

(Editor's Note: the following story was written by Communications Intern Hannah Cyr, a CASHS senior)

CASHS Student Qualifies for PA Music Festivals

Many people find music so captivating because of its unique ability to portray emotions and feelings that words sometimes fail to express. Hayden Johnson is one of these people.

From the triangle to the timpani, CASHS junior, Hayden Johnson, has played them all.

Hayden has placed first chair in the Pennsylvania District band, All-State band, and Regional band, all hosted by the Pennsylvania Music Educator's Association (PMEA) and has further qualified for the All-Eastern Honors Ensemble, hosted by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME).

"My mom told me I had to start doing something and I could either choose to play basketball or to play music," Hayden said. He went on to say that he chose music over basketball because "I do not touch basketballs."

While he may have been initially directed into music, Hayden said, "I continue to play due to the fact that I know it's something that I love, and I know it's something that I would love to make a living playing music."

Hayden first started the snare drum in the fifth grade band at Scotland Elementary and never looked back. He attributes his early music career to the CAMS North band director, Richard Bricker. Upon leaving middle school, he began to study with Dr. Erik Forst, music professor at Messiah College. Hayden said, "I've changed so much as a musician ever since I started working with Dr. Forst."

Although music can be a difficult passion to pursue, Johnson's teacher, Dr. Erik Forst, noted, "As a teacher, having a student like Hayden is refreshing because he doesn't require a great deal of external motivation. Hayden often stays after school most days to practice whether it is for his concert band music or his upcoming music festival."

"He is remarkably mature for a musician of his age, and all you have to do is point him in the right direction, and let his talent and work ethic do the rest," Dr. Forst said.

Ever since Hayden discovered his love for music, he has interned for a variety of organizations such as the Percussion Academy at the Indiana University of Bloomsburg, and the Susquehanna University Wind Ensemble. He plans on interning over the summer at the Indiana University of Bloomington Percussion Seminar.

From these experiences, Hayden has concluded that he aspires to become a music professor and study music performance post high school at either a music conservatory or university. Just as he was inspired when he was younger, Hayden hopes to someday inspire someone else to pursue his or her dreams.

Johnson will perform this weekend with the PMEA County band, followed by the District band festival next weekend. He plans on auditioning for the PMEA Regional band in the upcoming months and will play in Atlantic City, NJ at the 2017 NAfME Eastern Division Conference in April for a three day music festival.