

Music to the World

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Let's start from the beginning shall we? My name is Abigail Yessie Antonna. I'm a student at STARKI majoring Secretarial Studies and as I'm writing this, I'm in my 4th semester. Currently, I am working as a part time musician and a classical theory music teacher. My weeks consist of attending classes on weekdays and every Friday and Saturday, I work as a teacher. If I get an offer to perform, I'll perform with a small orchestra at weddings and such. I live in Depok but on weekdays I live at my grandmother's near campus. I was born on June 25th, 2003, and I'm the first child with 2 younger siblings. Now that you know a preview of my life, let's start on a story about how I got into what I am today.

Since I was a child, my parents told me that I'm interested in my father's interest, which is music. My dad used to be in a band and was a massive fan of rock but isn't a musician. I guess as a child how my father played guitar was always amazing. I remembered that I was interested in loads of things, even outside of music like ballet and English lesson. My parents loved to take lessons, whatever it is that I loved at that moment and Kumon, which is Math lessons that I remembered now I used to cry whenever it took so long for me to finish my task. My parent's goal was never to make me a smart person who is good academically, though if I were academically smart, they would be happy too, but they always say to do what I was most passionate and happy about, they will support me however they can and whatever it is. They were never financially secure but always enough, they said that everything is for God, so even if they don't have much, they are sure that God will help them when they need to. I guess it made me believe more in God whenever they said that, because it's a living proof that I'm still standing here, with enough facilities that my parents provided.

When I got to music, my first instrument was the keyboard. I don't remember much of the lesson as I was too little to remember and maybe at some point I got bored and stopped the lesson altogether. My second instrument was drums and this time, my little brother

was taking the lesson as well. Unfortunately, I can't remember clearly how I stopped playing drums. But two things that I remember about learning drums; one is I remembered a song all the drum lessons that I got, which is always playing in my head all the time, but never knew the title of the song, even as I'm writing this. Two, is that I'm weirdly a fast learning in music instruments. I don't mean to sound cocky, but I didn't even practice that week but at the next meeting, I got it right. My third instrument was the bass guitar, I think when I got into bass, I was in the middle of getting bored at drum and was shifting towards bass more to get something interesting. I remembered when I got the lessons, my teacher was someone from my church who's playing the bass guitar for Sunday praises. That's all I remember and the place to my bass lessons is so far. I still don't know where it is now.

My fourth instrument, yes this is the fourth, I promise you this is the last one before my final one, was a violin. Like the drums, I progressed really quickly compared to my brother who's at the time joining me on lessons as well. I started playing the violin a little differently compared to the instruments before. This time, I didn't start on some music lessons or some sort, but I started on the violin community at the town, Alliance Violin Community. I was really excited at first, excited that I can learn an instrument more complex and interesting than piano, bass, or drums. Above all, I was really excited that I progressed really quickly compared to my peers at that time. I was very proud of myself and my parents too. Though, knowing me, I started to get less interested in it as time went by and I progressed slowly since then. My parents of course got worried about this, maybe I wasn't motivated enough or other things that even after all this time I didn't know why I was so uninterested after some time, so my parents talked to my mentor on how to get me motivated. At some point, they talked about how I used to play multiple instruments before violin and my mentor was especially intrigued when my parents said about how I used to play bass. He suggested my parents I tried learning cello. Cello has a lower sound register than the violin and is considered a lower strings section, considering that I used to play the bass, maybe just maybe that I was more comfortable on the lower section of instruments. So, that's how I ended up ending my 2 years of playing violin into my last and longest instrument that I played and it was cello.

When I started playing cello, none of my mentors understood or even knew how to play the cello. So, they set up a YouTube video on the first day I learned how to play on the cello. I would say that I was semi-self taught at that time. Though I had to say it was a tough one to get the notes right as the position on the cello was so hard to get perfectly because of how big and hard the strings were and the instrument. I got real blisters and all that I didn't get when I played the violin. It felt good to see that I got those blisters, it meant that I was hard enough to myself. My parents were also glad that I was so diligent

on practicing at home and was so motivated on the instruments. Not only that, playing the cello gave me a lot of opportunities. Because it is a violin community, there's only one or two people who play the cello. At that time there's only me and one other person that quit not long after. So that made me the only cello player in the community. I was actually doing great, doing concerts and all. One time my community got an award for having the best performance at a music festival, it made me so happy to be part of them.

I started to get comfortable in the music world that I don't think I can get out of even when I'm older. I even pictured myself being a musician when I'm older. That made me so excited that I even chose a music school as my high school. After all, that's what I liked at that time and I wasn't that good at other subjects except for English and a bit of Math because of English and Math lessons I took when I was a child.

At high school, I was pretty excited that I got accepted into the school, it's my world now, my motivation. No more science class which was my least favorite subject, no more boring and not so used class in my life. It was just music, music, and music. It was like home actually, on Mondays I got Karawitan class which is a class where I learned about Indonesian local instruments, which is gamelan, I got harmonics class, I got orchestra class, and many more. I always bragged to my middle school friends that I didn't have to get so stressed because there's no science class and I loved every class equally. Not just that, I finally got a cello teacher, my first one, I never had one before and it made me so happy now I can finally be trained classically. Well, until I learned the hard truth that everything has its positives and negatives.

This is the time that I was really having loads of questions to myself. I was having a lot of self questioning, like did I make a right decision on going here or like do I really wanted to be a musician as a career. I was also not that great at theory class that I was starting to get really conscious about it. Anxiety, self conscious and unconfident. It started to get into my life that it made me quite depressed whenever I think about it. At school it wasn't all that great either, loads of seniors took notice of how I was already good at playing even when I'm only a freshman, while most of them just started playing the instrument when they got into high school. I won't say that I was bullied, it's more like they liked to tease me whenever they found fault in me, like saying "Why didn't you know about this? I thought you were already good?" like I knew all the answers to the world. My parents always told me that they were just jealous of me and that I should just go on with my life. I can't though, because it made me really conscious of my ability and my skills.

During that time also, my mentor at the community suggested that I enter an orchestra community, where I can grow more as a musician. At that time, I refused, I was too self conscious that I was already thinking that I might just get rejected, with a skill like mine.

My parents, knowing this, pushed me to do it, just try the trial, which at that time there's an audition to be a momentary member of the orchestra community. I had no choice but to follow through with my parents' wishes, so I submitted the audition video and it turned out I was accepted. I wasn't really happy and was scared, it was always a thought that maybe they just felt bad or they just needed a cello player. I was an over-thinker, that's why. Until it was the first day of practice sessions at the new orchestra community, TRUST Orchestra, was a youth orchestra community. My feelings at that time were scared, I was so scared that it took me a few tries to just get in the practice room, I even cried and had to be escorted by my brother to just get into the room. It was overwhelming and foreign to me. I was still self conscious but more so now that there's someone else who's way



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better than me and knows all the 'music language'. I felt so out of place that I was so determined to know what it meant. At that time I was also not the best at reading sheet music. Being a member in TRUST Orchestra made me improve my reading skill and even how I hear music. Though I was self conscious, never in my wildest imagination would I get accepted to be a full time member and never would I have thought that being in the community will make me who I am today.

A year after I got accepted, this is still in my first year of high school, I got an announcement that the orchestra will take part in the World Orchestra Festival at Vienna in the next year. We were excited of course and are looking forward to the festival. Though, we never would've thought we would be practicing for the song a year before the festival. It's tough, we got a lot of scolding and a lot of crying. I cried too as the song we were

preparing was so hard that I can't seem to get it right. We practiced from 7 p.m till 9 p.m or maybe if the conductor wasn't happy with our practice sessions, we could get until 10 or even 11 every Friday. It was a lot but the excitement was great and it kept me going.

A year later, the year 2019, the day we arrived at Vienna. I got to experience so much at that time, getting a masterclass, practicing and preparing for our performance at the park, going to a Mozart Museum and his hometown and the cherry on top, we got a Gold Medal for our hard work. We even exchanged gifts and souvenirs with other orchestras from other countries, we partied and celebrated and had a bonding time. It's a time we or I couldn't forget. That's not all, after we got home, we received an offer to perform at the National Palace and of course we accepted. That year was an amazing year, even now, I still miss that time.

That year also, there's also another unexpected event going on. As I said earlier, I used to be so self conscious whenever it's about music theory and such, I was never the greatest at theory stuff, it's been a struggle. Well, guess what? My conductor owned a music school and to my surprise, she offered me to teach as a theory music teacher there. Mind you, that at that time I was only a 16 years old that was so self conscious about her theory knowledge. I panicked of course and as always, my parents told me to just try it, you never know what's going to happen, maybe you'll get even better on your theory if you tried to teach. I accepted it, after some thinking. I was so nervous that I asked for the theory book that was used for the class and learned before my first day. I have to say my first day wasn't the best. I was very passive and I just sat around and was so nervous all the time. My students at that time were 5-10 years old and even they got me so nervous I can't even think straight. It took me a while but I got the hang of it. Not only that, I got to learn new stuff from my students' books. Definitions, how to read some notes, and get a better understanding of dynamics and intervals. It's like I got a free theory class while I'm working as well. It's fun actually and I got better with handling kids and stuff as I went by. That's been going on for a year and then in the year of 2020, the pandemic arrived.

The pandemic was a hard time, at that year, there was a plan for the orchestra to perform overseas and it got canceled of course. So, after that, our activities were so restricted and as an orchestra, we had to do what we could do to survive. All the performances like doing cover songs or attending festivals are done online. We each made a solo recording and then submitted it later on to the conductor. Until next year, the year of 2021, the conductor announced that our orchestra is going to make an album.

The preparation in making the album was actually really difficult, especially at that time the pandemic was still going on. Loads of recording homework, loads of zoom call sectionals, zoom call meetings, and sometimes we do offline sectionals even that was with

social distancing. Meanwhile, at that time I was struggling with which college I wanted to go to. My first goal was music, but after some thinking, it made me really doubt myself whether I still wanted to go through music as a career. I even consulted my conductor about my struggle. Of course my parents said to work on what I really like and love, but what if what I like and love didn't really help my parents? While my main goal wasn't only just do what I like, but also help my parents as soon as possible. It made me really think about my life. With heavy consideration, I decided that I won't pursue music as a career, but as a side job or a hobby. I still think that I can't let go of music, as it's still my home and comfort place. This decision made me very open to any choice of study. Coincidentally, some friends of my parents recommended us to go to STARKI as they said that you will get a job faster. It made me very interested at that time and made me apply and get accepted.

Joining STARKI is really nerve wracking, this is the first time in years that I was in an unknown environment and community, a whole new world to me. I was quite scared that I won't get along or maybe I won't do a good job as I was in a high school that used to be very heavy on creativity then to a campus that is way more formal and less creativity being used. I thought that I'll probably fail most of the classes, but turns out, it's quite enjoyable. Most of the subjects are English subjects that I was actually familiar with and a practical subject rather than theory. Also, I met amazing friends and a group that was also a plus point on that.

In the year of 2022, month of June, we record our first ever live recording album. That year also, we started doing our first ever offline concert after the pandemic to celebrate our first album, our first ever festival at Bali, perform at G20, and a Scottish themed concert.

Then? What's after that? As I'm writing this, I was preparing for our The Legends 8: Ghibli and Dreamworks edition, our first The Legend concert after the pandemic and our concert was sold out after a few minutes of opening ticket day. We even made an additional 3rd show because of the audience's enthusiasm.

Well, the rest is history. I guess this is all of my story and experience on how I got to my position now. It's hectic, hard, stressful, a bit depressing, and fun in my own way. It's not the best and interesting story out there but I guess it's mine and mine alone. I'll finish this off with a quote "Take any opportunities that are right in front of you. You never know, maybe it's not as scary as you think it is, maybe you might learn something from it and open more opportunities in the future"/GN.