

**SEVEN:**

**RESEARCH / CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP**

## CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Reimagining my performing career since moving to Lubbock has been a challenge, as balancing all aspects of my position as violin faculty has been tricky. Having a full studio of violinists, finding ample practice time, and supporting our violin community through service goals has left me to choose my concertizing carefully. I chose to focus on concerts that had a community-centric focus, whether it be internationally based or near Lubbock. Those who know me well know that this is at the core of why I perform, why I continue to push boundaries with repertoire, and why I have chosen a slightly different approach to my creative activity.

One of the highlights of my performing career has been working with the American composer John Corigliano. My dear colleague Sarah McKoin had a wonderful idea of bringing him to Lubbock for a full week for a residency, which was supported by both the School of Music and the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra. Maestro David Cho had asked me if I would like to play Corigliano's *Red Violin Concerto*, and I agreed because of the impact I knew this concert would bring to our students, to the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra, and to the entire community of Lubbock. Many of my students were on stage performing in the final concert and working directly with this incredible composer. Seeing our Lubbock audience embrace a piece of modern music with the living composer present for the performance developed a deeper sense of appreciation of contemporary music. Alamo Drafthouse had a special showing of *The Red Violin* film, and afterwards our community was able to ask questions to Mr. Corigliano about his compositional style. Our TTU composition students worked directly with the composer, having a unique opportunity to bond with this truly great artist. Without hesitation I agreed to be a part of this community project.

Another highlight has been traveling to Chile to be a part of the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual National Music Festival *Las Semanas Musicales* in 2019. My collaborative pianist David Palmer and I were the only American musicians chosen to attend the festival during our week of activities. One of the concepts of this festival that appealed to me was how the main festival was in Frutillar, Chile, but numerous concerts were given all over the country, allowing us to reach into multiple communities and share our work. The internal funding structure shows a wide range of support, from the Ministry of Culture to local businesses. For the three main concerts we gave (Frutillar, Valdivia, and Santiago), we had at-capacity audiences and press coverage across the country. Concerts were broadcast on the radio, we had television interviews, and received reviews by some of the most respected classical music journalists in the country.

Another large community-based project was the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* Alliance concert and PBS Documentary from August of 2022. Musicians from Lubbock, Amarillo, Albuquerque, Dallas, Oklahoma City, and beyond, were invited to participate in this monumental concert. Over five years and efforts by hundreds of donors and patrons allowed the *Missa Solemnis* to be performed for the first time in the Panhandle. This was originally planned for 2020, which was the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Beethoven's birth. Although it was delayed, it was a true celebration of

the spirit of West Texas musicians and audiences. 178 of us joined onstage for this concert, led by Maestro Michael Palmer, including eight of my TTU violin students. In the fourth movement (Sanctus-Benedictus), there is a 12-minute violin solo that I had the honor to perform, probably the one time in my life I will be so fortunate because of the scope of the work. Panhandle PBS did an entire documentary on this project, including the performance. It is currently being broadcast across Texas, telling this story of how so many came together to produce this performance. Considering this piece his greatest musical accomplishment, Beethoven wrote on the first page of the *Missa* score, "From the heart, may it go again, to the heart".

Musicians reinvented themselves during the Covid-19 year. With indoor performances cancelled, the Durations Trio (myself on violin, Kevin Wass on tuba, and Susan Wass on piano) explored performing outdoors by commissioning nine new works written by TTU students. Through a Scholarship Catalyst Program Grant (I was the PI), we purchased special equipment for on-site performances at numerous TTU Public Art Collection sites. We recorded all of the works for the students to include in their own personal dossiers and presented at the Texas Music Educator's Conference in San Antonio to share our experience of "Taking Your Chamber Ensemble Outdoors". Working with our dedicated music composition staff, connecting with our talented TTU composition majors, performing outdoors in front of monumental art structures during a health crisis, and working with my Durations Trio colleagues made this project fulfilling.

An unexpected recording project also took place during the end of Covid performance restrictions, as my dear friend and jazz composer Bevan Manson invited me to be a part of his new album. I hesitated to participate because of my lack of jazz expertise, but I decided to try this new genre and move forward with this project. Because of our phenomenal recording studio and engineer Hikedi Isoda, I was able to record for his "Redwood" track. This experience of playing a jazz influenced classical work pushed my boundaries as an artist and has served as a reminder to my students to try new genres and push yourself in new ways. It will be released in 2023.

One of my passion projects is with the Lake City Colorado community. Now in its seventh season, the Lake City String Academy has been a retreat for collegiate level violinists to work creatively in this supportive rural town. Dr. Morton Weir, a former Chancellor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign supported this project from its inception, believing in the concept of bringing high-level classical violin music to an underserved rural community would make a significant impact. Often, rural communities have limited access to cultural events, including classical music performances. We truly support the goal of bringing great violin performances to everyone, regardless of their location, so they can participate in the arts. In 2021, NPR correspondent Laura Palmisano from KVNF contacted me, asking if she could do a radio story on our festival. She came and followed us around for an entire week, doing interviews with me, our violinists, and the community audience members. She has won three awards for her work, including one from the Colorado Broadcast Association and one from the Society of Professional Journalism. Our festival has become a fixture of Lake City because of local and regional grant support, individual patron support, and direct support from the local arts community, Lake City Arts. I am proud of what we have accomplished in this small town and look forward to being there again this summer.

As I look through my repertoire programmed throughout the past few years, I was committed to include numerous composers who have not had as equal representation. My dear friend and colleague Maureen Nelson (violinist with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra) wrote an exquisite set of string quartet and percussion pieces, *Peruvian Dances*, which we performed at the Hot Springs Music Festival in 2022. The discovery of the composer Zara Levina (Russian-Ukrainian) and her incredible *Sonata No. 2* was a highlight to perform in Austin this past year. Syrian composer Kinan Azmeh wrote *A Scattered Sketchbook* for Violin and Clarinet, and I have had multiple opportunities to perform this with the great clarinetist Osiris Molina. Kenji Bunch's *Until Next Time* involved scordatura tuning (changing string pitches away from the traditional tuning), which stretched my technical abilities and required an extra violin to keep things in tune.

Through my performances, masterclasses, and recordings, I am attempting to preserve and further develop the cultural tradition of classical music, creating more community-based experiences and enabling collaboration.