

IN STYLE.

A balmy St. Petersburg's summer, a small private Christian school holding band camp for its students. Hard-working parents, an older child playing trombone in the band and a younger child...well, a younger child they weren't quite sure what to do with. Mom, late for work and no sitter in sight politely inquires of the "conductor" of the camp, "Well, can you just put her to work?" "No," the conductor replies, "but I'll put an instrument in her mouth."

Seven years old and attempting to squeal a sound out of the flute, then the trumpet — nothing. Fingers still too small to swat a fly, cheeks so bright from shyness, the Florida sun is no match. The clarinet stands next in line. The innocent introvert picks up the heavy piece of metal, blows and viola! Granted, no melodious masterpiece came gushing forth, Mozart did not turn in his grave. It was just a little squeak, a tiny peep if you will. Yet this slight sound became so sweet to young Diane, so full of purpose and inspiration that it became not only beautiful music, but her life. So divine this intervention that not only did the band director's wife happen to teach clarinet, but they later became Diane's godparents. If fate exists my friends, it existed in St. Petersburg, Florida that afternoon.

Flash forward to today, Diane Barger, tenured professor of clarinet at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, recently elected Treasurer of the International Clarinet Association and Principal Clarinetist for the Lincoln Symphony. Diane's accomplishments have allowed her to become above average in the realm of the content. She is so grounded in her life now in Lincoln that she even



photography by John Nollendorfs

convinced her forever sunny Floridian parents to come join her in the unpredictable, at best, Midwest.

Although it would seem to any outsider that Diane's aforementioned start to playing the clarinet was so bold a sign it might have well been surrounded by neon, Diane herself

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by *Katherine* Brockman

would not express the same sentiment. At first, "I didn't necessarily want or not want to do it," Diane stated, "but it became a way for me to gain some confidence in myself and get out of my shell...and it just kinda stuck."

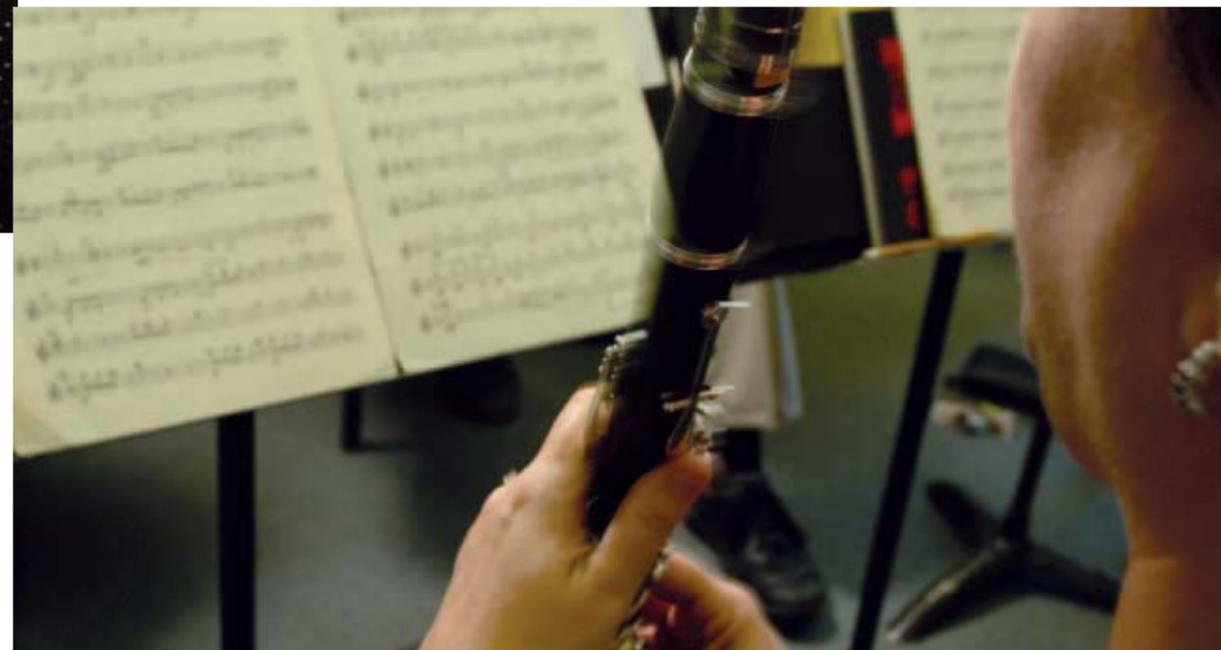
After spending a year studying with Mrs. Imbt, the band director's wife and Diane's godmother, the simple school clarinet instructor felt Diane had nothing left to learn from her. Another divine opportunity then came Diane's way, a chance to take lessons from the principal clarinetist of the Florida Orchestra. This led to Diane's first big "gig". She was allowed the opportunity by her then instructor to sit as second clarinet during a chamber music concert with the orchestra. She wistfully played each note of the Dvorak's Serenade, one of her favorite chamber music pieces, along with Florida's finest while still a mere undergraduate at Florida State University.

Speaking of Florida State, Diane received a full scholarship to the university during none other than the venue that had begun her love affair with the instrument, a summer band camp. With two highly supportive parents shadowing her every move, never missing a recital, Diane began to earn her Bachelor's of Music at Florida State when opportunity came knocking

again. During the summer between her freshman and sophomore years, she was chosen as one of only seven performers invited to attend a one week master class at Northwestern taught by one of the most infamous names in the clarinet world, Robert Marcellus. "That week changed my life in many ways," Diane exclaimed, "just listening to this man speak and what he had to say, it really influenced me, I knew I had to go study with him again eventually." And so she did. She auditioned and was accepted to Northwestern's Master's Program after her undergraduate work was complete. It was only a year-long master's program, but Diane felt after this year with Marcellus, she was "finally starting to get it."

After she received a pre-doctoral certificate in performance from Northwestern, Diane began the long and exhausting process of trying to make a lucrative living out of art. She began to take auditions from various orchestras, symphonies and philharmonics to no avail at first. Then, her past came back to visit one more time and cracked open another door. The second clarinetist for the Florida Orchestra was taking a one-year sabbatical; Diane auditioned and won the position. She described the experience in one simple, yet powerful word, "fabulous."

a woodwind affair.





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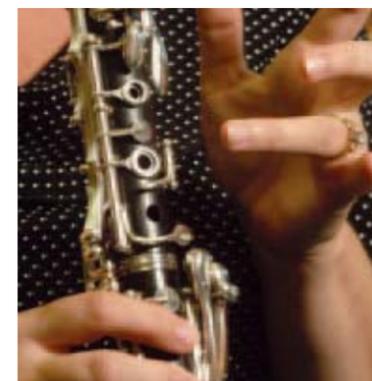
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Diane's year-long position inevitably expired and while attempting other auditions, she took on teaching some private students "to make ends meet." Diane fell in love with teaching much like she fell in love with playing the clarinet, slow and steady at first but passionate and life-altering soon after. Diane decided, "I loved to play, but I really loved to teach." So Diane yet again went back to her roots, Florida State University, where she pursued her Doctorate in order to teach. She received an assistantship with the University as well as a few orchestral opportunities along the way. Diane was getting paid to teach and paid to play-heaven. Yet, this heaven had an expiration date, at the end of her doctoral program, Diane was on the hunt again.

Enter Lincoln, Nebraska. Immediately following Diane's final doctoral recital, her teacher came up to her stating he had just received word of a job opening in Nebraska at the university. Ten years later, Diane is still here, still working the same job she came to Lincoln for, to teach clarinet to aspiring students like herself and to hold a chair on a faculty woodwind quintet. Diane accredits this quintet as being a strong factor in her longevity at UNL. From the minute Diane walked into the audition, "we all felt really comfortable, it was like walking into a group that had already been rehearsing." She has now just released her second CD with the group, The Moran Quintet.



Diane's fulfillment in the musical world was almost complete; yet one piece of her heart, her music, was still missing. She still yearned to play with the "big boys." Since her start at UNL, Diane had inquired about the Lincoln Symphony. All of her other colleagues at the University were principal woodwind artists in the symphony, yet the principal clarinetist job was taken, with no opening in sight. "That kinda tore my heart out when I first got the job," Diane said, "because I loved playing in an orchestra and would've really loved that opportunity."

Two years ago Diane, as she puts it, "got lucky." The principal clarinetist for the symphony decided to move on. Once again, the door opened and Diane grabbed the handle and ran inside. Yet fear bit at the heels of this young professor. She hadn't auditioned for anything in quite some time, much less the coup de

gras, the one thing she had been yearning for during her eight heartland homesteaded years. But Diane trumped her final hurdle. She now holds the proud position, Principal Clarinetist of the Lincoln Symphony. Bravo. Fin. There is no better way to describe the effect of receiving this position than Diane's own quote, "it pretty much made my musical life complete." Pretty much, Diane, and what a full and beautiful one it has been. *LS.*

"Through the performance and advancement of symphonic music, the Lincoln Symphony will enrich, educate and entertain current and potential audiences." Simple yet profound, the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra's mission statement summarizes this organization's colorful past and very bright future.

While the Great Depression caused havoc on the rest of the world, seven local musicians joined together to create a home for their long standing dream. By March 1, 1927, the collaboration was complete and the world was introduced to the Lincoln Little Symphony Orchestra, an institution founded by love of art and education.

By 1930, the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra, or LSO, began its pursuit for future adorers of the art. With the help of Lincoln school teachers and the Orchestra Association, LSO began its Young People's Concerts giving youth the rare opportunity to not only experience orchestral concerts, but to learn etiquette and appreciation of music. These concerts continue 74 years after their conception.

The 2004-2005 season will hold true to LSO's endeavors and accomplishments with performances such as Music of the Masters in November in which LSO goes back to its roots, the Saint Paul United Methodist Church, and is joined by award winning international pianist Dickran Atamian. Simmer in the sounds of the Clinton-Narboni Piano Duo on February 5th and join two talented LSO locals, Anton Miller and Clark Potter, March 12th for Mozart in March. Indulge the young ones this season as well with A Christmas Card from Stage and Screen on December 4th featuring the cast of TADA Productions. On April 30th, top off an exquisite season with the Spanish maestro of the guitar, Angel Romero, and the LSO performing Shostakovich's dramatic Symphony No. 5.

For ticket information, contact the LSO at 476-2211. *LS.*

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