

SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with WESLEY FERREIRA

KIMBERLY COLE LUEVANO

Celebrated for her exquisite musicianship, noted for her earnest and spirited personality, and recognized as an influential clarinet pedagogue, Kimberly Cole Luevano is Professor of Clarinet at the University of North Texas. She sits down to answer some questions.

What's a buzzword you never want to hear again? It's not really a buzzword, but a phrase: "Work smarter, not harder." I mean, I get the idea, but I grow impatient with the idea that there must be a way to make everything more efficient. Sometimes you just need to do the work.

Do you have a mantra?
Every day, just try your best. Some days will go better than others.

What really makes you laugh?
Super cheesy knock-knock jokes or corny jokes (like the kind kids tell). James Corden's "Carpool Karaoke."

What's the one thing that people would be surprised to find out about you? Most people think I'm an extrovert, but I'm actually not! I've just learned how to assimilate that behavior as needed. Most of the time, I really like to be by myself or in small groups of people. Big crowds still can cause me a little anxiety.

What advice would you give your younger self?
Trust yourself. Worry less. Don't forget to stop and smell the roses.

What's your favorite city in the world?
Paris.

What's the craziest (or most adventurous or unique) thing you've ever done? When I lived in Paris in 1992, the "wall" had just come down, making it possible to travel to former Soviet block countries. I decided to go to Hungary on a 2 week trip by myself through Austria and Hungary. I don't speak German or Hungarian. There was no internet. I made it by using a German dictionary. My mom was terrified for my safety. In retrospect, I probably should have been more concerned because if anything had happened to me, no one would have known where I was. But it was a great trip. I saw so many great sights, and I felt so self-reliant and independent!

What TV show are you mid-binging on? I'm a huge Grey's Anatomy fan. I've literally seen every episode. The Mandalorian---enough said. I'm also trying to watch shows in French so that I can fool myself that my French is improving by watching TV. I just finished a show called "Marseille."



What is your favorite form of exercise? Hiking/backpacking. I love the pace. I love the idea of carrying most everything I need on my back. I love to be where my cell phone says: "Out of Service." I love to be able to get to the amazingly beautiful places that motorized vehicles can't get to.

How do you know when you're finished with a practice session? When my head can no longer focus. Or when I just can't execute the ideas and concepts I imagine.

Which piece of solo clarinet repertoire do you think is overrated?

Berio *Sequenza*. Each time I hear it performed live, I think: "THIS will be the time that wins me over to this piece." But it just hasn't happened yet. Too long. I like Berio *Lied* much better.

What one great thing from each of your teachers did you learn and that impacted your life?

Keith Lemmons made me get to a higher level about everything. "Aim high!" Jim Gillespie instilled in me a spirit of curiosity and seeking. Elsa Verdehr taught me how to analyze and break things down for ultimate comprehension. All such warm, kind, generous humans. I am lucky to have such mentors.

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If you weren't a clarinetist, what instrument would you want to play?
Horn.

If you could relive any one day of your life, which would it be and why?
My wedding day. So that I could spend the time with all those people and take in all the details again.

If you ruled the world, what's the first thing you would change?
Income inequality.

If you could take back one sentence you've uttered in your past, what would it be? Any of them that I said when I was tired, frustrated, hungry, anxious, overwhelmed, or impatient.

If you could rid yourself of one personal fear... It's not really a fear, but I wish I could truly stop caring so much about what everyone else thinks and eliminate the word "SHOULD" from my life.

If you were an animal, what kind would you be? Some kind of bird—that could really soar and fly.