

Uke Jamming with the Street

Musicians of Western Europe:

Goliard Scholarship for International Travel Proposal

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All my life I have had a love for music. As a child, my parents discovered that I had a decent ear when they realized that I knew who they were calling on the phone just by listening to the tones of the buttons they were pushing. Each phone number had its own special tune to me. As a pre-schooler, my teacher told my parents that I was the first student she had seen who could line up a series of bells in order of their tune. It was after this that my parents decided to sign me up for piano lessons.

I took these piano lessons for several years, and they were a source of much stress. While my sisters were outside playing in the backyard, my parents kept me inside so that I could practice for several hours each day, training for what would be the pinnacle of my piano career—playing at a concert in Carnegie Hall. I reached this point at seven years old, when I was invited by my piano teacher to take a trip to New York and play. This was a very big honor for me, but by this time, I was burnt out, and I quit piano lessons shortly after. Although piano lessons significantly refined my ear, it was after I quit that I discovered the beauty of playing on the piano solely for the fun of it. The piano, my previous arch nemesis, quickly became my best friend. No longer did I have to spend hours on end interpreting sheet music covered with nearly indecipherable combinations of notes. After quitting piano, I quickly realized that I much more enjoyed jamming, playing along with, and creating my own variation of other music rather than reading and precisely reproducing the sheet music of Mozart and Bach. The only disadvantage was that I could only create this music within the confines of my home.

In college, I decided to learn to play a more portable instrument so that I could take music with me wherever I went. I decided to try out the guitar. However, I had one problem. My hands are TINY and can neither properly reach all the strings nor hold them down (especially bar chords!). I was quite heartbroken until I discovered what would be my savior—the ukulele. Not only is the uke much easier for me to play (less strings and much smaller!), but also is much lighter and easier to carry around than either the guitar *or* the piano! Receiving a ukulele for my birthday last year was probably one of the most exciting birthday presents ever. It is such a happy instrument, and playing it makes my days so

much brighter. During the past few months of our relationship together, my love for my uke has infinitely grown. I have longingly looked up several Youtube videos of pro-ukulele players hoping to reach their level some day. I love bringing my uke to jam sessions with friends where we gather, play, and sing various songs. I have also brought it to many family gatherings. Nevertheless, it has become my vision to travel with my uke to places much farther than my backyard or my friend's rooms. I dream of playing along with the undiscovered musical gems of Western Europe—the street musicians. It is amazing how much talent one can find on the streets of Europe. Many of these musicians have more talent than any of the famous rock stars out there, and it would be a huge honor for me to be able to play alongside them.

Jamming with street musicians around Western Europe will give me a completely different perspective than most other travelers. Rather than just visiting the famous tourist sites of Europe, I will learn how street music varies across different cultures and I will be more in touch with the natives' culture and daily lives. I truly believe that music is the perfect medium through which cultures can share and connect with each other. Playing along and creating an impromptu masterpiece with a complete foreigner sounds like an extremely magical experience, allowing me to break down any language barriers and connect with people across many cultures (especially because I only know Spanish and a bit of Italian!). Furthermore, it is my uke's portability that makes it an ideal instrument to travel with. It literally only weighs about 5 pounds!

I hope to travel to Barcelona, Amsterdam, Berlin, different cities around southern France, Paris, Florence, Rome, Venice, Bologna, Zurich, Vienna, and wherever else the wind takes me over the course of one month in the summer (from late May to late June). Just like "Where the Hell is Matt" from Youtube, I wish to make a video with a compilation of clips showing the different musicians that I will play along with and connect with around Western Europe. However, unlike Matt, I will use the beauty of music instead of dance as my focus (I am not as good a dancer as Matt, anyway!).

This is my last summer before starting medical school in July and probably one of the last times I will be able to travel for fun for a very long time. My parents want me to stay in Houston and work this summer because of recent rises in travel costs, but I believe that discovering other cultures through music would be infinitely more rewarding. Receiving the Goliard Scholarship would significantly alleviate this financial stress and would help me realize my dream of discovering and contributing to the colorful and diverse street music found in Western Europe.

Thank you, members of the Goliard Scholarship selection committee, for considering my proposal and for offering this wonderful opportunity!

Where the Hell is Matt: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlfKdbWwruY>

Imagine Getting to Play Alongside These Guys!

Amazing Street Musicians in Vienna: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2hyN1veHD0>

Accordion Masters in Milan: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzdH_oQ5lg&NR=1

La Blogotheque:

La Blogotheque is a French website that films famous Indie artists performing “take away shows” in public places—streets, subways, etc...Here is one of many of their videos featuring Jason Mraz performing with a French street musician. This is my dream:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bro7IV6euY>

Lyrics to "Let's Jam" -

(A song I wrote and recorded to supplement my Goliard Proposal)

Hello, Hola, Ciao, Bonjour

Why all the wars? What's the cure?

I'm not sure...

Friends, Amigos, Amici, Amis

What road will finally lead us to peace?

Let me see...

We could think, write a treaty

Force a friendship, help the needy

Will these work? They may.

But I sayyy...

(We do it the Goliard way!)

LETS JAM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AMMMM,

LET'S JA-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM

LET'S JA-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM

LETS JAM!

Listen to the music,

Ascolta la musica

LETS JAM!

Feel the rhythm, cumon'

Chante la chanson

LETS JAM!

Cantando en Barcelona,

Cantando en Roma

Singen in Berlin

OH YEAAAA

LETS JAM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM

LETS JAAAAAM AAAAAAAM

LETS JAAAAAM AAAAAAAM

LETS JAM!

LETS JAM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM

LETS JAAAAAM AAAAAAAM

LETS JAAAAAM AAAAAAAM

LETS JAM!

(Thank you, Goliard)

(Gracias, Goliard)

(Grazie, Goliard)

(Merci, Goliard)

LETS JAM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM-AM

LETS JAAAAAM AAAAAAAM

LETS JAAAAAM AAAAAAAM

LETS JAM!

(Thank you, Goliard)

(Gracias, Goliard)

(Grazie, Goliard)

(Merci, Goliard)