

Interview with a Musician

Written by: Henry TJ Uribe

Name: Zoey Tyszka
Age: 12 Years Old
Location: California
Instrument: Drums



For this assignment, I chose to interview Zoey Tyszka. She is a young musician at the age of 12 and her main instrument is the drums. I have known her parents for years and reached out to them to see if Zoey was available for an over-the-phone interview. Everyone respectfully accepted. Our entire conversation lasted nearly an hour and it was primarily a Q/A style dialogue.

I chose Zoey because she inspires me as a musician. I personally did not perform live until my 30's and she is around 1/3 my age and already performs live. She has strong character and amazing courage. This assignment was a real joy for me because it was interesting to listen to a fellow musician and hear her perspective on a shared passion that her and I can relate to. I will input my personal reflections of this assignment at the end of this interview.

Q & A

TJ: What is your main instrument and how long have you been playing?

Zoey: My main instrument is the drums and I have been playing for three years. I play almost every day.

TJ: How come you started playing?

Zoey: I listened to a song that my dad showed me and I loved the drums and wanted to learn how to play.

TJ: Who are your musical influences?

Zoey: I like Travis Barker. "I miss you" is my favorite song by him.

TJ: What do you like about that song?

Zoey: He uses different instruments to make the sounds pop.

TJ: What school do you attend and do they offer music classes there?

Zoey: I attend School of Rock.

TJ: What's your schedule look like there?

Zoey: I take lessons every Thursday and Saturday. They last 2 hours on Thursday and 30 minutes on Saturday. The live sessions happen on Thursday and Saturdays are my individual lessons

TJ: Are you self-taught, instructed upon, or a combination of both?

Zoey: I am combination of both.

TJ: Which is your preferred learning style?

Zoey: I enjoy learning by myself because I can create and find new beats on my own. It allows me to not have to worry about learning a whole song. It lets me be more creative.

TJ: Do you see music being a career?

Zoey: Yes, I see music as a career.



Zoey Tyszka Performing Live, 2020



TJ: Are you wanting to be part of a band or do more of a teaching role?

Zoey: I want to play in a band. I want to play rock music. I would also like to learn to play guitar but right now I want to focus on the drums.

TJ: What are some of your practice habits?

Zoey: Usually when I practice, I use a play list of songs that I have played and play along with them. I play around on my drum set and do patterns.

TJ: How long does it take you to do patterns?

Zoey: I do my patterns about five minutes a day. I average about an hour total with my entire practice session.

TJ: Do you prefer to practice alone?

Zoey: My dad plays guitar and I practice with him. My dad is a big musical influence for me.

TJ: What are some difficulties that you have experienced during playing live or in practice sessions?

Zoey: The difficulties are seeing a lot of people and I panic that I am going to fail. I get stage fright.

TJ: How are you able to still perform with that kind of pressure?

Zoey: When I walk on stage, I focus on breathing and I say to myself that I am going to do fine and perfect and reassure myself that I have been preparing for this. I use self-talk to make myself feel better.

TJ: What do you enjoy most about playing music?

Zoey: What I enjoy most is being able to do what I love. I love the opportunity that I get to play drums. I like that other people are enjoying my music.

TJ: Do you only like to play live or are you thinking about using an internet platform?

Zoey: I eventually want to show my music. YouTube is a good option.

TJ: Live is your preferred style though?

Zoey: Yes, I like to smile when I play.

TJ: Why is that?

Zoey: I smile because I like to show that I enjoy what I am doing. I don't want to play just for the heck of it.

TJ: What has been your best musical experience?

Zoey: My best musical experience would be the Beatles Show.

TJ: Was that a show that you played?

Zoey: Yes, it was my 2nd show that I ever played.

TJ: So, you enjoy the Beatles' music?

Zoey: I love the Beatles! Doing that show made me want to listen to their songs and play their songs.

TJ: How long had you been playing before you performed that one?

Zoey: I had been playing for 3 months and then I played that show.

TJ: Wow, so you must be a quick learner huh?

Zoey: Yes, I learn fast.

TJ: Do you consider yourself a natural?

Zoey: I am not a natural but I am pretty good.

TJ: What is your motivation to play music?

Zoey: I want to inspire others to make their own music. I am setting an example to show other people what is possible so they can do the same.

TJ: What advice would you give to fellow young musicians or musicians in general?

Zoey: My advice would be, if you ever get frustrated just don't give up.



Zoey Tyszka Performing Live, June 2021
Youtube Link:

https://youtu.be/qifvKW_fFZM

TJ: Has that ever been an obstacle that you have faced?

Zoey: Yes, and It felt good that I didn't give up.

TJ: Can you explain what happened leading up to you wanting to give up?

Zoey: I was performing. I was frustrated by one song that had this certain tempo. I had stage fright and it ruined me. When the solo came up, I missed my solo and dropped my drum stick. I was bummed.

TJ: Then what happened?

Zoey: The next song came and I played it pretty well and I immediately felt better about myself.



Reflections



I was amazed to discover that someone so young is able to have the discipline to practice everyday and play live. I am also amazed that Zoey has a vision for her future. She faces much of what adult musicians face and she is able to understand the work and effort that it takes to be a musician.

One response that stood out to me was the fact that she uses self-talk to keep her focus and overcome the fear and anxiety that she faces. I have heard many professionals in a lot of different fields use that same technique.

Another one of her responses that I enjoyed hearing was that she likes to smile when she plays. That is inspiring because it shows the crowd that it's enjoyable and that energy can spread across the arena. It took me many years before I really got serious about playing music. Zoey's courage to pursue her dream at such a young age is admirable and it is a great thing to see a child find something that they love.

The final response of this interview was my favorite about how she said not to give up. As musicians and even personally, we all meet moments of frustration; being able to persevere is crucial. Zoey understands this well and it is a trait that I know will take her far in music and in life. This was an awesome assignment and I learned a lot from it. Thank you Zoey for taking the time to conduct this interview and I wish you the best in every step of your journey.