

# Echo

**Our stories from the 2017-2018  
AAP Music Program at Purchase College**

Written by Jing Chen, Peter Xu, Vivian Yu, and EnYu Zhang

Edited by Alice Jones

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Dear readers,

**F**irst of all, thank you for reading our magazine. We are so glad that you can read it. It involves several essays that we have written during this semester. The experience of studying in America is unforgettable, so we made this magazine to commemorate our learning experience. In the magazine, you can see what we learned and what we were thinking.

This is the first time we came to America, and we experienced several new things which we never met in our own country: learning about a new classroom culture, interacting directly with our professors, being expected to do teamwork, participating in class, listening to unfamiliar music, seeing different audience members' behaviors at concerts, experiencing subway delays, being in the suburbs, trying new food (that was sometimes terrible), and hearing many languages besides Chinese (English, Spanish, Korean, Cantonese).

In the AAP Program, our professor often let us write essays after we watched shows or went to museums, and she graded us very carefully. Her patience and strictness developed our writing skills a lot. We learned how to write a good introduction and conclusion and how to have a good idea. At first, we did not have ideas about our essays. Our professor told us, "Do not check Google or some other materials," and only by thinking independently could we practice efficiently. We must think by ourselves and use our own experiences to make an essay more interesting.

We have learned different kinds of music: jazz, classical, rap or hip-hop, opera, and new classical music. Some were ones we'd never heard before, so we felt a bit weird at the beginning. We learned that we should appreciate music from different perspectives, since different music has different beauty.

We also learned other things, like how important it is to participate in the class because no one cares about your mistakes. Keep your personality. Be proactive and learn beyond your classroom by going to museums, going to concerts, and seeing new things.

Thank you again for reading our magazine. We hope you like it. Enjoy!

—JC, TX, VY, EZ

## **Uncomplaining Youth in New York**

By Peter Xu

New York is 9,600 miles away from Beijing  
From far away I was longing for you  
I see—  
Someone accomplished both success and fame in a young age  
I see—  
Someone still struggle for his living in the twilight years

Many people come and go, meet and leave  
Some people may be not the people they used to be  
However, in their love, you are still the same.  
You have made many people's dream come true  
You have betrayed many people's passion

Time and time again, I ask myself  
If I really love you  
Time after time, I ask myself  
If I can really leave you

If I have to separate  
Well, say goodbye  
And with gratitude in my heart  
Thank you for giving me a memory





# Differences Between Chinese and American Classroom Culture

By Peter Xu

I have been living in the U.S. for three months since September and have witnessed huge differences among American and Chinese classroom cultures. I am so interested in the differences between Chinese and American education because before I came to Purchase College, I grew up in China and I am still receiving Chinese advanced education. When I first came here, I felt a bit reluctant to join in the class because my professors (music class and American culture class) often asked me a series of questions and some of them were really difficult to answer. At first, I was confused as to why should I answer so many questions in class. After several weeks, I became used to participating in classes and a thought struck me: I should compare the difference of the classroom culture between China and America based on my experience.

## Students and Professors

The relationship between students and professors is quite different between China and America. In China, professors are the most respected person in the classroom. Students are trained to completely obey their professors. If students have a different opinion about a specific topic, although professors may give them a chance to share their opinions, but after that they will still require everyone to write the exact answer they taught on the exam.

When I attended a percussion class in America, I noticed that the professor was very open to discussing ideas with his students. He was also very nice because he treated his students as his friends and he communicated with them equally. His teaching style not only stimulated students' inspiration easily, but also made students feel they were respected by their professor and made them more energetic

in their studies.

What's more, I noticed that in America professors may prefer their students call them by their first names, but in China students can only call faculty members by their last names with a title like Mr. , Ms. , and Dr. To call a teacher by his or her first name is considered rude and inappropriate.

## Classroom participation

Based on my experience, I find that most Chinese students do not always participate in their class. When I was an elementary school student, I was expected to sit in the class quietly, memorize all the knowledge that my teachers taught me, and then paste it on the exam and get a good grade.

When I attended a composition class with some American students, I was shocked by their participation. Almost all the students were eager to express their feelings and opinions and to ask questions. Although sometimes their questions were very profound and difficult to answer, the professor still answered them patiently.

## Examination systems

In my opinion, exams in China are unscientific. They test how well students can memorize the contents of a textbook and key words. However, in America, I saw a lot of exams with open-ended answers. Short answer questions and essays check how much you understand the text and also demonstrate your own meaningful thoughts about the things you have learned in class.

Based on these experiences, I believe that educational methodology decides whether students can break new ground in advanced research. Comparing with the Chinese way of teaching, American higher education emphasizes application of one's knowledge and creation. In America, the teaching methods are more flexible than Chinese teaching methods. Teachers

always pay more attention to help students construct knowledge systems rather than requiring them to be familiar with every detail of the lecture. They encourage students to raise questions, to cultivate an active and harmonious atmosphere and to doubt predecessors' assumptions.

*Participation should be  
the most important thing.*

On the other hand, in China, I think students “learn” knowledge better because they are good at reciting a large number of notes given by their teachers, and they understand the essence of their majors deeply. However, students who can “memorize” knowledge well may not be good at “learning”. Learning means students can use their knowledge in their daily life. Although students in China can do well on all kinds of exams, tests, and quizzes, the exam-based education system in China both increases students’ burdens and deforms students’ knowledge and culture structure. Because they lack interaction and creation for years, students in China lack courage in class and are incapable of independent thought. I can remember clearly when I was attending the composition class, after the professor answered all the questions asked by local students, she asked our four Chinese students if we had any more questions. Unsurprisingly we all said no. At that time the professor was surprised too, and we felt very embarrassed. We did not ask questions not only because we were afraid our English was not good enough to express our ideas clearly, but also, and more importantly, because I think we were afraid of asking a stupid question and making the faculty and students feel uncomfortable. Now I realize that I don’t need to worry about those unimportant matters. Participation should be the most important thing.

## Class Visit

By EnYu Zhang

On November 5th, we visited performance classes at Purchase College Conservatory. In the percussion instrument rehearsals, I was surprised, intrigued, and felt something that disturbed or challenged for me.

When I visited this percussion instrument rehearsal, I saw a classroom with a professor, a conductor, and five students. Before the rehearsal, the five students were practicing. When they were in the class I was surprised because they paid attention not only to rhythm, but also to the melody and sound quality. I think it’s a rare thing to do in percussion instruments, because a lot of percussionists will only pay attention to the rhythm. If the rhythm is right, they will not pay attention to the sound.

The most that let me feel intrigued is they can use anything as an instrument, such as a bicycle, a tin, a pot, a glass bottle, or a bucket. They even used a bucket of water to change the sound of the instrument, and it sounded very harmonious. Maybe some people will ask me why I am intrigued. Before, I saw some new classical concert, the composer will bring a lot of articles for daily use as a musical instrument, the articles for daily use and other instruments play together, I’m curious musicians will feel not adapt in the middle of rehearsal.

After visiting the classes, I think this visit was enlightening to me, and when I compose music, I should be able to focus on innovation and diversity in the process of writing music. I can also use some everyday objects as a source of creation, and make music comes from life.

## Keep Working Hard

By Jing Chen

**T**here is an old story in China about a kid who could write poetry when he was 5 years old. He had not been to school before he was 5 years old. Many people felt amazed and they wanted to get his poems. His father thought if he wrote poetry for people, he could earn money this way. So, his father did not let him go to school but made him go earn money. Many years later, the boy couldn't write anything. He became an ordinary person. This story tells me a person who only has talent without study or hard work will be a mediocre person. Hard work or talent, which one is more important? It's always a question worth considering, no matter what your major is. So, the question is interesting for me.

A talented musician is someone who forms his own style and becomes an essential part of a music. However, I think hard work is the most important thing for musician. Like the Chinese musician Lang Lang. When he was three years old he listened a symphony and he repeat the main melody in the piano. So, his parents find his talent. He began to study piano when he was four years old. From this time, He must play the piano 6 to 8 hours per day. He keep the habit until now. Hard work keep him maintain his performance level. As a musician, if he just has talent without hard practice, he can only be appealing for a short period of time. And, he meet many good teachers in different times, study in famous school. and he kept working hard until now. Every year, he has many concerts in different countries, different cities. So, he is famous around the world now.

I think hard work is very important for me, because I'm not talented like some musicians. And, I think a musician is someone who has their own music style and they can create something that belongs to themselves. Musicians are people who are well known to the public, like Chopin or Beethoven. It's just my opinion. When I was 12 years old, I started to play the piano. But my piano teacher's other students started learning how to play the piano when they were 4 years old. So, I think I began learning the piano too late to make me feel very confident. I only got a short time to learn what they spent many years learning. This will make me have a lot of problems compared to them. So, as an ordinary music learner I must keep hard working to improve my skills.

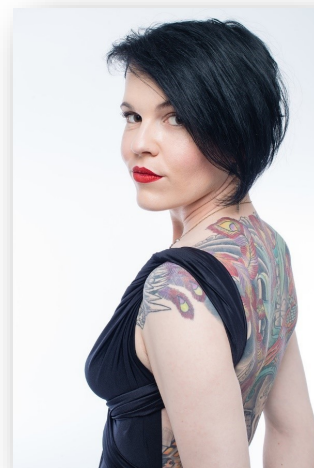
"Success" for me means that I can challenge myself. Through practicing etudes I can improve the strength and flexibility of my fingers. Through playing sonatas can improve my musical performance skill. I can understand the style of a musician. Through practicing concertos, I can improve my ability to work in concert with others. So, when I improve my skills, I can play more different kind of music. So hard work is very important for me. Practice is the best *place* to improve my skill.

## A Good Composer

By EnYu Zhang

W

hitney George is a composer, conductor, multimedia artist, and college professor. Through talking to her, I think we have some things in common. First, Whitney and I began to learn music in childhood. We didn't study composition in childhood, but in the process of learning we fell in love with composition. I think Whitney and I were attracted by the glamour of composition. The second thing we have in common is that we like to write chamber music. Each composer has his or her own creative style. Some people like to write symphonies, and some people like writing solos. I like writing chamber music because chamber music can reflect the characteristics of each instrument. I think the third thing Whitney and I have in common is that we both can conduct an ensemble. She conducts a lot of her own works. At school, I also often conduct some of my own works. I think the composer command conduct his own work. This can make the playing effect conform to the composer's idea.



I think I have some differences with Whitney. Whitney was born in the United States, but I was born in China. Since childhood Whitney accepts the culture is different, so our creative sources may also be different. Whitney has beautiful tattoos, but I don't have any. Her tattoo is cool, and I think tattoo is a part of her artistic expression. Whitney can play the piano, but I can play the violin, so I think her collocation of harmonic effect will be better.

She and I have similar attitudes towards composing. I think composing is what I must do in my life, and Whitney told me she couldn't stop composing—it's her most natural form of artistic expression, and probably some kind of therapy for her. Ever since she was a little girl, she always was very involved in the arts. She immediately took to drawing and coloring and putting extravagant fashion together. When she had the choice to learn an instrument and start performing, she found herself very naturally gravitating to writing music. And she thinks when you're starting out with music, you need to learn a lot! It didn't occur to her that it was something that she was really interested in until she took a music theory class in high school, and she had an assignment to write a fugue. She loved it! And then she wrote another one in her free time...and then quickly became interested in writing for other instruments other than piano and trying to get them performed.

Although we both write classical music, our styles are totally different. She writes new classical music and some film music, but I write classical concert music. I think this is my biggest difference from her, and also I need to learn from her.

In my view, she is a great professor! By listening to her works I think she is the very personality of a composer. In the email conversation I feel she is full of enthusiasm and she'll go out of her way to help you. I know she is very busy, in the email, I asked her, "What about difficulties I face while composing?" She said that now the most difficult thing is to arrange time. Although she is so busy, she promptly responded to my email. I think she really loves music because she

has many jobs related to music. Also, since childhood she never wanted to give up music, so she made music a part of her life. She is very young, but has won many arts awards. Her master's thesis and operatic work, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, was awarded the Lehman Engel Award in 2010. George was named as a John Duffy Composers Institute Fellow for two years running in 2010 and 2011 for her staged works *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *And Thus the Whirligig of Time Brings in His Revenges*. The Robert Starer Award commemorated her multi-movement orchestral work *The Anatomy of the Curiosity Cabinet* in 2011. In 2012 a collection of her chamber works was released in the UK by Blue Tapes on a series of cassettes titled *Blue Nine: Whitney George*. Movements from her recent work completed in 2013, *Night, Like Velvet: In Twelve Letters*, have been selected for performance on various new music festivals since its completion, including the New Music Conflagration series, Hartford Women Composers Festival, AME 10th Annual Awards Night, and more. I think the prizes represent your public approval.

Through the conversation with her, what surprised me most was how she chooses musicians for her chamber orchestra. The most important criteria is not skill and virtuosity. I choose players based on skill and virtuosity, but she said she is always primarily interested in knowing if she can work well with that person. Skill and virtuosity are important, but by no means the most important thing. she really enjoys working with performers who also engage in composition or improvisation in some way. She finds that they are like-minded in the rehearsal process, and especially when working on pieces of her own. If they are working on something of hers, she can take their suggestions and modifications and actually put them into play in real-time. She is always looking for people who are willing to think outside the box and try out different things in rehearsal. And also importantly—loyalty. They are a group of people who are largely together as a labor of love. She thinks no one is there for the paycheck, and that's very important to the dynamics to the group—they are dependent of the level of involvement of all of the “team members” so everyone has to be “all chips in.” Dedication to what they do is incredibly important.

The thing that interests me the most is that she has her own website to sell her work. But why are some scores more expensive than others? She told me the longer a piece is, or the larger the instrumentation, the more it costs. Digital purchases (for people to print on their own) are always less expensive than having the physical ones copied/bound and sent to the buyer. She is very much a one-woman business, so she does all of that stuff herself, saying “I sell anywhere between 1 and 5 pieces a month—really just depends.”

Through the conversation with her, I think our common challenge is time management. In China, the school curriculum very demanding. Sometimes we need write about 8 pieces in one week, so I often can't arrange my time. Whitney is the same. She has many careers, so she says, “I think the biggest hurdle to jump is time management.”

Although I have not met with her in person, only through email conversation, I learned a lot of valuable information. For example, if you want to write a good song, it will take about one year's time. The first thing is to do a plan for your work, through a year of continuous change, so you can write a good work. And, by telling me how to choose players, and letting me know that skill and virtuosity is not the only thing, I learned it's best to be compatible with yourself.

I appreciated that Whitney to replied to my e-mails to share her experiences, and I love her style. I hope to one day meet with her!



## Riverside Music

By EnYu Zhang

Last night, I went to a special concert. I think it was in one of the best concert halls, for this concert hall was on the sea, in the boat. Although last night was very cold, this was my first time to attend a concert on the boat, so I felt very excited! The ship didn't look very big, more like a small bar, but once I entered into the boat, I smelled the woody smell, felt there can accommodate about one hundred people. I heard a Korean speaking, Chinese people talking, of course, and more Americans. When I found my seat, I found every seat had a program. I read the program, and I was surprised to find that every piece of music was a premiere. This made me even more excited, because I've never heard the song, and it was the first time I heard the music of people around the world.

The concert began soon afterwards. The lady sitting next to me was wearing a lace silk suit and had red hair. She came to the stage, because she was a piano player. This song made me feel strange. Then the piano and echo ringed together and made me feel dizzy. I thought the effect was very wonderful. It affects the feeling of the brain. This song let me know how music really affects the brain. The second piece of music was played by seven players in a chamber ensemble. I thought the two cellists on the stage were brother and sister because they looked alike. Although the deck was leaning, which made the cello unstable during the

performance, the performer did not show any panic. He had such a stage presence that I really admired!

In the whole concert, my favorite piece was the third. It was written in a Japanese style. The Japanese player held her shamisen in a precious way. The two players sang when they played. Their voices and instruments together sounded very harmonious. They put Japanese Instruments and Western instruments played together, and the effect was very special. I like this kind of instruments with national characteristics of music!

By watching the concert today, I was able to understand music more deeply. I think is the greatest influence on me is that I have a more in-depth understanding of music, how music is diversified, and that all music is worth looking forward to. However, I'm looking forward to hearing even more national music. Gradually I will also know myself better and know what I want to do and what kind of music I want to make.

Finally, at the concert I didn't just look at the players. I was watching the river, the boats, and the bright lights of New York. It was as if the ship is inside a music box of the city. It was a wonderful night and a wonderful concert!

## What's the Difference?

By Jing Chen

**O**n November 27, I watched a jazz orchestra concert. Before this time, I had not seen a jazz orchestra performance. I think it had many differences compared with when we watched symphony.

Firstly, the instruments are different. A jazz orchestra has piano, guitar, bass and drum. The symphony doesn't have these instruments. The saxophone, trombones, and trumpet play different parts in the jazz orchestra. The different instrument play different themes.

*Everyone can enjoy  
music and love music.*

Secondly, the role of conductor is different. In the jazz orchestra performance, the conductor was freer than in a symphony. The conductor just prompts for the tempo and start of the music, as well as cues the saxophone, trombone, and trombone to solo. In this performance, I was surprised by the conductor. He walked around the stage and interacted with the performers. It looks very interesting. The performers can talk and laugh on the stage. But, in the symphony the conductor is very important. He must control the audience, like he gestured with the cooperation of the instrument. Because symphony pay attention to the cooperation between instruments, so the conductor is very important. The performance is more about the cooperation between the instruments. The performance is more rigorous than jazz orchestra.

Thirdly, jazz orchestra is freer than a symphony. In a jazz orchestra, we can see improvisation. It's begun by the drum's rhythm. A strong sense of rhythm is its characteristic. But, a symphony is always strictly in accordance with the score to be performed.

Finally, the audience at the concert was freer than when watching symphony. They can applaud after a performer's solo. But in a symphony we can only clap after the performance. And I saw an old man sitting in a wheelchair watching the performance. We can see the same thing in the symphony. I think music is not related to a person's age, or whether person's body is healthy or not healthy. Everyone can enjoy music and love music.

## Talking to the Musician

By Jing Chen

By searching on her website, I know Sugar Vendil is a pianist and a director. She is the founder of Nouveau Classical Project. She likes combination of dance, music, fashion in her performances. I think she likes to create new things, and through the creation of new music expression she became herself now.

Through e-mail I asked Sugar some questions about what I can't solution about music and some things I wanted to know about her. We always face nerves in performance, and she said when she was young she was very nervous in performance. She thinks she just played about 20% of her true ability. When she met this problem she just kept at it and she thought it must be overcome. So, I think when I am very nervous in performance, I must overcome fear and not give up. Sometimes I can play the piano better in concert than play the piano usually. When I am on stage I always tell myself relax and focus can help me overcome nervous.

What is the most important thing to help us become a pianist? I think I want to be a pianist, so I must improve myself now. Sugar told me I must improve my technique and believe I can do it. Sometimes, when I meet hard work, I don't believe I can do it. I think self-confidence is based on its own level rather than blind self-confidence. So improving my skill is very important.

In terms of her job, Sugar likes challenging and creating, so she combines music, dance and fashion in one performance. For my last 20 years I just studied what my teacher said and just practiced classical music. I never thought of creating anything in the past. But now, I think creating is very interesting. I think classical music combined with pop music is very interesting. I think study piano is more important than work, so I will continue to study. When I graduate I want to be a piano teacher in collage.

I think I'm not a genius in the piano, so practice for me is very important. But, just practicing with my fingers is not a good way to improve my piano skills. Listening is a good way and watching the piano performances also can help me. I should work hard and not give up my values.

When I was young, I thought piano is very hard for me. I couldn't do the best in my teacher's studio, so I felt inferior. At the time, my piano teacher always gave me confidence and let me believe in myself. At present, I think I am a person with a sense of faith. I like to challenge myself and do my best. I think a good teacher always influences a person's life. So, when I became a college student I met my new teacher. He let me participate in many competitions and performances, which is also an important way I can overcome the fear of the stage. So, if I will be a piano teacher, I want help my student to do them best.



How does one become a musician? I think this question is very hard for me. I think the important thing is understanding of music. Every musician has different styles and ideas in music. They have many thoughts about music. When I play the piano, I think the composer's thoughts about the music are very important. Classical music is always about history. The composer wanted to introduce them minding in this time. So, they write this music. Now, I just can through the historical background to thinking music. I'm just in the imagination stage. If I want to be a musician I need to improve my technology and broaden horizons. It's just my opinion.



## A Trip to a Concert Gem @Bargemusic, Brooklyn

By Peter Xu



n January 5, I attended a chamber music concert in Brooklyn.

That was my first time to attend such a concert and what I experienced impressed me a lot.

It was a freezing day. After I got off the metro, I walked about 15 minutes to get there. The wind blew just like many knives cutting my face. At that time, I doubted whether this concert would be excellent because I have never been there before and I didn't have much understanding of chamber music, so almost everything for me was unknown.



After I got to the destination, the view in front my eyes shocked me. Bargemusic was a floating boat on the Hudson River at the foot of Brooklyn Bridge. It was really a new thing to me because in China, and even in other parts of the world, I have never seen a “boat concert hall.” Walking in to the hall, I saw a wood-paneled room with thrilling view of lower Manhattan's night scene. It was really an unique experience listening to different repertoire with different musicians and looking all the great ships passing by.

The concert that I attended was part of the “Here and Now Winter Festival,” and all the music were new pieces. The music played that night was experimental music so I do believe that people who came to the concert were true music lovers. The musicians were pleased to be there and delighted to be playing for the audience. They said a little something about each piece and what it meant to them or how they wrote it before playing. Interestingly, all the composers drew their inspiration from poems. It seems like there's no boundary between music and literature. There were six pieces played that night. The first and second pieces gave me the deepest impression. The first piece was named *In the Deep Heart's Core*. The soloist played the piano accompanied by a recording of the poem. Just like a young blonde whispering with a gentleman, this art form was novel. The reason why the second piece impressed me is not just because the music was so beautiful and soft, but also I noticed that two of the ensemble members were Juilliard undergraduate students. Although they were very young, they had so much experience and they looked very mature when they were playing music. I really admire them because they have such a distinguished platform. Also I hope that music professors provide more chances for students to perform because experience is the best teacher.

Since my major is arts management, I was thinking about the possibility of making a profit with such experimental music or classical music while enjoying the concert. After all, audiences

of classical music, especially experimental music, are relatively smaller in the entire music industry. From the characteristics of this type of music, people who appreciate it should have good education background and also have an understanding of arts. I think most of this concert's audience had a certain economic base and age so that they were more likely to walk into the concert. However, the profits of classical concerts are remarkably trivial compared to those of popular music concerts, which is easily to reach hundreds of thousands or millions of US dollars. To find a way out, what art managers of classical music should do first is to eliminate public's stereotype of classical music. In China, classical music is more likely to be called "elegant music" or "serious music." I think no one in China is willing to listen to something serious in their free time. In fact, classical music is not serious. At most, it can let them have a deep pleasure. What I mean is that this entertainment of enjoying classical music brings the audience different levels and depths. As an audience, there is no need to think this is a particularly serious and unreachable thing. The most important thing that I realized during this concert is that classical concerts should bring not only the artistry of music, but also entertainment to the audience. For example, Bargemusic used a novel venue, so a classical concert can let people enjoy music while also enjoying the view out of the window.

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### **Turn Heavy Study into Cozy Play**

By Vivian Yu

**A**fter going to the concert. I learned a lot, but the most enjoyable thing was the atmosphere and expressive force. First, I want to talk about the musical composition Symphony No. 9 composed by Antonín Dvořák.

The music is divided into four movements. The second movement is the largo. There is a subtle link between the theme and the central melody of the whole piece, and it also runs through the four movements. The introduction of the movement, which is played by stringed instruments, timpani, and wind instruments, is a powerful and enthusiastic rhythm, which is a metaphor for the tense, hectic, fast-paced life of the United States.

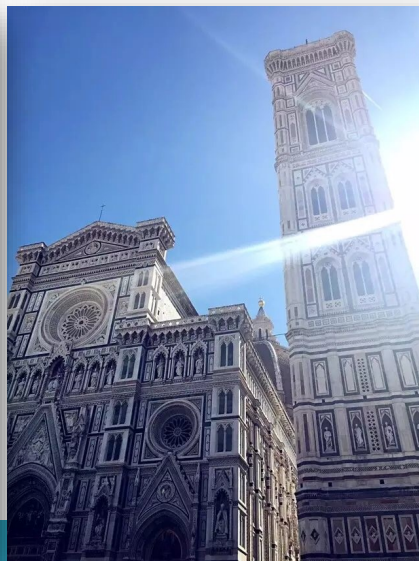
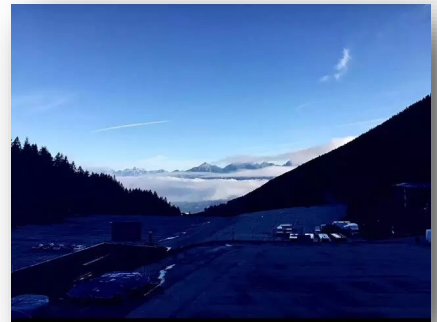
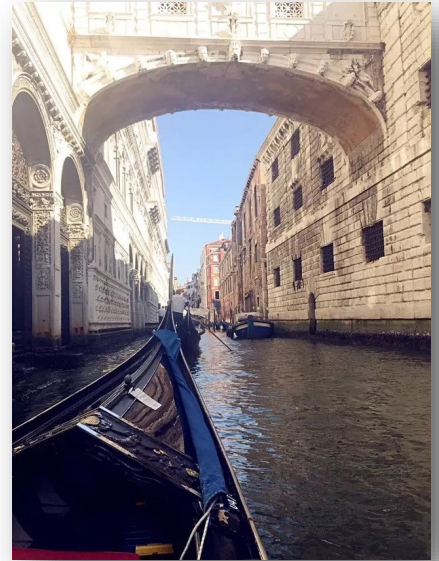
The most important thing is that before the music sounded, the audience was very quiet. After the music sounded, everyone who was sitting in the orchestra was focused. Rather than just playing, they were actually enjoying the music. There is a lot of effort behind every successful performance.

From my point of view the theme was just like the trunk of the tree and the secondary melody was like the branch and leaves extending outward. The repeated melody was easily remembered by people and resonated with people. Music is like magic. It not only gets into people's hearts, but also touches the soul. Music is also a way to help people express their feelings better.

## **Nameless Poem**

By Vivian Yu

Let's meet at the crossroads of the world  
Just get lost in the neon lights of Times Square  
Maybe I'll think of the second wish at the wishing pool  
You said you like snowy mountains  
We live in the foothills of the Alps  
Clouds in mist. Cool air  
One day in a gondola  
Floating in the canals of Venice  
I can't forget your smile of that day  
You're dangling the key  
Walking along the Champs Elysées with me  
On the corner in Florence  
You smile in a long skirt  
The afterglow of sunset falls into the church  
Later  
I finally said I love you  
It's in your name  
Later  
You said softly  
It's just a beautiful dream











# OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT AMERICA...

October 9, 2017

Many states

A mix of cultures from all over the world

Open-minded

Tolerant

Beautiful

FRIENDLY

DEMOCRACY

Shopping

Polite

NYC is

very

crowded

Has many  
cultures

Broadway

Famous universities  
(Juilliard, Manhattan  
School of Music)

Open

OPEN

## Our thoughts about America...

November 27, 2017

People work hard to pursue freedom and equality  
America is a country fused with happiness and sadness  
America is a trendy country

# OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT AMERICA...

JANUARY 22, 2018

There are not so many limitations. Guns are legal, some drugs are legal. Americans can make fun of their religions. The government doesn't crack down on the development of the arts and artists' opinions.

If I go back to China, I will introduce all my friends to America. There are many museums. We can

see musicians and opera. When I went to America, I could see that many people (children and older people) all like art. Many cities have their own museums about history or art. And there are many famous universities.

***Food from many different countries: Turkey, Korea, Italy, Thai, America, Chinese, Japanese, Hong Kong, India, and a lot of seafood!***

Many Americans speak Spanish



## Metronome

By EnYu Zhang

First, I want to say that this is definitely not a jazz concert; this belonged to the category of dance party because I was swaying my fingers, toes, heart, eyes, ears, and mouth to the rhythm.

The concert began at 8 o'clock. At 7:30 in the evening, I arrived on time at the choral hall. It was the first time I enjoyed a jazz concert. When I entered the hall, I was very surprised, because only about 10 seats remained, and I sat down in the penultimate row. I looked around and saw some students, parents, and children sitting in the concert hall. This made me think jazz music is indispensable for the American family. When the concert started, the lights dimmed. It must have been a wonderful Jazz evening, because I smelled of excitement in the air!

When all the players were on the stage, the conductor entered from offstage and at this time the audience warmly applauded the players. One difference I saw was that the conductor didn't stand on the stage but instead sat in the front row. The players smiled to each other before the performance. There were 5 saxophones players, 4 trombones players, 4 trumpet players, one piano player, one guitar player, one bass player, and one drum player. I think this was a very complete jazz orchestra. When they played, the audience swayed their bodies, and I also involuntarily used my fingers to tap along to the rhythm. At this moment, I suddenly got an idea: each member of the audience is the concert metronome.

The conductor gave order to the one saxophone player, the player started a solo. I don't think the player is completely according to the score to play, he looked more like improvisation. An audience warmly applauded the performers at this time, and then, several audience applauded along. This is indeed a wonderful solo, I think

the players must have enough stage experience and technology. At the end of the concert, the conductor came to stage with each player hug. Full applause sounded like wave around the concert hall. Now I want to talk about the whole concert of my own thoughts.

First, I think what surprised me most was my reaction to this concert, because I had seen a lot of classical concerts but seldom go to jazz concerts. Before I went to this concert, I thought I should sit in a dignified and serious manner. However, at this concert, I was like the metronome. I was rocking my body, fingers, and head along with the music. I really enjoyed the feeling of myself and the music together.

Second, I think what intrigued me most was the conductor. I had seen jazz concerts in China, and many jazz concerts had a conductor on the stage. But this concert had no conductor on the stage. I think it was a very good approach that allowed players to play their own musicality. Jazz music is free and I think improvisation was very important.

Third, I think what challenged me most is how to write jazz music in the future. I have only written classical music, so I want to try a different style. Maybe some people will ask me why I want to try different styles. Because of this concert, I think the jazz music can bring people a lot of happiness, can let people really enjoy music, can let people be immersed in music, and can make people forget some troubles. Different music can let people feel different experiences. So, I also want to compose some jazz music, because even people who do not understand the music can also find happiness from the music.

Last, the concert to let me know more about the American jazz music culture. I will put this style into my works. In my school when I rehearsed my own works, I always had strict requirements of my players, but through this concert, I think in the future when I rehearse my works I should let players play more freely and play in their own playing style. I also observed that when the American students were playing on the stage



they were not nervous. This is a very worthy mentality because many students are nervous when they performing.

This is a wonderful concert, and I learned much from the stage experience. I am looking forward to the next concert!



## Respecting, Learning, Innovating—An Interview Report

By Peter Xu

Katie Dukes and I have quite a few things in common. We both learned to sing when we were children. We both reject the idea that classical music has to be stuffy or boring. Because of these, I think we approach music similarly.

However, there are many obvious differences between Katie and me. She was born and grew up in the US and now she is living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but I am Chinese and live in China. She got her bachelor's degree at San José State University and master's degree at the University of Northern Colorado. I am a student from Nanjing University of the Arts. She is still a soprano nowadays but I have discontinued my vocal studies. In addition to her work as a performer, she is also a vocal instructor and executive director of Studio Forza, and I am still a college student who studying art management.

In our conversation, I found that I have many things in **common** with Katie:

She said the reason why audience members come to the theatre is just because they want a performance to make them feel something, and this is most often accomplished by an artist who can truly communicate a story. I agree with her because although most opera singers have great singing skills, the most difficult part for them is making the public believe you as a character. For example, *Turandot* is a western opera which tells a Chinese story, so the singers should think about Chinese people and are they will be able to convince the audience members they are the princess or the emperor.

We both consider it wrong to force people to learn music because this will make people feel unhappy and even lead to a worse result: they will become tired of learning. She said many children in China are not interested in learning music not just because their parents forcing them to participate in music, but also because the educational experience offered to them is not fun or playful. I deeply understand what she means. Nowadays in China, many teachers teach students in an inflexible way, which makes them feel very bored and cannot intrigue them, so I think the most efficient way to teach is by making the class more interesting and fun. If the teachers do that, I do believe it will be more appealing, more students will become music lovers automatically.

We both reject the idea that classical music has to be stuffy or boring. Both in China and in America, average people stereotype classical music according to a grand opera model in which people must adhere to a specific set of listening practices when attending a performance. Because of these

rules, audience members, especially youngsters, tend to think that classical music is very serious and they cannot be free to enjoy a performance in their own way. However, Katie and I think firstly, as an audience, there is no need to think this is a particularly serious and unreachable thing. What's more, many things are changing in today's performance world and many new opera companies or chamber organizations are adopting a more casual performance/viewing environment (e.g., Opera on Tap and Bargemusic).

Although we agree with each other in many aspects, we still have some **different opinions**:

Katie said that although Opera on Tap simplified the classical opera, if the performance was of high quality, it could still provide the sense of classical opera for the audience. I don't agree with that, because the reason why people go to splendid and elegant theater is to watch operas, not only because they want to appreciate the content, but also because they enjoy the atmosphere of the hall, talk with cultured people, and the edifying sentiment of the music. I think watching an opera in theater is really a good way to promote people's artistic taste and show off their social status.

### **Something that surprised me**

Although I did not meet Katie before, I still had a verbatim transcript of her answers to my questions, which is very helpful. I was pleased with the outcome of the interview.

### **Something that intrigued me**

Katie said that classical music is not very famous in America because there are a lot of limitations on listening to opera, and at the same time, audience members want to be freer to enjoy a performance in their own way. She also said that if opera goers have more freedom during the performance, they can be more interested in classical music. I think what she said is true, but if we want to appeal to more audience members, we should transform the music. What I mean is we should promote crossover music (a fusion of classical and pop music) to the audience members. As a fanatic of musicals, I've seen a couple of Broadway musicals in the four months since I came to New York. I love musicals because they feature both the artistry of classical music and the entertainment factor of popular music. The actors and actresses not only have solid singing skills, but also modern dialogue and dance steps. This form of art attracts a large audience, including those with a taste for classical music, offering an opportunity for people to get to know classical music and gradually like it. For example, I love Sarah Brightman who is well known for her crossover songs such as "Time to Say Goodbye."



### **Something that disturbed me**

Katie said that hard work, discipline, time, and patience are most helpful in creating a successful musician. However, I still insist that luck is the most important thing to be a successful musician. Katie thinks that hard work is the most important issue, but from my perspective, luck is more important. There are many variables that are out of our control:

The region you live in may affect your success: New York is a bustling metropolis and has enough space to support young artists who have just cut a figure in society. In New York, numerous critics

always pay great attention to these artists, and peers in the same industry encourage each other in fierce competition. Certainly, this does not mean that people cannot succeed far away from a metropolis, but in big cities, it is easier to achieve one's aim.

Network of relationships in school: if students can find a teacher who is willing to share his or her hard-won relationship network in the art circle, it means that they find a short-cut to success. And if you can make several close friends with the same interest in art, they may also be willing to share their successful experience.

The initial investment of art learning is fairly enormous. In his blog post "What is the Secret of Success," Michael Shermer says "The luck of having loving and nurturing parents who raised you in a safe neighborhood and healthy environment, provided you with a high-quality education and instilled in you the values of personal responsibility. If they were financially successful, that's an added bonus because a key predictor of someone's earning power is that of their parents." Shermer also says that talent and hard work are important, but I think in the field of art, if artists want to be successful, they should be approved by their audience, however, others' opinions are provided by others or circumstances not themselves, they cannot control.

### **What I have learned**

Love and respect for music. When Katie was very little, her parents introduced music to her and she fell in love with it. After she grew up, she went to college to study music and now music is her career. I want to be a theatrical producer in the future, so I think loving and respecting music is also very essential.

Develop and maintain relationships. Katie is running a studio with her husband now, because one of the functions of the studio is teaching non-musicians music, so she has to employ music teachers. At this time, knowing how to build a good relationship with the teachers is very important. Everything is built on relationships, especially in the art field. How to build positive relationships with each other is always a topic in art field.

Keep dreaming, keep working, never give it up!

## **FAVORITE PIECES WE STUDIED IN CLASS**

**Antonín Dvořák, Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95 "From the New World" (1893)**

**Giacomo Puccini, *Turandot* (1921-26)**

**Lesley Gore, "It's My Party" (1963)**

**Cyndi Lauper, "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" (1983)**

**Philip Glass, String Quartet No. 2 "Company" (1983)**

**Stevie Wonder, "I Just Called to Say I Love You" (1984)**

**The Village People, "Y.M.C.A." (1978)**

**Whitney Houston, "I Will Always Love You" (1992)**

## New Experiences

By Jing Chen



This day was very cold. I have never experienced such a cold day. Before I went outside, I wore a lot of clothes and was wearing a scarf. When I walked on the street, I thought maybe I would be blown away. When night fell, I arrived at Bargemusic. I saw a very beautiful view. Many skyscrapers had beautiful lights. And, it was the first time I saw the Brooklyn Bridge. That evening, we saw a concert on a boat. We saw the whole view through the boat's windows. It was very beautiful and it was a new experience for me. Before this time I never saw concert on a boat. The stage and the concert hall were very small, so we enjoyed the musicians' performance at close range. Their clothes were not gorgeous, and the boat just had a small audience, so I think it looked like a family concert.

Before I saw this concert I only knew that neoclassical music is a music form. I never listened to this type of music. After this concert, now I think neoclassical music has many more new elements than classical music. There are many examples. The first piece I saw at this concert was Vera Ivanova's *In the Deep Heart's Core* performance by Kathleen Supove. It combines piano performance and recitations of spoken poetry. So the musical sounds and recited content are combined. If the recited content is scary the music follows it. I think it's a very interesting performance form. Maybe I can learn to do this this type of this performance also. There is a Chinese classical music, it's called Liang Zhu, that's told to us as a tragic love story like Shakespeare's drama 'Romeo and Juliet'. I can try to combine a song with this story. Maybe I can add video too. This way of performance can tell the story through a new way and enhance people's impressions.

I also saw two Japanese musicians who performed Elizabeth Brown's *Hope in One Glance*. Their performance combined cello with shamisen and added some singing. I think the composer's idea is very novel. She combined a folk music instrument with a Western music instrument. It's a good way to introduce a folk instrument to us. I think in China, we can combine piano and *guqin* in a performance.

I think neoclassical music is a new form of music that composers and musicians make it by trying to combine different forms of musical performance or combine different instruments. At the same time, they use traditional methods of composing classical music. This reminds me of Sugar Vendil, who combines piano performance with fashion and dance. Neoclassical music combines classical and modern. If I have chance I want to try it.



## A Concert that Changed My Stereotype of Jazz

### @Recital Hall, Purchase College

By Peter Xu

I like listening to different kinds of music, from classical music to pop music. I have attended many concerts, mostly *symphony bands*. However, I have never experienced jazz music and I have never been to jazz concert until I came to Purchase College. Therefore, I decided to go to a jazz concert held in Recital Hall on November 27.

Compared to all the other concerts that I have gone to, the atmosphere of a jazz concert was very different. Compared to the other concerts I attended, this jazz concert seemed very relaxing and comfortable. Most people were wearing jeans and shirts which looked very casual. But the musicians were dressed in suits, which seemed quite interesting to me. There was a good diverse group of people, from young children to senior people.

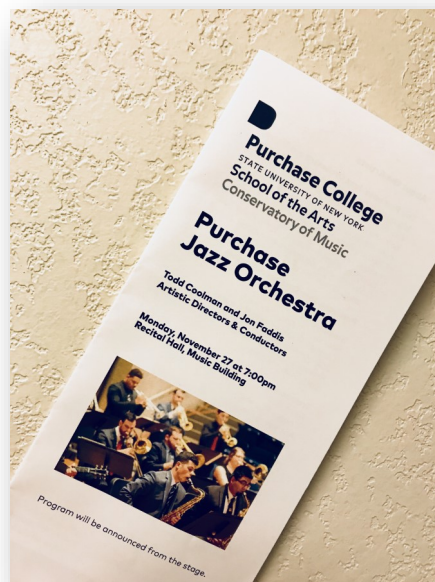
When the musicians were playing, I was surprised by the audience's behaviors. Some audience members were clapping their hands and nodding their heads. In the traditional classical concerts, people often sit rail-straight without talking. However, this was quite an opposite environment compared to the concerts I went to. It was interesting that even though the crowd was a bit loud, the musicians seemed very comfortable with it. This would not be acceptable in the concerts I have attended, but no one seemed to mind in this jazz concert.

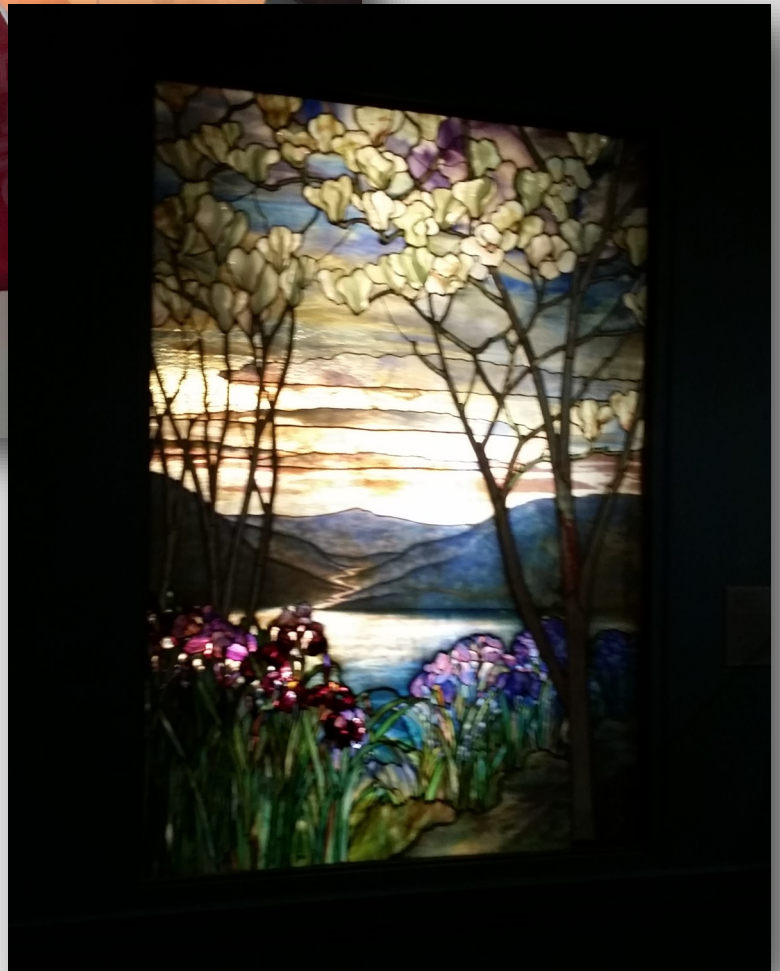
In the class, I have heard many jazz songs. All these songs were played with instruments such as trumpet, saxophone, drums and bass. After the class I told my professor that I felt the jazz music she played was so boring. She thought I was wrong and told me that no piece of music is boring, because I appreciate it in another way. I found it to be uninteresting, just like one cannot appreciate pop music from a classical perspective. Therefore, I expected the musicians would help me to have a deeper understanding of jazz.

Fortunately, their performance impressed me a lot as they could play the music in such a lively and infectious way and they added some pop music in their music, so it really changed my stereotype of jazz. After I came out of the music hall, I was thinking that no matter what kind of music, it will be very easy and enjoyable to appreciate and understand the spirit of the music if you only get into it—happiness, sorrow, laughter, tears...

There are many different kinds of music that can be called jazz, but there are two elements that most jazz styles have in common. One is improvisation, meaning composing and performing at the same time. The musicians did some improvisation during the concert. Each and every song seemed to be original and had the musicians' own style added to it. It especially showed when each player had solo parts. The other element is a swing feeling. This can be described as a feeling that makes you want to dance, clap your hands, or tap your feet. During the concert, as I looked around in the audience, I could see people bobbing their heads and tapping their feet.

Going to jazz concert gave me an opportunity to experience a new concert atmosphere. I enjoyed the informal and casual style of the concert's atmosphere. If I did not listen to the "boring" jazz played in class, I would never have attended a jazz concert. The music style was not quite what I expected, but I really like it. It was very modern, but also had the elements of early jazz.





## Art About People and History

By Jing Chen

I had a piano lesson before I went to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. As a result, I was late and I was so sorry about that. When I arrived there, I saw many parents with their children and many old couples. When I saw these people I felt that no matter how old you are you can enjoy arts and like arts. And I think parents should take their children to museum from when they were young. It's a good experience for them. It makes them broaden their horizon and understand history. Whenever my parents and I traveled, they always took me to the city's museum, such as Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum and so on. I learned about the history of the Qin Dynasty by visiting the museum. It was very helpful for my studies.

I saw many interest things in the museum. We viewed The American Wing and the musical instrument gallery.

First, I saw furniture. Because some chairs are very small, I think maybe hundreds of years ago people were shorter than now. There are many patterns on these chairs. I think at that time many rich people liked use the beautiful colors to show their status. I liked the color and the size.

Second, I saw a living room. There were lace curtains, a fireplace, beautiful lamps, and chairs and a table. The style was very classical and made me feel peaceful. It seemed like a good place for talking with a friend and having a reception. There are also living rooms in ancient Chinese building. It's also an important place to meet with friends and hold some important activities. So, I think living room is important for a house.

Third, I saw a painting about George Washington, the person who was America's first president. In this painting, he was with many soldiers on the boat. He stood on the boat watching into the distance. He looks like hero, and I felt he can overcome all difficulties. Portraits exist in the history of many countries. We can use painting to recording people and history.

Fourth, I saw a beautiful glass used in a church window. There are many colors on the glass like blue, yellow, and white. When sunlight shines through the glass into the church, it will make a church look sacred. I think standing in a church to feel the scared atmosphere is a good way to free myself.

We couldn't see the whole thing in the Musical instrument gallery because it was closed. We just saw some horns. There were many strange horns, but only one attracted me. It was coiled and didn't have any keys. I think the player must have strong lung capacity to *soothe* this instrument. I'm curious about its voice. There are strange instruments in many places. In China we use leaves to perform music. They are attractive and very interesting.

Many works of art are related to the history of people. Through art works can record human life. If you want to know the history of a country, you can do so through the art work.



## The Soundless Whoop in the Darkness—"The Sound of Silence"

By Peter Xu

The 1960s was a troubled time for the U.S. that witnessed turmoil and disturbances. Inside the country, the consciousness of antiracism and civil rights was brought up. In the world, the U.S. was under a great pressure brought by the Vietnam War. At the same time, anti-violence and anti-racism activity led by Martin Luther King, Jr., the leader of the human rights campaign of black people, became increasingly fierce. What's more, the strong voice for anti-Vietnam War caused a great influence.

Against such a background, an American group, Simon & Garfunkel, composed this widely-known and thought-provoking song, "The Sound of Silence," for the turbulent 1960s. I have found out that this song covers two themes: the first one is anti-capitalism money worship; the second one is the alienation and apathy among people made them lose their ability to communicate.



This song is a beautiful poem consisting of five stanzas. In the first section, the singer comes to chat with his old friend again: darkness. Regarding darkness as an old friend, he pours out his

heart into darkness that reflects his loneliness. This was not the first time that he talked to himself alone in darkness. This time, what he wants to say that this darkness, his friend, is a phantom in his mind.

In the second section, the singer tells the real scene of the phantom. In his dream, he always walks on the convoy road alone, in fear, and trembling. The first and second sentences reflect that it must be a wet and cold night. In such a lonely, wet and cold night, he was awakened by the dazzling neon light suddenly and then he felt the silence.

The third section is the strong part of the phantom. He describes "naked light," which was not weakened by a lampshade, so that it was direct and strong. Under such a glaring light, he saw thousands of people. They were talking with each other but the content was nothing. So, it was "talking without speaking." The listener was also abstracted and did not care about what they listened to. So, it was "hearing without listening." Except talking about empty topics and being absent-minded, people also sang the song which they composed with no emotion.

Therefore, the singer, who has become worried and anxious, warns the people how horrible the "silence" with anger is, because silence would spread continuously like cancer until it swallows everyone. The singer wants to tell everyone to listen to his words so that he could help them, but nobody paid attention to him.

All the people persisted their own way. They worshipped and prayed for the "neon god" they had built. The "neon god" here was associated with the one in section two, and the significance of the symbol is very obvious. "Subway walls" was always the home of hoboes, while "tenement hall" were only a little better than ghetto. With a strong contrast with the neon light, it represented not only the civilization of capitalism but also *anabiotic creature comfort*. In section two, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel used a metaphor to reverse the positive meaning represented by light, because neon light was so dazzling that it made it difficult to distinguish



directions, and people always neglected the surrounding things that they should care for. Therefore, “neon god” was the symbol of money worship. When the singer tried to help people out of the chaos in vain, the neon slogan gave people a warning: ‘the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls’. These words did not refer to the people who can predict future but hoboes and poor people. They always wrote their complaints and dissatisfaction on the wall of the subway stations or the lobby of apartments. However, these voices were always overwhelmed in this society full of greed and material desire.

Nowadays, with the development of science and technology, Simon and Garfunkel’s “The Sound of Silence” is especially important. It seems that their song is telling us that although we are under great life pressure, we still have to slow down and stop to have a good communication with each other, otherwise, people’s relationships will keep worsening and finally become a victim of science and technology.



## The Thinking of Walking

By EnYu Zhang

Today, I finally visited the world famous Metropolitan Museum of Art. This is my first time to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art, completing one of my wishes. In front of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I found that many people were set on the stairs, and almost every stair was full! When I entered the museum, I found that the number of visitors to the museum was more than I expected. When I waited in line I heard a lot of different languages. People from all over the world come to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I think the most special thing about this is museum the price. You can give or not give money to enter museum. I think this way is very good, because even the poor can also come to visit! After walking through Egyptian art, we came to the American wing. A lot of people came to visit the American wing. In here I chose five of my favorite exhibits.



First I was interested in the woman's dressing table and two chairs. I saw the two table bases and the chair feet shaped like a dog's paw, and I found that the patterns of carved on the back of the chair was a harp. I feel it must be rich people's furniture because in the past, the poor would not have carved patterns on the chair. So I think the gap between the richer and poorer parts of humanity is reflected the life.



The second thing I was interested in was a suite of parlor furniture. This sofa used two chairs together, and the two chairs were face-to-face. I imagine people can sit in a chair and talk face-to-face. So, I think communication is very important in American culture, both in the family or in school. Communication is the most important thing to people. The design of the furniture facilitates communication.

The third thing I was interested in was a wardrobe. This was a closet, but the design looked like Japanese style and Chinese style. I feel this was a combination of Chinese and Western design. This closet reflects the fact that America is an open country. It not only has its own national style, but also over the last century it began to absorb other national cultures.

The fourth thing I was interested in was Henry Mosler's *Just Moved*. In this painting there is a mom and a dad, children, baby, and a cat. The color is very clear. The house in the painting is very messy, the dad sits at the table, he looks at the baby, and a little boy watches his parents. When I first saw this painting I felt very warm. So through the picture I think one of the best things in the world is being one's with own family together.



The last one I was interested in was Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware*. In this painting, I saw everyone's efforts in rowing. The captain of the boat was looking at the front. In their eyes I saw the spirit of not to giving up. From this painting I felt their desire and persistence of life. Looking at this picture I think "never giving up" is the spirit of the Americans, and this spirit makes people stronger!

You may ask me, there have so many exhibits, why I chose these 5 exhibits. I chose them because these 5 exhibits are all about life. I think that life can reflect a country's culture, spirit, and customs, so I prefer to focus on life exhibits.

This was a memorable visit, and I comprehend a lot of life philosophy!



## First Interview

By Vivian Yu

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rom this interview and communication with Anneke Schaul-Yoder, I learned a lot. I totally agree with her thoughts about the meaning of the music: “It cannot be described in words. Something in music is powerful enough to make me devote my life to it. Not just the sounds but also the sharing of it. The energy that comes from people playing and listening and experiencing all together.”

When I perform on stage or solo in front of people, I feel very nervous and her advice is very helpful. I usually ignore the relaxation in daily life. She likes walking in the woods and for me I try to be quiet in a quiet place.

The skills always disturb me, because as a student my parents forced me to practice for a very long time each day. However, I think a long time is very tiring and it didn't bring me a very high reward. So I asked Anneke about this, and she said a long time is not necessary and that I should just limited myself to a few minutes on a passage. Find problem. Fix it. Slow, calm practicing for a couple of hours is much more productive than spending all day striving.

Everyone has the turning point in their studies. But I think I haven't met it yet. I admire her teacher who taught her a visualization technique. My teacher just told me how to practice and how to play. But I never achieved real education of my inner world. Maybe in the future I can find some important things inspire me. And it can be my turning point.





## How to Recognize a Musician

By Jing Chen

“**M**usician” in Chinese means a person who is very famous in the musical field. In my view, a musician should have their own style and strong skills. For example, Chopin and Mozart are well-known because they have their own style and have many famous works that we all know, and that’s the reason why we called them musicians. Another example is Chinese musician Lang Lang, who had participated in many piano competitions and won prizes. He already had performances all over the world, and that’s the reason why many people know him.

After this semester, I think “musician” does not just mean those famous people. Dr. Jones always introduces us to other teachers who are pianists, violinists, and composers, and this lets us think about what “musician” means. My classmates and I are studying music, we all like music, and perhaps we will work as someone who related to music in the future. In my opinion, a person can be called a musician is someone who really likes music and who will devote himself to a musical area. And they will have strong skills in musical area by some professional training.

Now I’m just a person who studies the piano but not a pianist, so I think I still have many problems in my major. I want to be a pianist and a musician in the future. For achieving my dream, I will continue the study of piano and try my best to gain experience through performances and contests.



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## WHAT DOES AMERICA SOUND LIKE?

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**America sounds like a place where people can know what art is. —Jing Chen** / **America sounds like a Christmas tree because it's very colorful, you can put anything on it, and that makes it richer. —Peter Xu** / America sounds like Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. —Vivian Yu / *America sounds like a manifesto. —EnYu Zhang*

### **The Golden String**

By Vivian Yu

Out of the window, the moon was shining, and night was falling over the earth. Me, sitting at the window again, with a trace of pleasure, with my hand gently stroking, stroking the companion I have already played for a long time. The sound of the strings was like silver, a beautiful melody echoing in the ears. This is my major—playing the violin.

Speaking of the violin, there is a tortuous story. My mother took me to the music shop and let me choose a musical instrument. There happened to be a teacher of the violin. It was the sound of nature, and suddenly I fell in love with the violin. I had thought about giving up, but my teacher always encouraged me by saying, “Work hard, be persistent and stick to the end.” I also made up my mind to learn the violin well. In my spare time every day, I would come to the violin stand and pick up my companion-violin, practicing with open strings and the scales again and again. After more than half a year's efforts, I finally could practice the tune. After many years, one evening, I was at home, playing the violin and enjoying the wonderful sound. His voice changed with the dramatic melody, played smoothing ups and downs, was quiet and agitated. Sometimes high, sometimes low, as one of the joys and sorrows to convey the mood of the players.

I have been learning the violin for more than ten years, and I deeply love the violin, love its beautiful melody, and love its crisp voice even more. I sit at the window, staring into the distance...



## **Transforming Lives through Music**

By Vivian Yu

**T**oday we visited Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. I learned about music therapy, Suzuki Method, and so many different teaching forms.

When I first came to the school, I didn't think it was a big place. But at the end of the day, I realized that there was more amazing place than I thought. I really liked this building with its long history.

Today I also saw a lot of people. Each person's work, is different. Each room was filled with paper, wall posters, and countless files on the computer, so you can see that everyone is committed to their work.

I think work is important and dreams are important. This school gives such an excellent group of people a choice of both sides. I think education is important, and it's important to be happy. The school also gives children a choice between these two things.

In China there is no education form like that. Music therapy can be seen only in the hospital, and only the big cities have it, like Shanghai and Beijing. I feel having this in school is very good. I learned a lot, including how to run a company, manage, and so on.

The most striking thing to me is the teacher who teaches me, Alice. I think you are the interpretation of the word "powerful," you made me realize that a person is not just confined to a job. You are a leader and can be both a teacher and a musician. In China a person has only one full-time job. But in the future if I have a job, I can still insist on my music dream, just like you.

## **Blue White Red**

By EnYu Zhang

If I were a farmer,  
I would pluck 50 stars from the sky.  
Plant them in my blue land,  
I expect my land to germinate.  
After many years,  
The blue land finally had fifty fruit.  
Many people came to visit whit red courage,  
Many people carry the white truth.  
They all love my blue land,  
Some people call this land United States.







*The stories continue...*

