Sarah McRae

Gateway to University Honors

Personal Passion

Made of Music

Making people cry seems to be my forte, but trust me; it’s not what you think. I have made more people cry than I have fingers. Usually that is a statement one would keep to their self; however, my case is completely different.

For the past eighteen years, I have been surrounded by music. Beginning from infancy, my mother would sing “You are my Sunshine” as I fell asleep in the crib, and at age six, I began an adventure. It would become my hobby, my interest, my appeal for colleges, and my life—all at the young age of six. I leaped into the music world by choosing one of the most obscure instruments—the harp. In my prolonged emotional process of finding a college major (and eventually a career) I might be interested in, I kept falling back on music. Why? Because people kept telling me “Do what you love, Sarah. Find your passion, and you will be happy.”

I have played the harp for almost twelve years and it is definitely one of my passions. There are so many parts of the harp to be passionate about, but mine is changing people’s emotions and influencing their overall being. I thought about going to school to be a music therapist because of the interaction with all varieties of people, and I loved the idea of sharing my music and providing beneficial experiences for medical patients. I chose to forgo teaching instead because of the same reasoning: people interaction.

But why does sharing my music make me so fulfilled? When viewing a musical performance, the audience often forgets how the musician is feeling and what they are thinking. I always pause in a performance and think about how lucky I am to provide a break in people’s day or a time to de-stress. I love performing, especially one-on-one where it is me with another person who specifically asked for a song, a treatment, or they simply want to relax.

I am incredibly interested in performing harp at the college level. My goal is to share harp music with as many people as possible. Whether that is with friends during finals week or joining the University’s non-Major orchestra, I will inspire people with my music. Over winter break, my friend (that has been playing as long as I have) and I are volunteering at local nursing homes and senior centers because we realize we have a talent that needs to be shared. Once a musician understands their impact on society, I believe they have found their true passion with their instrument.

There were certainly times when my passion wavered back and forth to being simply an interest and a talent. The line between these characteristics was once incredibly blurry. I had no idea what effect harp music had on my own life. I think most musicians go through a phase where they struggle to find inspiration, and practicing their instrument just seems like the most dreadful thing in the world. I know I have a unique talent and am certainly interested in harp music, especially inspiring others through my music. However, passions sometimes disappear. They transform and adjust based on other important life experiences, and after I took some time to realize that playing my instrument has changed me in profound ways, it will forever be my passion.