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**"How I plan to integrate my love of music into my professional career."**

When I was a young child, my father worked in the local music store selling everything from records, to guitars, to home entertainment systems. I watched my father work through nights and weekends, installing car stereos to earn extra money for our family. People would come by our house or the shop to ask him questions about audio gear and I could see the excitement in their eyes. I grew up feeling people's energy and love for music, while learning from the hard work of my father. I believe this is where the musical seed was planted in me.

As I grew older, I began to develop my own passion for music. I played trumpet in elementary school and percussion in local parades. Throughout high school, I would stay alone during lunch breaks to play the piano in the theatre. At home, I would stay in my room for hours and analyze every sound within my favorite songs. I began to write journals full of lyrics and annoy my schoolteachers with constant drumming on my desk. I even joined our high school's top choir—which is a very daring move for a teenage boy! By the time I was ready for college, music had completely consumed me and I began to dream of a career in music production.

Moving to San Francisco from a small town in the country ignited a musical fire that continues to burn within me. I was completely overwhelmed with the amount of music shops, record stores, and live shows in the Bay Area. My education reached far beyond the classroom as I was being exposed to one of the most culturally rich and diverse communities in the world. San Francisco became my musical playground where I explored and developed into an aspiring producer.

My opportunities remain wide open in the field of Media & Communications. I have enjoyed a variety of experiences since I began to pursue a degree in audio production. I have worked an internship at a professional recording studio. I have recorded and co-produced a creative Northern California rock band. I have also composed and arranged songs of my own and with local artists. Each of these endeavors has taught me a new lesson in the world of audio. I learned that I am definitely interested with musical sound and energy, while I am less interested in music business and bureaucracy. By stretching myself to accept new challenges, I have grown tremendous amounts in a relatively short period of time.

Along with practical experience, my higher education at San Francisco State University has truly enlightened me. I have been blessed with amazing professors such as Dr. Scott Patterson, Dr. Eileen Mahoney, Dr. Michelle Wolf, Dr. Josh Hecht, Dr. John Barsotti, Dr. Corless Smith, and many others. The BECA Department has done an impressive job serving massive amounts of students who are all very eager to learn and produce new media. My experience at San Francisco State has been so fulfilling that I am now considering continuing onto graduate studies in the BECA Department. It has been very inspiring to study what I am passionate about—music and audio production.

One of the most inspiring moments of my musical experience, as well as my life, was jamming with the inmates at San Quentin State Penitentiary. Through a USF Outreach Ministry program, a couple of friends and myself were able to visit San

Quentin inmates and attend a short mass ceremony. After the service was over, we all shared a few hours to relax and talk. One day, my friend and I picked up the church instruments and began to play a little melody together. Moments later, the inmates gathered around and picked up the remaining instruments. We began to jam in harmony and create music together. This was such a deep experience, I could feel the chemistry bonding imprisoned and free men—it revolved around culture, and spirit, and the universal quest for freedom. The music we created transcended the iron gates and cement walls, as we released our collective energy into the atmosphere, becoming one with the universe.

When I hear drums I feel Aztec blood pump through my veins. I grow filled with the spirit of an ancient warrior. Bass becomes my heartbeat; rhythm spills from my soul. When the music is playing, I taste my childhood within me. I remember my father and my uncles playing guitar. I have visions of my Great-Grandmother playing her keyboard. I remember nights in garages listening to “rock & roll” and sunny days at the lake listening to “reggae.” I never would have guessed I’d be studying music production and I feel blessed that my life turned out this way.

Music and education have been a fundamental part of my life, from teaching my baby niece to drum on her bongos, to teaching teenagers collective identity in a drum circle. Music has power beyond sound and energy; it is a public art that societies have identified with for centuries. Music creates the peace that forms social bonds. Whether I become a professor, a producer, or both, I know music will be the center of my career and my life.