

I had many goals starting out the year to improve my technique, but I forgot the most important thing when it came to my music; I forgot the exhilarating feeling of just performing, the stomachache before a show, and the nerve wracking moment, standing in front of an audience. And most crucially, I forgot the importance of practice – the intense practice that enable me to play everything with minimal mistake. Which is to say my performance in the winter concert was anything but satisfactory. So I did make it a goal to practice my music as much as I can, and not just working on solos pieces and techniques, I think I have achieved this goal as I greatly enjoy myself at both the Wake Forest concert and the Wakefield concert. Mistakes in my playing were now disregarded as the inevitable, which to me, is the next wall that I have to overcome in order to advance to the next level.

I have improved in my techniques, I could play sixteen notes faster than before as well as long ties without dividing the bow – Suite and Sinfonia gave me quite a bit of practice in this aspect. I could also play the sixteen notes in my Handel solo that was cut before. I also advanced in my study of the Seitz concerto and that was because I am doing better with double stops. Seitz's challenge to me right now is quadruple stops and harmonic notes (which I have no knowledge about). I could also play vibrato in higher position more effectively and I felt as if my sight reading have improved because I did very well on Sinfonia during the earlier period of time, when we have just gotten the piece. In terms of techniques, I think there are more room to grow, but I felt that I also grew quite a bit due to our repertoire.

This year, by coincidence, I have challenged an aspect that I had trouble with before without knowing that I did. I have always performed solos, playing by myself instead of with an ensemble (not including my accompanists), but this semester I played in a quartet, and was a part in two duets instead of solos. This has given me more opportunity to work with others, thus giving me new insight as a musician.

My goals for the summer include practicing everyday (at least 15 minutes on days that I don't feel like playing), going over all of my previous solos and make sure that I master them completely (Concerto in D, Handel Sonata, Seitz, Bach Gigue and some other pieces), and memorize simple pieces that I could perform instantaneously in front of the public if anyone asks me to play. But the most important thing that I would like to accomplish is to find the 'zone', which I define as a mental state where I am at the right level of nervous and at the right level of being comfortable in regards to the music. I have found that I make mistakes if I'm too comfortable on stage, or if I'm overly nervous. So I would like to get to a point where I can perform freely in front of people, instead of getting conscious about everything, which affects my performance. (I can perform in front of a mirror, yet can't do the same in front of an audience, quite frustrating actually). This might be a small goal, but I would like to perform a solo piece without any mistakes.