

Personal Statement – Chet Chwalik

I appreciate and embrace the opportunity to continue the pursuit of my performance goals, as a jazz pianist and as an overall professional musician. I recognize how much more there is to learn and experience and am continually led and motivated by the greats that have come before me.

I have been fortunate to have had wonderful mentors, each who have led by example both as people and as performers in their craft. They all showed great patience and each inspired me to work hard with my music. This all began with my first teacher, Mrs. Rita Schultz. Here we are today, 56 years later, and I take from that experience her patience and kindness, which I try to pass on to my own students. I later studied with Helen Lakofsky, another great influence in my life and excellent teacher. While at CCM, I learned from some of the best, including Rick Van Matre and Pat Harbison, excellent teachers and who continue to greatly influence my life today, as a professional musician, instructor, and person.

There are numerous life experiences related and unrelated to music and I must first recognize my parents who very much encouraged me. One lasting experience is spending a great deal of personal time with jazz trumpeter Red Rodney, including having the privilege of accompanying him on "So What" during his classroom presentation. Other positive life experiences include being a camp counselor at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Twin Lake, Michigan, and my time traveling and marching two Summers as a lead soprano and soloist with the Glassmen Drum & Bugle Corps. All of these experiences were stepping stones in my continuing pursuit of excellence in music and character building. I was also fortunate to work with some great leaders in the corporate world.

Over the many years I worked and performed in the Sacramento area, I have met many musicians that have graduated from Sac State. I've seen their dedication and commitment to a high level of performance, at the same time showing their knowledge and putting it into practice. This is a direct example of what results from obtaining a degree in music from Sacramento State. I have also been fortunate to have worked directly with some of those who are instructors or lecturers at Sac State. This has given me direct insight into the level of musicianship and expertise that the faculty of Sac State has to offer. Based on these experiences, there is no question about the quality of instruction that is available at Sac State.

Furthering my education with a Master's at Sac State will benefit my work in numerous areas: my private teaching studio, as a professional jazz pianist, my chart writing and transcription work, conducting, composing and arranging. This would include my future musical endeavors such as opportunities to work in a college setting.

I'm excited for the next phase of my musical training and look forward to it happening at Sacramento State.