

Personal Essay

Marcus Heier

I was born and raised in the southern region of Sweden, in a small village that offered very limited access to ensembles, bands, and orchestras. This circumstance required me to explore music in a more isolated manner, which created more space for individual exploration.

Recognizing that Sweden could not fully support my aspirations in performing and composing the music of my dreams, I made the decision to leave Sweden in my early twenties. Over the years, I have lived and worked as a musician & composer in diverse locales such as London (4 years), Los Angeles (2 years), Abu Dhabi (1 year), Macau (7 months), and several other Asian countries, including Beijing and Seoul, for shorter durations.

My residency in these various countries provided me with profound insights into their cultures and, in some cases, their languages. This significantly helped my ability to connect with individuals from different backgrounds. I have found that even a simple greeting in someone's native language, such as a warm "Hello, how are you?" can invoke a smile and foster an incredibly welcoming atmosphere. These social interactions have proven invaluable in cultivating positive environments within my workplace and study communities in the past, and I am confident that it will contribute similarly to the Princeton University community.

Through my many travels, I have been immersed in a multitude of cultures and their respective music. This exposure has granted me a clearer understanding of my own identity and the type of music I wish to compose, as I have had the opportunity to compare and contrast it to a wide array of musical styles. It also made my musical goals and ambitions more tangible, as the path forward is significantly clearer because of my experience.

As a drummer with a strong interest in harmony, my writing style deviates from the conventional. I not only concentrate on tonal tension-release in my compositions but also meticulously consider rhythmic tension-release, both in shorter phrases and large-scale patterns encompassing entire sections. Furthermore, my main influences derive from non-jazz and non-classical genres, such as Loscil and Meshuggah, which inspire me to take alternative routes in actualising my music. My unique musical perspective, coupled with my personal interests and experiences, has the potential to infuse new ideas and inspiration into the music community at Princeton, thereby enhancing and supporting the diversity of an already diverse department.
