

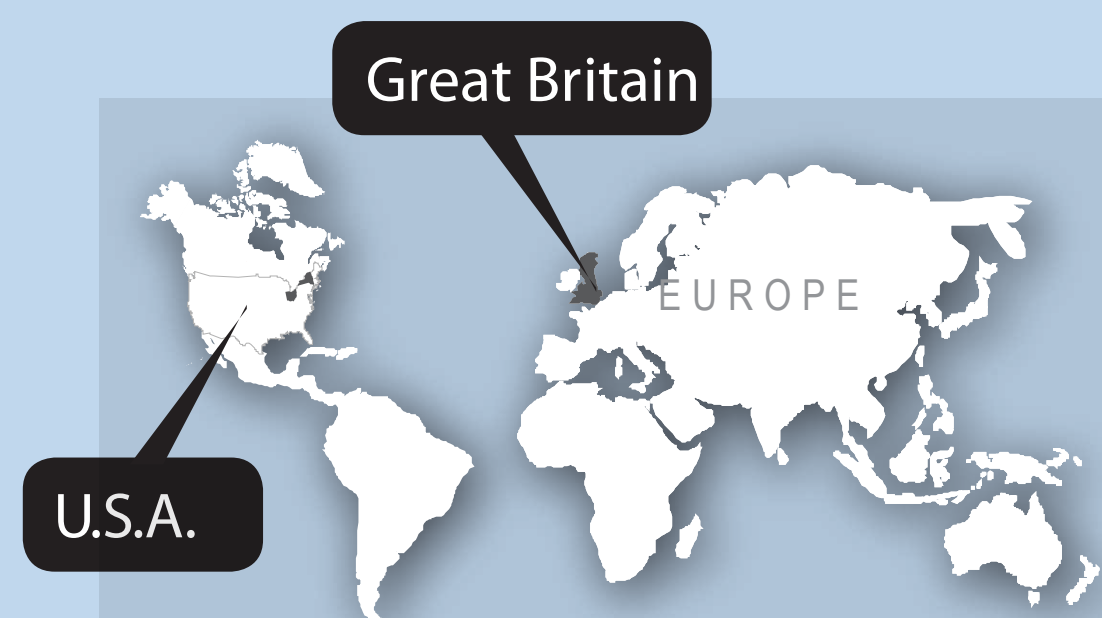


MATT KIEFER
Class of 2006
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Matt Kiefer

As I listened to the virtuoso violinist's flawless performance of Sarasate's Carmen Fantasy, I realized that this summer was going to be about much more than learning to play violin with better tone or more accurate intonation. This is the story of my summer: I traveled to New York, Ohio, and England intending to learn about playing violin.

CONTINUED ►



I took lessons with great teachers, played with great players, and listened to great performances. Yet somehow, my summer became about more than playing violin; it became a chance to experience and enjoy a life of music in exciting new ways. Each place I went I grew both as a violinist and as a person.

The first segment of my Burch Fellowship took me to New York City to take lessons with Patinka Kopec. There I saw two very different lives in music. The first was through the lessons with Ms. Kopec: high-powered, successful, and expensive. I will treasure the instruction I received from her. However, I will also remember the time I spent with the friend I stayed with. A former Metropolitan Opera singer, he now lives seven dirty floors above a small Episcopal church at which he directs worship, plays organ, and teaches voice lessons. His life had none of the glamour of the NYC music scene, but somehow he loves what



inspired by the high level of performance to practice longer and harder than I had ever before. I was also challenged: through events like the performance described above, I was forced

to confront my feelings of inadequacy. My decision to treat music as a privilege has shaped the way I have since pursued music. I have begun to understand the lifestyle it takes

to be a classical musician. When we were not practicing, other students and I watched videos of famous performers, listened to new recordings, or just discussed pieces we love. Of course, we did find time for non-music recreation: Ultimate Frisbee, foosball, and the occasional trip to Walmart for supplies.



he does and I will never forget his enthusiasm.

The second portion of my summer was participating in the Encore School for Strings, Cleveland Institute of Music's summer program. There I spent six intense weeks studying chamber music and solo violin performance. I took lessons with David Updegraff and David Cerone, both well-known pedagogues and performers from CIM. Together, we covered etudes, scales, and a concerto—at least a semester's worth of repertoire. Some of my fellow students were older than I, some nearly ten years younger, but all were excellent at their instruments. I was

for classical input and left having broadened my horizons. I competed in a concerto competition, formed close relationships with several musicians from Great Britain, and played in a superb orchestra; I also visited Stonehenge, saw one of the original Magna Cartas at Salisbury Cathedral, and played American folk tunes with a middle-aged English guitarist in a small British pub.

The things that I was looking for in this summer—quality



The final piece of my Burch-enabled summer took me to Winchester, England, outside of London. There I stayed at Winchester College, a boys' school dating to the 14th century, and took part in The MasterWorks Festival Europe. This festival brought teachers and students from Europe, Asia, and North America together to play orchestral, chamber, and solo music. Again, I went hoping

practice time, solid instruction, and excellent fellow musicians—I found. However, what I treasure most from my Burch Fellowship are the friendships I made, the new places I went, as well as the decisions about my life and my music. I am happy to say that, with encouragement from Mr. Updegraff, I plan to attend graduate school in violin performance. I improved over the summer and this past school year to the point where playing professionally is a future possibility. It will require much hard work, but thanks to Mr. Burch's generosity, I have a good idea of what that work will be like and I know I can do it.

