

Haley Diers 2015 Celebration Award Winner

1.) Do you remember how you first heard about Celebration?

I heard about Celebration from my high school flute teacher.

2.) What are you up to nowadays, can you tell us what a typical week in the life looks like for you?

In the spring I graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Music in flute performance. This fall I moved to New York City to pursue my Master of Music at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College. My weeks are busy with orchestra and chamber music rehearsals, flute lessons and practicing, and classes. I also teach flute and beginning piano lessons. In my spare time I enjoy concerts and exploring the city!

3.) Have you continued with your music/art? Have you found new mediums?

I've continued to play the flute in college and graduate school. I've also begun learning the baroque flute (the wooden flute that preceded the modern metal flute). Playing it and studying historical performance practices has been a fun way to expand my musicianship.

4.) How significant was your involvement with Celebration for your development as a woman after winning?

Performing at the Annual Celebration of Women and Their Music concert was a significant moment in my personal development. I performed the Griffes Poem from memory. Before taking the stage, I was filled with nerves. Overcoming those nerves to perform and bring the audience into the magical sound world of the piece was an incredibly empowering experience. By providing this performance opportunity, Celebration helped me find greater self-confidence and a break-through moment as an artist.

5.) What about Celebration draws you in to keep in contact/remember your experience?

What is special about Celebration is how it brings together artists from different mediums. It is important to recognize all art styles and forms; all artists have a story to tell and we all have something to learn from one another.

6.) Any advice for our future young women awards?

Never give up on yourself and don't be afraid to have big dreams. Set goals, no matter how big or small. Find the teachers, mentors, family, and friends who will support you and help you work towards those goals. Challenge yourself by trying new things, meeting new people, and going to new places. If you feel knocked down, find inspiration and motivation in your favorite artists and songs. Focus on your personal progress each day.

7.) Can you tell us about the connections you made during your time(s) at Celebration?

I collaborated with Peggy Bartunek to perform at a Summer House Concert a few years ago. We played some jazz songs and the Bolling Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano, a fun musical experience!

8.) Would you be willing to recall a story the last time you were genuinely touched by music?

Music is so powerful because it can be touching in many ways. Music's emotional affect and story telling can move a listener, but it can also be an impactful shared experience and way of communicating among performers and between teacher and student.

A recent unique experience I had was a rehearsal with the Queens College Orchestra of Beethoven's Symphony No. 1. The orchestra members sat facing one another with like-instruments spread out in the ensemble for a conductor-less rehearsal. This allowed me to hear and communicate the music with my colleagues in a new way. As I've begun teaching music, I have also discovered how powerful music is as an educational tool. It is inspirational to see my students' excitement and confidence grow through music.