intersection of neuroscience, psychology, and music. Studying abroad at the University of Edinburgh my junior year, I learned more music theory, including fugal theory and composition, and orchestration techniques. For my senior honors thesis, "Little Notes," I composed a thirteen-movement song cycle using a transposable mode I constructed around a fully diminished seventh and an augmented triad. Scored for two sopranos, chamber ensemble, and electronics, "Little Notes" was performed and recorded in April of 2010, and I subsequently defended it successfully to receive Honors in the Music major.

In addition to my academic music experiences, I also have a substantial background of performance and music-related employment. As an undergraduate at Latin College, I studied viola with Amelia Majors and Anita Smith. I also studied the viola da gamba with renowned gambist Carly Jefferson, and taught myself the rudiments of the theremin for inclusion in my senior thesis recital. I performed in several different ensembles, holding officer positions in the Latin College Orchestra (Treasurer 2009-2010) and the Chamber Music Society (Librarian 2007-2009, Co-President 2009-2010). My music employment experiences include working as a Music Assistant at the Excellus Summer Arts Program from 2006-2008, and working at the Composers Conference and Chamber Music Center the summers of 2007-2010. While I may have attended a liberal arts college, rather than a conservatory, for my undergraduate degree, music has still been a tremendously important part of my life to date.

The primary objective I hope to achieve in the course of obtaining a MM in Composition from Longy School of Music is the expansion of my compositional knowledge and abilities. I want to learn about instruments I do not play in such depth that I will feel comfortable writing absolutely anything and everything for them. I also plan to explore and develop my interest in music for film and dance, and in music as one part of a collaborative work of art. As a student at Longy, I would welcome the

opportunity to study with Jeremy Van Buskirk to finesse and enhance my skills with computer and electroacoustic music.

Another goal that is important to me as I pursue graduate studies is to be involved in the performance of new music, both works by other composers and my own compositions. While studying abroad at the University of Edinburgh, I participated in the Edinburgh University Composers' Orchestra, a musical group devoted to playing and performing works by living composers, especially those by fellow students. As a senior at Latin College, I played viola in a friend's senior thesis performance. Both of these experiences were more fulfilling for me than any other concerts I played in during that time period, because not only did I have the opportunity to play music I had never played before, but I saw how rewarding it was for the composer to hear her (or his) music performed and recorded. When I began my own senior thesis, I knew that I would have to manage the compositional demands of a thirteen-movement song cycle, written for whatever combination of instruments I was able to procure. The reality, however, of getting that piece to the concert, from recruiting students interested enough in the project to give up valuable midterms study time to organizing rehearsals and dealing with last-minute performer drop-outs and changes, was both more challenging and more invigorating than I had anticipated. The growth I sustained as a composer and musician from that experience alone has made me eager for more opportunities to get my music performed. Because of Longy's reputation for excellence in performance and all aspects of music, I hope to be able to find fellow students who would be interested in performing my compositions, and I hope to have the opportunity, in turn, to play the compositions of my fellow students.

One other goal I hope to realize through an MM in Composition at Longy connects both my passion for music and my liberal arts background: the exploration of the ways I can use my extramusical knowledge in my compositions. The final music seminar I took at Latin College delved into the intricacies of the relationship between performer and material. My background in social psychology, as well as my interest in the work of John Cage and aleatoric compositional techniques, has led me further down this path: What are the relationships between performer, audience, and material? How does the experience of listening change in different situations, and what, if anything, can the composer do to control that experience?

During my time at graduate school, I plan to apply for any music assistantship job opportunities that may arise. In an ideal world, after obtaining my MM in composition, I would compose and/or orchestrate music for film and freelance for a few years before pursuing any further degrees; I do also embrace the possibility, however, that, when I graduate in 2014, the job market realities may be such that I instead decide to return to school for further graduate studies in Music. Regardless of what careers I end up exploring, I know that I want composition to be a part of what I do. In

order for that to happen, I need to develop further my abilities as a composer and musician, and increase my experiences of having my own music performed. I believe that my best opportunity for achieving these goals is through the MM in Composition at Longy School of Music.