



exam, but also I came out of it with greater knowledge of theater than I had when I started. I learned a great deal from taking these various exams, most notably the age old lesson that hard work does pay off. The personal splendor I felt was one that I had never felt before, and I live to feel it again.

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### ANALYSIS

Fareez shares a meaningful accomplishment in a small space. He effectively explains the significance of the LAMDA Diploma with Honors—an award that only one other person had received before him—and portrays a sense of jubilation which reveals to the reader his excitement. Fareez then describes how much work went into preparing the four monologues, each from different time periods. Plus he adds detail on how much he worked to perfect them, even humorously revealing that his sister begged him to stop. He concludes with the greater meaning that he learned from the experience, that hard work pays off.

In this limited part of the application, Fareez accomplishes a lot and touches on all the elements that highlight the achievement as well as positive aspects of his personality. It's important to remember that admissions officers will not know the significance of most awards unless you tell them. Describe how few people receive the award or how selective the competition is. Briefly explain the amount of work that was involved or how difficult it was to prepare. Then, put the award into perspective. What did you learn from winning? How can you apply what you learned to your future endeavors? Why was winning important to you? If you write about receiving an award, it's important to do more than just state that you did. You should also give context to the honor.

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### “Music as My Second Language”

Jean Gan

Duke University

MUSIC HAS SHAPED MY PERSONAL AND intellectual life in many ways. Music is a common language that connects me to others who share my enthusiasm for creating it. Furthermore, I learn about my own preferences and personality through the pieces that intrigue me. As I expose myself to a wider array of styles and eras, my musical tastes



grow more complex. Through music, I welcome opportunities to expand my friendships as well as my instrumental horizons.

I began studying piano at age six. For the next five years, my mother lived vicariously through my musical education, which her family had not been able to afford. In fifth grade, as I was becoming an earnest piano student, I was selected to commence violin lessons and play in my elementary school orchestra. From that day on, I saw life from a violinist's point of view.

Although I am a seasoned pianist, an ambitious solo violinist, and a fledgling cellist, I am, above all, a passionate chamber musician. My experience in a chamber quartet has had a strong impact on my character. When I was the second violinist, I simply enjoyed making music with my friends. Only after I became the first violinist did I feel the responsibility of leadership settling uncomfortably on my shoulders. However, the burden soon became a part of me and transformed into enthusiasm. Now, as the quartet leader, I use the small group setting to channel each of our individual creative instincts. Each member of the quartet shares her musical interests, bringing favorite repertoire to the table, so that we each participate in the learning and playing experience. The quartet is also an outlet for my musical fancy. Ever since I discovered the Finale music writing software, I have delighted in arranging works for our quartet to play and perform. This year, my goal is to arrange and perform the Ferrante and Teicher version of the love theme from *The Godfather* for a piano duet and orchestra.

As my aspirations grow, I aim to arrange music for a greater variety of instruments and to explore jazz, pop, and other styles of music on the piano. I desire to join others with similar talent and passion at Duke. However, before I leave my high school, I hope my appreciation for music will leave a mark on my community.

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### ANALYSIS

In "Music as My Second Language," Jean writes about how "music is a common language that connects [her] to others who share [her] enthusiasm for creating it." Jean packs a lot of information into a short essay while keeping the topic tightly focused. The language metaphor helps tie this essay together: Jean's assertion that "musical tastes grow more complex" parallels the growth of someone learning new vocabulary when studying a foreign language. And just as learning a