Me, Graphically – by Joey Elsisi

The goal of my visualization was to map out some of the music I have played over my life on the violin. I wanted to use a traditional bar graph, seeing if I could add more elements to it. On the left is my key. The physical size of the bar graph (it’s width and height) is supposed to represent my size at each musical phase of my life. I started playing the violin at the age of 6 and quit at the age of 18. I was really short at 6 and grew taller (and wider) until 18. I did not use real data, instead recalling the size and pace of each piece of music I played, imagining how many notes I might have played over the course of that period in my life. The music staff is meant to represent a traditional graph. I chose to add a treble clef on the left to hint at viewers that I played the violin, if the titles of the pieces I have on the bottom was not enough. The fill of each blue bar is meant to represent how much I was practicing/playing my instrument. The hollowness of bars is meant to show whether or not I was doing well for my age. When I started playing using the Suzuki books I was far ahead of my peers, exceeding my potential. Once I hit high school, around the Bruch violin concerto stage, I stopped improving. The gap between the ceiling of the musical filling and the hollow bars widens and reaches its peak in the last two bars. By that point my practicing habits had flatlined and to aid viewers a red curve of potential outlines this.

My primary difficulty was learning how to use Adobe Illustrator with enough proficiency to do real work. This took two tutorials, rewatching Mr. Fields lecture, and a lot of experimentation.

Another difficulty was getting the bars and the musical notation filling them to show. Originally this graphic was entirely black and white. By adding borders to each item in a bar, and making the bars holding these items blue, It is more clear what is filling them up.

I wish I had more time to work on this assignment. It was really fun and if I had the time to gather real data, I feel this graphic could have told the story of a significant part of my life.