

What Students Say about their Two Years of Band/Orchestra at Hopkins

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Student: Eamon Jahani (Hopkins Bands 2007-2009, Trumpet)

Currently: Biotech Engineer (Degrees from UC Irvine and University of Washington)

Even though I knew my career/life would take me to becoming an engineer, I would not be where I am today were it not for being in the music program, especially under Mr. Conway. It may not seem like it at first glance, but taking music is an excellent way to learn important life skills in general. Music taught me how to be disciplined by practicing my instrument, how to think creatively by improvising solos in jazz band, and how to communicate and develop skill for fostering team chemistry. From the Hopkins program, I went on to join music groups throughout High School and College, and even now music is a constant point of connection and engagement with my coworkers well after my academic career. I had an overwhelmingly positive experience of being Mr. Conway's student; it motivated me to continue have music be a part of my life and the older I've gotten, the more I've gotten to appreciate and be thankful for those early years.

Student: Nisha Sen (Hopkins Bands 2012-2014, Trumpet)

Currently: Student at Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Applied Mathematics)

I consider my time in the Hopkins Music Program to be some of the most valuable and important time in my life. I entered with the expectation that I would learn an instrument and get to go on some cool trips, but I quickly learned that there was so much more to it than just that. Other than the opportunity to make lifelong friends and perform in a (surprisingly) high caliber band for a middle school, some of my most significant takeaways from my time in these bands were the importance of detail and the ability to multitask. Attention to detail is necessary in any musical situation, and I quickly found myself applying similar painstaking attention to my schoolwork— something I continue to do today in college (as a Mathematics major). The ability to multitask, which is especially necessary in an ensemble setting, is something that I have also continued to use throughout my life, academically and otherwise—and it is a skill that I (and my other peers in the music program) seemed to have developed and fine tuned more quickly than many of our other peers. I could honestly go on and on about how much I loved my time playing in Hopkins Bands, but I just want to stress that taking part in them taught me several life skills that have only benefitted me since, and I highly encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity.

Student: Jeanine Tso (Hopkins Bands 2011-2013, Trombone)

Currently: Student at UC Berkeley (Cognitive Science)

With practically no music experience, I started playing trombone right before 7th grade and enrolled in the Hopkins Concert Band. I initially wanted to take band because my friends were also in it, but participating in band was probably the most formative experience of my junior high school years. It taught me the importance of disciplined practice to grow in any worthwhile skill and the importance of each individual's contribution to the group. Over the years, I've picked up some side perks of continuing to play music in band in high school, like having a REALLY FUN hobby (you have a bit of a "wow" factor, too, from knowing how to play an instrument), leadership experiences to write about in college essays, opportunities to travel around California and meet other musicians at music conferences, and community service, none of which I would have anticipated when I first joined band in 7th grade. But perhaps the most valuable and memorable things I've gained from making that decision were my character growth and the amazing realization that a room of 60 teenagers and a conductor could produce something together that sounds absolutely incredible.

Student: Apoorva Prakash (Hopkins Orchestras 2011-2013, Violin)

Currently: Student at UC Berkeley (Computer Science/Economics)

Being part of the Hopkins Music Program was arguably one of the most formative experiences of my life. Mr. Conway's energetic and inspiring teaching style really sparked my passion for violin, which led me to join youth symphonies in high school, and pursue violin performance opportunities even throughout college. I am certain that playing violin was a primary reason why I got admitted to top universities: not only did I write my college application essay about orchestra, but I was able to display leadership in the various ensembles I had been part of. Most importantly in my personal life, I made my closest friends through the Hopkins Music Program, one of whom went on to be my roommate in college! I am forever grateful to Mr. Conway for being such a wonderful musical director, and I would recommend participating in the program to every aspiring musician.

Student: An Tran (Hopkins Orchestras 2011-2013, Violin)

Currently: Student at University of the Pacific (Pharmaceutical Medicine)

The Hopkins Music Program was one of the best experiences that defined my junior high school years and created a lasting impact on who I am today. The program helped me develop good habits at a young age and taught me to always strive to improve myself. I learned and developed skills critical for everyday professional life, such as discipline, interpersonal communication, and collaborating with others. Most importantly, I made so many wonderful memories that I can look back fondly on, and formed friendships that have lasted to this day, nearly a decade later.

Student: Andrew Wang (Hopkins Orchestras 2013-2015, Cello)

Currently: Student at UC Berkeley (Mechanical Engineering)

The Hopkins Music Program was the absolute highlight of my middle school experience. Mr. Conway's incredible drive and resolve, along with his consistent effort to be the friendliest and most approachable teacher one could ask for, fostered a welcoming environment of musical excellence. But beyond that, orchestra was a community in every sense of the word. Many of my fondest memories and closest friendships were made there, while rehearsing in the orchestra room, chatting on the bus between festivals, performing in grand concert halls, and, of course, traveling to Disneyland! For those of you parents/students who are still debating taking band/orchestra, I implore you: please take advantage of this golden opportunity to make some of the most treasured memories of your young lives. You won't regret it!