

During the summer of 2022, thanks to the funding of the Miller Arts Scholars program, I had the opportunity to travel to Chicago, Illinois, and participate in the 50th Anniversary National Flute Association Convention. After a rigorous pre-recorded round, I was selected to participate in the Collegiate Flute Choir, where I met talented flute players my age from all over the country. Our ensemble was led by Gareth McLearn, a distinguished flutist and composer who performs regularly on London's West End and is the principal flutist for the Heritage Orchestra. We rehearsed every day of the convention, leading up to our performance. Particularly after the pandemic, it was wonderful to get to work with so many passionate flute players in-person and perform together. While attending concerts and panels throughout the convention, I got to hear and even meet some of the flute players whose recordings I have taken inspiration from for years, or whose compositions I have performed, including Jasmine Choi, Amy Porter, and Valerie Coleman. I also found new artists whose work I will be following in the future, including Sharon Beazly, Nestor Torrez, and Melissa Keeling.



Collegiate Flute Choir Performance on August 14, 2022

I also worked on my research project that I outlined in my original proposal, and expanded upon my original goals. I initially planned to learn a piece that would be played at the convention, then record myself before and after the convention to implement the skills I learned. I didn't want to choose just any piece, and as an Asian-American, I decided to look into music by Asian composers, who are traditionally underrepresented by classically trained artists. I chose *Memory* by Chen Yi because in addition to fitting this theme, it was also very compatible with a lot of the techniques I have been working on with my faculty mentor, like intonation and pitch bends, which test lip flexibility. I saw the piece performed at the *Celebrating Asian Composers* concert. The performances were wonderful, although I was bothered by the fact that one of the pieces wasn't even by an Asian composer. I thought "How hard can it be to achieve inclusion at a concert that is specifically designed for it?" I decided to attend as many panels on inclusion as possible. The most informative panel that I attended was called *Nothing About Us Without Us: Reflections on Inclusion*. This panel featured a Q&A with five flute players from diverse backgrounds. A grad student named Jonathan Yuan from Oberlin College discussed how as musicians we rarely feel like we can venture outside the Western Classical Musical world. However, he didn't find this world totally gratifying, and it was only when he started teaching traditional Chinese music was he actually able to find his own sound. This really spoke to

something I've been feeling for a long time, which is that often educational institutions box students in to only playing music by composers that are usually male, white, and long dead. I knew other people felt the same frustrations when I attended the panel *Did You Choose that Piece Or...* which was hosted by Lorin Green, who, for her master's concert, did a program featuring pieces from musical traditions all around the world. This is something I have been seriously considering myself for my senior recital, and as of February 2023 I have submitted a Distinguished Major proposal that intends to culminate in a concert of all living composers that represent a wide variety of musical traditions. Lorin and the other panel host conducted a study in which they analyzed the concert programs of over 25 master's students, and found that 94% of the pieces were by white males. In 2023, I found this very disappointing, and was even more glad that I decided to focus on Asian American composers.

Attending this convention made me realize how far we have to go in terms of diversity and inclusion, and how that's something I want to focus on in terms of the way I make music. We have to be careful how we go about this, however. One of the most interesting discussions I heard was from a Japanese panelist, Mihiko Watanabe, who in her professional life has been asked to be on five Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committees. She felt like she was just "checking a box." And that, even with these attempts at "inclusion" she has to work twice as hard to be perceived as competent because she is female and Asian. I think there can be a fine line between what is just tokenism and what is actually creating a space where diverse voices are heard.

In addition to my research on diversity and inclusion and flute playing, I also got to attend many panels and concerts that truly expanded my view on what flute playing has to offer. I loved watching *To Infinity and Beyond*, a concert by Melissa Keeling that used a glissando head joint, looping effects, and pedals to create an otherworldly effect with multi-textured harmonies and sounds. She was creating sounds in live performance that I thought were only possible in the studio. I attended *Profaning the Sacred*, a performance that combined spoken word poetry and flute using extended techniques that went far beyond the singing and playing that I was used to seeing before. Finally, the Gala concerts that took place every night featured dazzling performances of many styles and genres by several of the best flute players I've ever seen.



(Left) A visit to the fascinating Historic Flutes room, including an 18th century bone flute!
(Right) Meeting Jasmine Choi, one of my biggest inspirations/influences!

A large portion of my budget went towards purchases at the exhibit hall, an overwhelmingly large space where they sell everything related to flute that one could possibly imagine. Some of this money went towards adding pieces and technique books to my music library that every flutist should have, such as *De La Sonorite* by Marcel Moyse, 17 Daily Exercises by Taffanel and Gaubert, The 28 Day Warm-up Book by Paul Edmund Davies, the Nielsen Concerto, the Ibert Concerto, and more. In an attempt to play more modern pieces (for reasons mentioned above), I picked up a book of 11 Twenty-first Century Masterworks, as well as other works I found interesting by living composers. I also used this money for maintenance and repair materials, such as pad cleaner, a silk cleaning swab, mouthpiece cleaner, and a high quality flute stand to replace my wobbly one. All of these purchases are life long investments that I will be able to use to improve my flute playing abilities.

It was also a great experience to visit Chicago! I got to try deep dish pizza and lots of cool local restaurants! I attended a free concert at Millenium Park and saw Hypnotic Brass Ensemble, an amazing group that fused traditional big band jazz, funk, rock, and rap, and also featured incredible flute and guitar solos. After that was the headliner, CIMA Funk, which played an Afro-Cuban funk style that I had never heard before. The whole week was an amazing experience.



Gorgeous Orchestra Hall and the Chicago Philharmonic for the Gala Concerto Concert.

Upon my return home, I worked with my faculty mentor, Kelly Sulick, to enhance my ability to play *Memory* by Chen Yi based on what I had seen at the convention. I learned better methods of doing pitch slides, modified my extended techniques to sound more like a violin (which the piece was originally written for), and worked on expressing grief through a musical tradition that I was unaccustomed with. The piece is written for Chen Yi's teacher, and the piece is meant to be "a painful cry of [his] name in our Cantonese dialect." I tried to really bring this to life in my recording. My recordings, one before the convention and one after, are attached below.

Pre-Convention: <https://youtu.be/F1gYVjYBnTI>

Post-Convention: <https://youtu.be/TFGrvR0vQOU>

Using some leftover funds, I was additionally able to travel to Washington D.C. in February, 2023 for the Mid-Atlantic Flute Convention. I was selected as a finalist for the Collegiate Flute Competition after a pre-recorded round. I spent months preparing the CPE Bach *Sonata in A Minor* and *Three Preludes* by Mucyznski. I tied for second place. I also went to many exciting panels and concerts, including the “Flutes on Fire!” ensemble which specialized in extended techniques, a presentation on world flutes, and the Christina Jennings Showcase concert. I purchased two more pieces from the exhibit hall from a Latin American music collaborative, this time with my DMP proposal in mind.

Many thanks to the Miller Arts Scholars Program for funding this extremely educational and informative experience. It definitely changed the way I view the world of flute players and how I can see myself as part of and meaningfully participate in the community.

Final Budget:

<u>Expense Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Hotel	\$1075
Flight with American Airlines	\$387.20
Convention Registration	\$135.00
Transportation to and from Hotel	\$15
Per Diem	\$206.74
Educational Purchases from Exhibit Hall	\$523.87
Flute Repairs	\$300*
Music Stand	\$15.17
Mid-Atlantic Flute Convention Registration	\$55.00
Mid-Atlantic Flute Convention Hotel	\$223.74
MAFC Per Diem	\$30
Educational Purchases from MAFC Hall	\$50.16
Total:	\$3,016.88**

* This money will be spent after the due date of the outcome. The repairman recommended to me (Clifford Trettick) by my faculty mentor lives about 45 minutes from Charlottesville. I do not have a car. He is open to receiving my flute on business days, and all those who could drive me have class on business days. Thus I will be waiting until Reading Days at the end of the semester to get maintenance on my flute. He charges \$100 per hour, and it takes 3-4 hours to do a “clean,

oil, and adjust” so my estimate is conservative and I will pay any remaining money out of pocket.

** Remainder payed out of pocket