

SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with WESLEY FERREIRA

ROBERT SPRING

A world-famous clarinet virtuoso with several pioneering record albums to his credit and an over 30-year legacy of performing and teaching as clarinet professor at Arizona State University, Robert Spring sits down to answer some questions.

If you could have lunch with any human being in history, who would it be and what would you want to know? Johann Christoph Denner – did you really mean to invent a new instrument?

What's the hardest part about being a musician? Practicing daily. I've done this since 1966!

What really makes you laugh? Bad puns, and bad lessons when you and your student just fall apart laughing.

What's always in your bag? My Micro reed clipper. I only know of two of these, mine and the one John Mohler had.

What do you love most about your life right now? Freedom! I can perform any and all styles of music. I'm also old enough to do what I want in music and not care what others think.

What is your secret to being productive? I believe that everyone is given a gift in life. It is your role in the world to use this gift. To not do so is, in my opinion, a sin.

If you were given a million dollars right now, what would you do with it? Help my daughter and son-in-law get started in life, and make sure my brothers were ok for the rest of their lives.

What is your best habit, and what is your worst? Best... I'm very driven and I love to work, teach, and be creative. Worst... I like cigars!

How do you handle email? Do it all at the end of the day. Start at the latest and work backwards. Often things that were big problems at 6:00am are solved by the time you get to them!

How do you wind down at the end of the day? Netflix and single malt.

What is your favorite gadget or piece of equipment in your home? Alexa – "Alexa, turn on the living room."

What advice are you glad you ignored? Don't go into music – there's no money in it. It was from a music teacher and it was wrong!

What's the worst performance experience you've ever had? L'Histoire du Soldat at ASU many years ago. I narrated the devil part as well as playing the clarinet part. I blew the opening passage on both the first time and the repeat. Don't think I got any of the notes!

How do you know when you're finished with a practice session? Brain stops... can't think and don't remember what I just did.

What do you think is the biggest accomplishment in your career so far? My students' successes.

What's your favorite city in the world? London, England.



What's the one thing you learned in college that you wish you had listened to? You need to realize that there are hundreds of other people doing the same thing you are, and you need to be the best.

Do you have a necessary vice? Coffee!

Is there a meal you fantasize about? Lobster.

What is your favorite quote? "It's a pretty good crowd for a Saturday, and the manager gives me a smile, 'cause he knows that it's me that they're coming to see to forget about life for a while."
- Billy Joel, "Piano Man"

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

If you had to describe yourself in three words, which ones would you choose?
Family, Teacher, Musician.

If you could cast someone to play you in a movie, who would it be?
Robert Redford!

If you ruled the world, what's the first thing you would change?
Eliminate all nuclear weapons.

If you had a superpower, what would it be?
ESP.

If you were to pick what is inscribed on your gravestone, what would it be?
He cared about people.