

SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with **WESLEY FERREIRA**

JULIE DEROCHE

With a rich and varied career as an orchestral and chamber musician, performer, administrator, pedagogue, and corporate consultant, Julie DeRoche has done it all. The former president of the ICA and long-serving faculty member at DePaul University sits down to answer some questions.

What's the most fulfilling thing about being a musician?

Making music with other people.

What's the hardest thing about being a musician?

Maintaining the level of work needed and staying confident. It can be a relentless lifestyle.

What do you think is the biggest accomplishment in your career so far? My biggest accomplishment is accomplishing many different things...and I say that with gratitude for life's ability to open doors in many directions. We just have to walk through.

How do you unplug? Netflix or Amazon Prime shows in my PJs.

How do you handle email?

I answer as quickly as I can, and delete or file away the messages when I'm done with them. Try to have as little mail in my box as possible. I dream of a moment when there are no messages in my inbox!

What embarrasses you the most?

I can't seem to remember people's names and faces well.

What is your cocktail or drink of choice? Single Malt Scotch, with a little ice... my biggest vice.

What's one thing you wish you had known when you began your career? How important other things in life are, so not to worry about career so much. Hard work is important, but so is perspective.

What's the last thing that made you cry? Watching my percussionist son perform with the US Navy Band at President Biden's inauguration evening concert.

Which piece of solo clarinet repertoire do you think is overrated? Poulenc Sonata.

What other art form resonates with you? All styles of dance.

How do you know when you're finished with a practice session?

I start thinking about what I am going to do next rather than what I am doing.

Is there a musician/artist that you admire?

My friend and colleague Larry Combs. I learned so much from playing with him. I never officially studied with him, but he was probably my greatest teacher. He never acted as if he was.

What advice are you glad you ignored?

When I was young, women were meant to be nurses, teachers, librarians, or housewives, and that's about it. Don't get me wrong! I respect all of those choices. But women now aren't held to so few options, and that is wonderful. I am happy I did something that women in the past were not expected to do.

What worries you most about the classical music sector?

That priorities will change in a way that will cause us to lose some of the best of the past, or deny the future. Classical music must be like Janus - looking forward and backward at the same time, rather than only one way or the other.

What's the one piece of advice you'd give graduates today?

No matter what, prioritize happiness in your life. We really only have one time on earth so it is best to be guiltlessly happy.

What would you recommend seeing if you're in Chicago?

The lakefront and skyline.



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If you could have any other job, what would that be?

Medical doctor or researcher.

If you joined the circus, what would you be doing?

Ringmaster.

If you could meet any one living person who would it be?

Jeff Bezos, so that I could have a conversation with him about how he could be using all that money!

If you had a superpower, what would it be? **To be fearless.**

If you could be remembered for one thing, what would that be?

Being straightforward.

If you were to pick what is inscribed on your gravestone, what would it be? **She smiled.**