



Josh Iyer

Major: Music composition

Activities: Augustana Symphony Orchestra, Augustana Chamber Orchestra, Kali Yuga, Film Club, Video Game Development Club

Post-grad plans: Graduate school in music composition!

“Even from his audition four years ago, it was already apparent that Josh was not the average college student. He was (and is) engaging, funny and incredibly bright (not to mention that he already knew more about the music of Ravel than I will ever know). However, what sets Josh apart is his curiosity and the way he uses it in a consistent effort to advance his knowledge. I will miss our informal hallway conversations dearly, as I’m positive I’ve learned as much from him as he has from me.”

— Dr. Rob Elfine, associate professor, music

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Why Augustana?

As composing was my main focus coming into Augie, I was mainly just very excited to work with Dr. Bancks. The campus is also gorgeous on sunny days, and I always loved taking composition walks around the campus.

Are you where you thought you’d be when you first came to campus?

Actually, yes. I came into Augie thinking I would be just composing and practicing all the time, and while I’ve been exploring other subjects for classes, I always had some connection with music every day. Even now, I’m still writing smaller works just for fun, as I had been doing back in 2015!

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I really think all of my teachers have helped me in some way, especially all my private music teachers. In lessons we not only have focused on what we are working on, but also have talked about aspects of life that will give me things to think about for the rest of my life.

Peak experience?

I believe my senior recital was a time I felt most proud of my work. Three large pieces were performed, and I got to conduct, as well as play violin and piano, for them. During the whole performance, I was elated with the work my colleagues and friends had put into my music, and I could not have been more pleased with how it turned out. [Josh’s orchestral piece, “Music for the Galactic Palace,” won the 2018 Student Composition Competition and was performed by the Augustana Symphony Orchestra during its winter concert.]

What surprised you?

What surprised me was how much I found I wanted to learn about more than just music. In high school, I was very focused on my composing. At Augie, I started checking out books about science and took classes on Asian culture and marketing and philosophy just because they seemed interesting to me. I am happy for this change because it will help me broaden my viewpoint of the world as I move forward in my life.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used Augie Choice on a study abroad trip to Paris! I had a wonderful time in this city where my favorite composer, Maurice Ravel, lived for part of his life. I certainly got inspired musically while there. I also just loved walking the streets and gardens and experiencing urban life. Of course, the two classes I took on Parisian music history and American literature in Paris were fantastic as well.

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What will you miss the most?

I will miss all the lovely people I met at Augie—some of them have already left me! I will especially miss my private lesson teachers, Drs. Bancks, Chetel, Elflin, Hall and Stone, as they have truly helped me grow as a human being, as well as be a better musician overall.

Advice for the Class of 2023?

Cherish your college experience. Yes, you've come here to study something that interests you about the planet we live on and to explore it, but be open to the other classes you will take for perspectives. With a positive attitude toward them, you may end up enjoying them more than you initially thought you would. These four years go by so fast, and college really is different than high school in so many ways. Enjoy it while it lasts. being supportive as Augie is, I'll be very lucky.