

Alan Gao  
Naples Music Club Turiel Award Essay

I was on the stage of the Naples Philharmonic Center for the Arts performing the exhilarating Finale of the Violin Concerto in D Major by Piotr Tchaikovsky with the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra. My heart thrashed against my chest while the blood raced through my body like a raging river fueling the music that I played with fervor and passion. My fingers almost seemed like they had developed a consciousness of their own as they slid up and down the fingerboard with agility hitting each note accurately like miniature hammers. As the audience exploded out of their seats and interrupted my final note with thunderous applause, I realized that I never would have been able to achieve such success and prowess if I had not developed unwavering confidence and resolute will that proved to me that even the hardest stones can be cracked by the most perpetual water drops.

Throughout my life I have always felt the need to stretch the limits of my abilities. Born to two professional musicians, my training in classical music started when I was only 3 years old. My father and mother guided me on the path of classical musicians and taught me the key virtues required to be successful in music: agility of mind, accuracy of fingers, and passion of heart. I dedicated myself to every new challenging piece of music that my father approached me with and I worked endlessly to bring the soul of the music to fruition without relinquishing the technique of the violin.

The virtues that I attained in my musical training have facilitated my academic journey and proved to be advantageous allies. With these disciplines, I succeeded in many of my endeavors throughout my life including Math Competitions up to the state level, organizing charity events, and the college admissions process. And as I cross over the threshold into college, I have no doubt that music will continue to accompany me and support me. It has already helped me accomplish so much and as I seize the benefits of the reputable music program at University of Michigan, I will rely on the qualities of a successful musician to succeed in the University's Honors College. Some of the many benefits that the Turiel Award can aid me with, if I am fortunate enough to receive it, are my aspiration to form a string quartet with my peers at Michigan with the guidance of their chamber music faculty and my interest in taking violin lessons from renowned professors such as Stephen Shipps.

Starting next year, the independent life will take me through many changes as I adjust to my new surroundings, but with the potential help of the Turiel Award, music will be a constant no matter where my life takes me.