

SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with WESLEY FERREIRA

DIANE BARGER

President-elect of the International Clarinet Association and Professor of Clarinet at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Diane Barger is an active soloist, chamber musician, masterclass clinician, and adjudicator throughout the USA and abroad. She takes time to sit down and answer some questions.

What's your best habit, and what's your worst? Best habit is that I am organized and get things done in advance when at all possible. My worst habit is looking at my smartphone or tablet too much before I go to sleep. I blame hosting a past ICA ClarinetFest® for that!

How do you unplug? I love to color intricately-drawn coloring books while having Netflix on in the background. It's a complete stress reliever for me!

What is your secret to being productive? Knowing the satisfaction that will come is my secret. Once I get going on a project, there is no stopping me.

Do you have a mantra? "Play Pretty" – a phrase that my mom used to say to me before every performance. I have that phrase engraved on my Hexa Silverstein ligature; I make sure to gently touch that bar on my ligature before every concert and hear her voice saying those words to me.

What advice would you give your younger self? Don't sweat the small stuff.

What's the best mistake you ever made? Not winning an orchestral audition: had I won, I would never have gone back to school for my doctorate and never would have had this amazing life in Lincoln.

What's the one thing that people would be surprised to find out about you? I am such an introvert! I used to make friends by bringing my puppets to school with me when I was young. I still do a great Grover imitation (and yes, I have a Grover puppet)!

What's the craziest (or most adventurous or unique) thing you've ever done? I played in the orchestra accompanying Whitney Houston singing the Star Spangled Banner for Super Bowl XXV.

What is the last thing you do at night? Say a prayer and make sure to thank God for something, even if it's been a rough day.

What time do you typically wake up? I wake up around 7am, but that does not mean I actually GET up!

What's your morning routine?

Depending on the day, get up, go for a walk/do a work out, then shower OR simply get ready for the day and get going. I'm not a coffee drinker and usually don't eat breakfast as I've been doing intermittent fasting since 2019, so it's pretty easy to get going in the morning!

What's the best piece of advice you received, and who gave it to you?

As an undergraduate heading off as a performer for the Robert Marcellus summer masterclass, my teacher, Frank Kowalsky, wrote me a note, "Allow yourself to be fallible; you will perform more successfully and enjoy it more." I have that piece of paper laminated and in my clarinet case with me at all times.

What was the hardest part of 2020 for you?

Not being able to perform. When I first got to make music again with my Lincoln Symphony Orchestra colleagues I had tears in my eyes! It was so healing for my soul.

What's your favorite object in your home? My cat, Fritz Kroepsch. He's not an object, of course, but I love him so!

What's the last good TV show that you binged? I finally watched *Game of Thrones* this summer! I want some dragons of my own...



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If you weren't a clarinet player, what would be your profession?

Some sort of art teacher; I do love to color in my spare time!

If you joined the circus, what would you be doing? **I would be one of the clowns working with the little dogs in tutus riding bikes.**

If you could have coined a single phrase of wisdom, what would it be?

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." (Nelson Mandela)

If you could take back one sentence uttered in your past? **"Why me?" I try to turn that into "Try me."**

If you could ask any person one question, who and what would you ask?

I would ask Leonardo da Vinci: "Would you have painted the Mona Lisa so tiny if you knew so many people would be trying to get a good look at it at the Louvre?" I mean, seriously!