

SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with WESLEY FERREIRA

ANDREW SIMON

Principal clarinetist of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, since 1988, and graduate from The Juilliard School, Andrew Simon has recorded and performed to acclaim worldwide. He also got us through the pandemic with Andy's Licorice Talk video web series. He sits down to answer some questions.

What's the best part about being a musician?

When you introduce someone to a masterpiece for the first time.

What's the hardest part about being a musician?

No matter how well the concert went, accepting you could have always played it better.

What's the one thing that people would be surprised to find out about you?

I'm an introvert at heart.

What's something that made you smile recently?

Watching live panda bears.

What is your best habit, and what is your worst?

Calling my mother in the morning; not being in the present.

What's something that you've wanted to do for a long time but haven't yet?

Go through my cassette tape collection and save what's left of the sentimental gems, like lessons with my old teachers.

If you could have lunch with any human being in history, who would it be and what would you want to know? Albert Einstein and (how) did his music influence his mathematical pursuits.

Do you have a mantra?

Be a contributor, not a critic.

Who was your hero growing up, and who's your hero today?

It was Björn Borg, and now it's Muhammed Ali.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Focus on improving what's important to you and have faith that everything will work out.

What is your favorite form of exercise?

Tennis, walking on the beach, walking in Manhattan.

Is there a book you recommend to everyone? *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl.

What book(s) inspire you?

Black and White: The Way I See It by Richard Williams (Serena and Venus' Father).

What phone app do you love to use? Headspace.

Is there a musician/artist that you admire? I have many musicians that are my musical heroes, but Wynton Marsalis is my hero in everything.

What other art form resonates with you? Ballet. I admire dancers' dedication beyond words.

Do you prefer the calm of nature or the vibrancy of the city? Vibrancy of the city with a bunch of calm of nature experiences sprinkled in.

What's the first piece of music you remember falling in love with? Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony and the horn solo in the slow movement.

What is your favorite trait in a conductor? One that delights and searches in finding something new no matter how standard the warhorse.

How do you wind down at the end of the day? I pet my dog.

If you could play in any orchestra (other than your own), which would it be? Berlin Philharmonic.



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If you had to describe yourself in three words, which ones would you choose?
Motivated, well-intentioned, distracted.

If you were an animal, what kind would you be?
A pampered dog.

If you could own any company, past or present, which would it be?
Blue Note Records. Amazing brand name built on trust of quality for so many generations to appreciate.

If you could rid yourself of one personal fear, what would that be?
Performance anxiety.

If you were to check into your retired self, where would you be and what would you be doing right now?
Exactly what I'm doing now.

If you could cast someone to play you in a movie, who would it be?
Bruce Willis.