

Performance Inspiration: A New Perspective

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Original Project Proposal: I am asking for funding in three areas: continuing private lessons over the summer with my local instructor in Northern Virginia, attending a New York Philharmonic Orchestra concert, and one private lesson from a New York flutist, recommended by Kelly Sulick. This work will be ultimately presented via two orchestral excerpt recordings: one before I visit New York and one after.

Outcome:

My arts award provided funding for five private lessons with my hometown flute teacher over the summer, a train ticket to and from New York City, a hotel room for two nights, food during my stay, other transportation costs, and a private lesson from a teacher in New York. I want to thank my mentor, Kelly Sulick for reaching out to the MET Opera Orchestra flutist, Koren McCaffery for this private lesson. I would also like to express my gratitude for receiving this Arts Award since it awarded me with something I would never be able to find within the constraints of Charlottesville: clarity.

When I applied for this grant, I had been intermittently playing the flute. Although I was still involved in the UVA arts community, my focus was split and I did not know where to devote my energy. During COVID I briefly quit the flute, thinking I would never play again after deciding against applying to a conservatory. I had not regained my instinctual passion for music until taking that private lesson with Koren, walking around the New York arts community, and ultimately attending the New York Philharmonic Concert that night. It reminded me of how much I adored performing, especially in an orchestra. I expected to write solely about how this experience improved my musical technique, but that would be overlooking the mindset shift it granted me. This change in perspective was ultimately more valuable in improving my flute technique in the practice room. I was no longer practicing for someone else. I returned to my natural state of practicing for pure enjoyment, exploration, and creative expression. This led to more productive practice sessions.

Directly after receiving my arts award, I booked a ticket to the June 2nd New York Philharmonic Concert where they performed *Symphony No. 5* by Dmitri Shostakovich. Prior to the concert, I set up two lessons with my hometown teacher, Laura Kaufman. Laura and I first established my performance goals for the summer and what repertoire to play for the MET Opera Orchestra flutist, Koren McCaffery for our private lesson. Laura and I decided to work together on my dynamic range, articulation clarity, and aperture flexibility. Before and after the New York trip, I prepared Anderson Etudes, exercises from the Taffanel and Gaubert flute technique book, and a few individually-curated harmonic exercises. The repertoire prepared for the lesson in New York

was chosen with input from Kelly Sulick and Laura Kaufman. I prepared three orchestral excerpts: Beethoven's *Leonore*, Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*, and Brahms' *Symphony No. 4*, as well as the first movement of Bach's *Partita*. I only had two private lessons with Laura before my lesson with Koren since there was a quick turnaround. This left three private lessons after New York to work on Lowell Liebermann's *Concerto*, more etudes, and *Poem* by Charles Griffes.

Koren McCaffery had an amazing penthouse with impeccable acoustics. We had our lesson in her living room. It was difficult to focus on one thing since her apartment was tastefully designed and the music sounded amazing in her place. It was great to have a second opinion on these excerpts. Private lessons catalyze my performance and practice skills. Input from others is one of the most important elements of music since players themselves can be biased, and outside opinions can point out details they might not notice. Throughout the years, I have noticed that each flutist is good at teaching others specific tips that are unique to their teaching style, and they approach lessons in a different way. Koren is a perfectionist like me, and would really push me to execute exactly what she was trying to verbalize. My hometown teacher is amazing at verbalizing what exactly she wants me to do and reframing it in multiple ways until I understand how to reciprocate it on the flute.

This lesson taught me how to push myself during a practice session when I do not have that type of guidance. Koren did a lot of playing during the lesson to explain how she wanted me to play an excerpt instead of verbalizing what to do. I really appreciated this because I do want to get to the next level of flute-playing, and it takes this type of discipline and precise instruction to do so. I learned to keep my tone color and its resonance even in softer dynamics. This was crucial for Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5* excerpt and I heard the principal player of the New York Philharmonic demonstrate this in person later that day in the concert.

This was the second major orchestra I saw in concert. As mentioned in my project proposal, I have experience with the National Symphony Orchestra and am familiar with their performance style. Traveling to New York offered another take on classical performance. The conductor from this concert was much more vocal than the NSO conductor. I was seated directly behind the timpani player, guiding my gaze directly toward the conductor's expressions. I noticed he was part of the music rather than simply directing it. He even auditorily added to it with his quiet, yet noticeable, vocal gestures. One of the flutists had a tone similar to James Galaway. His resonant tone throughout every dynamic level is something Galaway is infamous for. He phrased his Dmitri Shostakovich solo using both dynamic and vibrato changes, but mainly with vibrato. I also noted his impeccable ability to maintain his tone in the quietest dynamics of the excerpt. My high school fellowship program allowed for a close-up analysis of the National Symphony Orchestra's flute section. I attended masterclasses and Q&A sessions with some of the players. From this experience, I was able to use that knowledge to compare it to the NY Philharmonic's

flute section. They were actually fairly similar in terms of tone quality and timbre from what I can remember.

During my time in New York City, I also went to the Guggenheim Museum, the MET, and walked around where Juilliard's main buildings are. In early high school, it was my dream to attend Juilliard and to later pursue a professional career in flute performance but I ultimately decided against it.

This concert was special to me because it reminded me of how much I enjoy performing. Throughout high school I spent a lot of time playing in the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (AYPO) and at the Kennedy Center sitting in on the National Symphony Orchestra's (NSO) rehearsals. Looking back, it was pivotal for me. I originally planned to measure my playing improvement from listening to others via a recording of my prepared lesson material before and after New York, but that would be dismissing what I truly gained from this opportunity. Now I know I cannot live without music and I want to somehow incorporate the performance aspect of it into my career. I will forever be grateful for this experience because it not only improved my flute technique in the moment, but it shifted my mindset in how I approach each practice session. Most importantly, it reignited my passion for music and redirected my life. I now want music performance to be a bigger part of my life and future career, with the intention of finding a way to combine flute performance with neuroscience.

Budget

Expense	Amount	Details
Five private flute lessons with Laura Kaufman	\$600	Each lesson costs \$120 per 1.5 hours. I prepared orchestral excerpts and solo repertoire for these lessons. I focused on the Bach Partita and the Brahms <i>Symphony No. 4</i> , Beethoven's <i>Leonore</i> , and Dmitri Shostakovich's <i>Symphony No. 5</i> flute excerpts.
Train ticket to New York City on June 2nd	\$105	The Amtrak train departed on June 2nd.
Hotel Room for two nights	\$706.49	I booked a hotel room near the Lincoln Center, where the

		concert was located.
Train ticket from New York City on June 4th	\$115	The Amtrak train departed on June 4th.
New York Philharmonic Concert ticket for Friday, June 3rd at 8:00 PM	\$232	The orchestra performed a concert including Dmitri Shostakovich's <i>Symphony No. 5</i> .
One 2-hour Private Lesson with Koren McCaffery	\$250 (\$125/hour)	Kelly Sulick referred me to MET Opera Flutist Koren McCaffery.
Transportation within the city	\$302.28	Walking from my hotel to the Lincoln Center is dangerous and too far of a walk. I took an Uber to the concert. I also Ubered to/from the train station and to my private lesson with Koren McCaffery. This expense includes a 20% tip.
Food during the stay	\$180	These expenses came from purchasing breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the stay (June 2nd - June 4th). This expense includes a 20% tip.

My view of the NY Philharmonic Concert:

