**Jose**: My name is Jose, and I’m here with Derek. Derek is a suitemate of sorts—he lives in a separate suite that we clipped with on the same floor. So even though he doesn’t live with us, we spend enough time together to be suitemates in spirit.

**Derek**: Hey! My name is Derek like Jose said. I’d like to thank Jose for having me on today. So, I’m a senior in Branford. I’m a math major and I play the French horn in a lot of different groups here at Yale.

J: Let’s jump right into it then. What have you been up to for the last month?

D: The last month? Let’s see…well this is my last semester here, right? So, I’ve really just been relaxing because I finished all my senior requirements last semester. So, uh…I’ve just been enjoying my classes. And then these past two weeks were spring break, so, uh, the first week I spent in Cancun with some of my suitemates—and we had a lot of fun—and then I went home to Buffalo, New York.

I just got back Wednesday. Been hanging out with the suitemates and catching up on homework—things like that.

J: How was Cancun?

D: It was great. Got to hang out with a bunch of friends that I got an Airbnb with. Hung out on the beach a lot…ate a lot of good tacos and drank a lot of beer.

J: Oh, that sounds amazing. Do you have a favorite part of the trip?

D: Yeah, it’s probably when we went to Chichen Itza. We woke up early and caught a shuttle bus to a nearby drop-off zone and we hiked the rest of the way there. Our tour guide was great and the whole experience was pretty amazing to be honest. But the best part was after the tour finished we went down into a nearby *cenote* and swam for a while. It was the best. It was so pretty too!

J: Yeah, the pictures you and Zach, another suitemate, sent look gorgeous. I was very jealous. No, but really. That’s awesome. I was hoping everyone had a good time. Maybe I’ll join you guys next time.

D: Totally! No, but yeah—it was a lot of fun. But, how did you like staying in New Haven?

J: It was good. I like having my own space, so it was nice to have the suite to myself. It was very quiet. I got some work done on some personal projects, but otherwise just kind of hung out and watched a lot of movies.

D: That’s dope. I know you like watching movies and Netflix series, so you must’ve had a good time, right?

J: No, yeah—it was nice, but I definitely should’ve gotten ahead on class work. Now I’ve got a couple of days before school starts again to catch up. What about you—do you have anything

coming up?

D: One thing that’s coming up pretty soon is the Grand Prix. Zach, who’s on the track and field team, has been training Jose and myself so we can race at the end of the semester. So, he’s been giving us workouts to do and long-distance runs—and sometime at the end of the semester we are going to have a 200m race and an 800m race. But I feel like we’ll have to add a third distance.

J: A longer one. Like a full mile, maybe.

D: I think that would work well. Also, it would help you out with the three marathons under your belt because of the more traditional running workouts for those longer distances. But I feel pretty confident about my chances against you.

J: You honestly do seem to be in better shape than me. But, I still have a little over a month left to get into better shape so who knows man.

D: But yeah, apart from that I also have the end of the year concerts for all the bands I’m in on campus. The three groups will each have a concert sometime in the next month or so. Really looking forward to that.

J: Awesome! Definitely going to have to check one of those out. Remind me, what bands are you in?

D: I’m in the Yale Concert Band, I’m in D-Pops, I’m in Coup de Brass—which is like a, uh, brass ensemble here on campus. I’ve got three shows to look forward to.

J: And of course: graduation. Are you excited?

D: Ah, yes! Graduation! Yeah, it’s crazy. It’s been creeping up quickly. But it’s going to be fun. I’ve participated in some of the past graduations because I’ve marched with the band in the graduation procession and played music throughout the whole thing. So, I kind of know what the whole day is going to be like, so I feel like I’m prepared for that. It’s the stuff that comes after that I think will be an adventure.

J: Do you feel like you’re happy with what you’ve done while here? How do you feel about leaving?

D: Yeah. I am, for the most part, satisfied with my overall Yale experience. I loved my time here, and it would be awesome to stay around longer but also, I realized that it’s time for me to go. Plus, next year I’ll be in New York, so I can come visit whenever.

J: Once summer break starts I’ll be counting down the days for your next visit. I want to return to the subject of music really quickly: why do you love it so much? Did you grow up playing? When did it start for you?

D: When I was five, or so, I started playing the piano. I did that informally for a handful of years, like from kindergarten right up to middle school. And in fourth grade I started playing band.

So, they basically have everyone go to the cafeteria and they go through all the instruments available. You then get try out your top three instruments. I don’t know why but, on that day, my top three were French horn, bassoon, and saxophone. I guess I thought they were kind of unique. Not necessarily the most popular instruments, but I really enjoy their sounds. Like, you know, the French horn has a very beautiful sound that really drew me towards it. So yeah, I started playing the French horn in the fourth grade.

I still play. Its’s always been a big part of my life and I’ve made a lot of good friends through it. I just really enjoy the whole process of working together with other musicians to figure out who gets what part and working in tandem to make sure it’s played as best as possible.

J: My parents played an important role in shaping my musical taste and my love of music in general—where does that come from for you?

D: It’s funny that you mention parents, actually. Both of my parents are deaf—they wear hearing aids. They both speak and can read lips and know sign language, but yeah, growing up I can’t really say I had that parental guidance in terms of exploring music. And well, my mom was a percussionist in her grade school bands—she would just watch the conductor’s hands and drum in time. She actually has great rhythm.

They both encouraged me to take up music and I started off by playing drums. They really like music with really loud drums/moments because they can feel the vibrations through their body.

Most of my music taste comes from friends, radio, and babysitters actually.

J: Do you share music/playlists with others often?

D: I feel like I don’t really do that that often. I’m usually the recipient of things like that, but if it’s something I really like then yeah, maybe I’ll send it to a friend/sister or add it to one of my playlists.

J: Oh, so you make your own playlists?

D: Yes and no. I just kind add songs I like to a list. I don’t really put enough thought into them to feel comfortable calling them playlists.

J: No, that’s fair. I do make my own playlists, but I also have a couple of those lists of songs I just really like to listen to. So, you make playlists, but do you ever compose things yourself?

D: Well the groups I’m in have student arrangements all the time, but I have never really taken the initiative to start writing. I usually volunteer for other jobs. I’ve actually never taken music theory classes, but I feel like I’ve learned a lot through playing the music. So, I do feel like I could potentially arrange/write something if I really wanted to.

J: We’re starting to run short on time but is there anything you’re listening to at the moment that you’re really into?

D: BROCKHAMPTON. I really like them. They’ve definitely become a big part of my music listening. I actually filled out a March Madness bracket for them?

J: Oh, really? I did too. Wait, who won in yours?

D: SWEET.

J: That’s a good one. I had HEAT winning. I don’t know man—HEAT is just so in your face. It might just be because it was the first song I heard by them, but I really love that song. Why did you choose SWEET?

D: Similar reasons to you actually. I was actually introduced to BROCKHAMPTON late last year so SWEET was one of the first songs I was introduced too. Plus, all the members have high-quality performances in the song—it’s hard not to like it really.

J: Agreed.

Well that’s all we have time for today. Thanks so much for sitting down to talk. It was nice catching up and chatting. I feel like we’ve just really scratched the surface of your love for music. But we do have to go, so is there anything you’d like to say before we wrap things up?

D: Thanks for having me on your show and don’t forget to like, comment, subscribe. Thanks for watching!