

A REFLECTION ON MY TIME LEARNING VIOLIN

by Emma Schaper

I've played violin for a long time, since I was in 4th grade. I'm halfway through 10th now. That's almost six and a half years. Needless to say it's made a big impact on my life. Six and a half years; I'm mostly 16 right now. That's two fifths of my life, almost half, really close to half. And after doing something for that long I would be sad if it hadn't changed my life. But it has. It's made me love math more. It's helped me become better at dealing with being in front of crowds. It's made me realize that sometimes you just have to suck it up and do what you should do no matter if it's boring, or tiresome because the eventual benefit will be worth it.

Music is math, plain and simple. In every measure there is a set number of beats that can be twisted and manipulated to make all sorts of tempos and rhythms and feels, because music feels when you listen to it right. When you manipulate a measure it's like manipulating an equation, you have to make sure that it still adds up after you change it. Music is also like math because you could spend your whole life studying either but there'll always be some-

thing else, something to work for. You can't completely master either, the complexity and never-ending-ness of both are what attract me to them. Maybe seeing that fact in violin helped me recognize and appreciate it in math.

When you play an instrument the one thing you are constantly working towards is performing in front of an audience. Everything is about perfecting your piece and working on skills to become a better performer. I don't like performing in front of crowds; it scares me. Since violin is so centered around performance, it forced me to get up and just do it no matter whether or not I wanted to, and by just doing it the performing got easier. Even though I still don't like public speaking or performing I think I dislike it less than I did when I didn't play. Or when I developed the fear, violin helped me overcome it, because it's hard to say that you were afraid of public performance when you were a fourth grader.

Practice makes perfect in music like in no other medium. You practice every day for extended periods of time. You practice even if you don't really want to or there's

something better to do. That aspect of violin helped me to realize that sometimes you just have to do what you have to do. Whether it's practicing violin or doing history homework, it's all things that need and have to be done and that I should just do it.

All in all violin has been a very rewarding part of my life, it's accentuated my love of other subjects, helped me overcome my dislike of public performance and it's helped me get a better work ethic. Writing this essay makes me almost sad to be leaving it, but I think I'm ready to move on with my life and love something else like I loved violin. Maybe I'll come back to it someday, maybe I won't, but I'll always be glad that I had this experience. Thank you for being a good teacher, Mr. Hinkie and I'll miss you lots.

Emma Schaper is in 10th grade at South St. Paul High School. This essay was a final assignment in her violin study with William Hinkie when she decided to stop violin lessons to concentrate more on math. So far, her favorite kind of math is Calculus. ‡