

# 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...



# CODA

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!**