

Teaching Philosophy (Jan 2024)

Teaching the cello has allowed me the unique opportunity to work with people from many different walks of life. My growing online teaching studio has allowed me to connect with individuals across the United States and even internationally as of recently. The idea of playing a small role in each other's journey as a student or a teacher through shared experience, the transfer of aural traditions, and the development of one's personal musical voice continues to excite me in my teaching today.

I am fortunate to have had great opportunities and musical experiences, many of which wouldn't be possible without the demonstration of hard work, cultivation of performance practices, and artistic inspiration by many mentors and teachers over the years. My first musical love was classical and chamber music. I am especially grateful for my former teacher Dr. Vicky Wang (in my early years) for her belief in me as a young cellist, and dedication in helping me pursue a degree in cello performance. And my cello teacher Antonio Lysy (at UCLA) who was pivotal in helping me grow from a cellist into an artist. I had the privilege of attending his benefit concert raising money for the SOL-LA Music Academy, featuring music from his multimedia project "Te Amo, Argentina" based on his Latin Grammy award-winning CD "Antonio Lysy at the Broad - Music From Argentina", featuring works by Piazzolla, Golijov, Ginastera, Bragato, and Schiffrin. The solo cello performance, chamber music, live dancing, combined for a charity event imparted on me a vivid and memorable introduction to the heart and soul of Argentine music and culture.

My second love was jazz, which I began in middle school. My upright bass teacher, Saul Sierra, instilled in me an appreciation for the important role of rhythm, groove, and harmony in many styles of music at an early age. I have also been fortunate to spend extended time with

extraordinary music educators including string chamber music with Formosa Quartet violist Che-Yen Chen (First-Prize winner of the 2006 London International String Quartet Competition), and improvisation with my mentoring committee during my graduate studies at Belmont University: jazz pianist and composer Dr. Bruce Dudley and 6-string electric violinist, Tracy Silverman, who was named one of 100 distinguished alumni by the Juilliard School. My teaching philosophy has been expanded by these musicians and others who have believed in me and encouraged me in exploring a wide scope of musical styles.

I am also grateful for the opportunities to teach and learn from my students in a variety of contexts. I have enjoyed teaching private students over the years in addition to teaching on faculties including Belmont University's String Crossing Camp, the O'Connor Method String Camp, and C'est Bon Chamber Music Academy. During my years as the strings teacher at F. H. Jenkins Preparatory School, an ESA-approved institution in Nashville, I created and taught a comprehensive and diverse K-8 curriculum for violin, viola, and cello, organizing classes by age group. I'm also appreciative of guest opportunities to lead string improvisation workshops and share my story, including for undergraduate and graduate level cello performance students at UCLA.

I believe music is more enjoyable and meaningful once we have found our own voice. As a teacher, I hope to equip students with the necessary tools to solve problems and become uniquely creative and expressive in music that interests them. The ability to self-assess one's playing is critical, and one of my aims as a teacher is to guide students in the process of learning how to teach themselves. In addition to learning classical music, I believe the ability to improvise, read lead sheets, play in multiple styles, function in a rhythm section, and amplify and record can help open opportunities for string players pursuing a career in today's evolving

musical landscape. I hope to inspire students with an approach to music I aim to follow; to have confidence in his or her unique voice while remaining curious to never stop learning.

-Caleb Yang