



Student Spotlight

Skyler Hedblom

Our student spotlight this winter is Skyer Hedblom, senior composition major and percussionist. Skyer has played percussion with a myriad of groups, including on-campus in the Wind Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, Percussion Ensemble, Yume Daiko, Opera Theater, and even choral groups such as the Adelpian Concert Choir; as well as playing for and being the music librarian of Tacoma Concert Band. Even though learning music for all of these ensembles can be challenging, Skyer treats each concert cycle as a learning experience to grow and develop his performance skills.

This year, Skyer became the president of Puget Sound's Taiko club, Yume Daiko. Skyer says he's honored to be president for such a strong community, and he's excited to be a guiding figure and to "give them the space to discover all the things that led me to fall in love with Taiko for themselves, while still being there to show them a path and correct them when needed." When asked what some of the main takeaways Skyer has from playing in Yume Daiko, he said "Passion and energy... the Taiko rhythms we play tend to be on the simpler side. To play them without energy results in an extremely dull performance." He also talks about how Taiko requires full-body movement, loud 'kiai' (shouts or other verbalizations), intensive playing, and demands full focus. "While on the classical stage I'm not usually shouting like in Taiko club, I try to bring the same level of engagement and energy to the back of the ensemble. Hopefully then it carries to the front and out into the audience!"

As a composition major, Skyler has had to do a lot of work with music engraving, and that translates well into his work as librarian for Tacoma Concert Band. Skyler has worked with many pieces of music over the years, and his work in engraving has changed how he views new music. "I think...just becoming more familiar with the overall process and journey music takes from the composer's draft to the performer's music stand has made me more aware of all the decisions that do or don't get made along the way." He says that this has helped him to understand why some music looks the way it does, while other times, "I find myself ignoring it, as I also know how many of these confusions may be the result of an arbitrary decision made along the way that had no thought put into it, or it is quite simply an errata that got lost in the process."

Through his major, Skyler has taken many music classes that have furthered his composition and music arrangement skills. One of the most impactful courses that Skyler took in the School of Music was MUS 301, Form & Analysis. This course teaches students how to look at and understand, to a broader degree, the form of most music. "I feel like a lot of the time as younger performers we get as far as maybe phrase-by-phrase analysis, or possibly a broader 'this section sounds like ___ and this one sounds like ___.'" However, after taking the class, Skyler feels as if he can now understand the form in almost any song, and this has given him a better understanding of how music is made. "As a performer, this allows me to have such a better understanding of what I am playing and the function my part serves in it."

As a composition major, part of Skyler's graduation requirements is to create a senior composition recital, in which he will showcase pieces he has composed in his time here at Puget Sound. When asked how he feels about the process, Skyler said "I've just started preparing my repertoire list, and it's honestly a bit intimidating to think that this will be the culmination of my time here at Puget Sound, but I'm also really excited about getting to share this music and am taking it just one day at a time!" Skyler's Senior Composition is Wednesday, March 5 at 8 p.m. in Schneebeck Concert Hall and we're excited to see the product of his hard work and dedication!

