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Senior Recital

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Jaron Kirshenbaum, Senior Honors Clarinet Recital Reflection

This experience can only be described as deeply rewarding, although that may be an understatement. As a music education major, it is not required to do a recital, and most education majors do not have one. Part of the reason for this is because of our regular workload, and part of it is because we generally do not practice as much as a music performance major would. My decision to do a recital as my Honors Thesis was one that I knew would stretch my abilities as a performer. I would have to prepare more music than ever before, while also keeping up the high performance standard for the large ensembles I was in, attending weekly lessons, preparing for my Senior Hearing, and not sacrificing time needed for other classes in a way that would affect my grades. The process was long and hard, but I believe I exceeded not only the expectations of my Studio Professor, family, and friends, but of myself as well.

Going into it, I knew that my stamina would be an issue, as I have never played an entire solo recital before, and have never practiced an amount that would allow me to easily do so, as is the nature of a music education major. I had to increase my amount of daily practicing, and do extra exercises to get my embouchure into shape. When it came to the recital, I made it through just fine, only feeling the physical fatigue about halfway through the final piece.

As it is with every performance by a musician, looking back, there is a lot I wish I had done better. That does not mean I am disappointed in myself or believe that I did a bad job. I believe, as I said before, that I exceeded my own expectations. However, there were some mistakes I had never made before due to nerves, and small details that really only I as the performer would notice were not quite right. However, your harshest critic is yourself, especially in the music world. Looking at the overall performance and thinking about the

technical and expressive aspects, sound quality/tone production, and communication between myself and the other performers, there is a lot to be proud of.

The process of playing a recital is not only physically demanding, but mentally demanding as well. The level of stress involved in playing and staying completely focused for 45 minutes of music in a recital that, with an intermission and setup between songs, lasts a little more than an hour, is more than I realized. After the recital, my body was sore, and I found it hard to focus on tasks like greeting guests who had come to my performance, due to my mind being extremely exhausted and needing time to decompress.

In conclusion, although there is a lot that I as a perfectionist and performer would like to have done better, I am still overjoyed with the final result of my performance. It was physically and mentally exhausting, and was a feat I never imagined myself even attempting until I decided to make it my Honors Thesis topic. It pushed my limits, and allowed me to hone my skill and show my true potential as a musician. It allowed me to share music that I enjoy and picked out myself with my Professors, family, and friends. I am proud of myself for completing this daunting task, and am honored to have gotten to focus my Honors Thesis around the subject matter I love and am pursuing a professional career in.