

# *How the Pandemic Affected Me*

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted my plans in many ways. Being a clarinet performance major at DePaul University was one of the biggest problems I had with the pandemic because I was unable to perform and collaborate in ensemble concerts for a whole year. Everything, from clarinet lessons to clarinet masterclasses to regular academic classes was online. That being said, it was much harder to stay focused and engaged due to being quarantined at home where I was surrounded by numerous distractions. Bored out of my mind with nothing else to do and nowhere else to go, I felt less motivated to work hard, thinking about how much better life was before the pandemic shut our country down.

Speaking of everything going remote, I was supposed to graduate last Spring. However, being a music major, I took a year off since there were no ensemble rehearsals and concerts where I could collaborate with other fellow musicians in person and build energy from them by making music together. During my year off, I worked at the deli counter at a local Jewel Osco store. Considering that I was afraid of catching the virus, I was exposed to plenty of customers whom I served lunchmeat to.

Going back to DePaul for the first time in two years felt weird. We were back to having in-person ensemble rehearsals, which felt rocky from the start considering Fall 2021 was the first time I have ever done an in-person ensemble rehearsal since March of 2020. Not only that, but we also had to wear masks with holes in them while we played, which didn't sound very legit considering that playing a wind instrument such as the clarinet means you're probably

putting others at risk either way. Also, I felt like the mask restricted my breathing, which is absolutely crucial for making sound out of the clarinet.

Now that things have sort of improved since the start of the pandemic, we do not need to wear masks in class and rehearsals nowadays. Despite, however, the city getting rid of the mask/vaccine rule, DePaul kept it mandatory to wear a mask if you were an audience member at a concert. Luckily for us performers, we no longer had to wear masks on stage. I had to wear an instrument mask while I was performing my junior recital last fall, but luckily not for my senior recital which I thought went much better than my junior recital.

I was supposed to give a junior recital performance at the end of my junior year, which I postponed until Fall 2021 because of the pandemic. As a result, I had two recitals to cram together in my senior year.

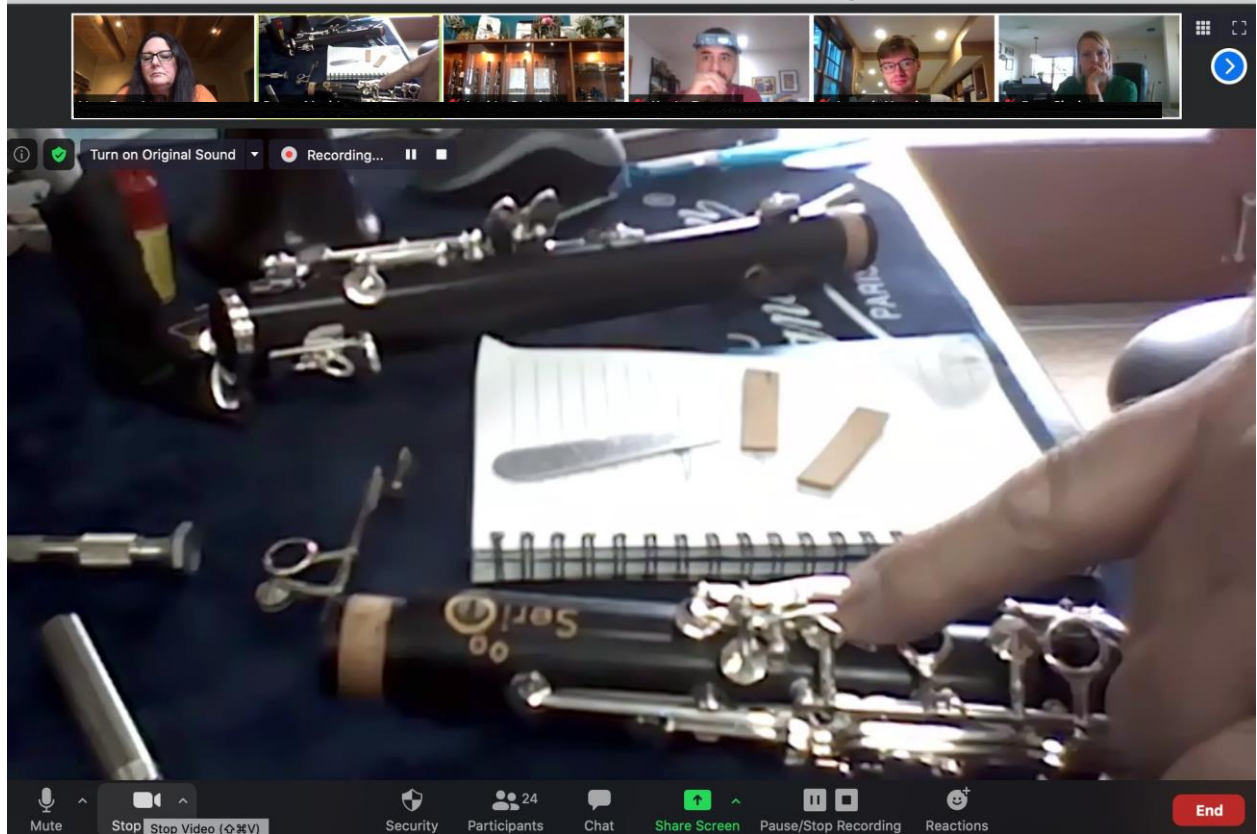
All that being said, there were some ways in which the pandemic affected me in a positive way. One of those ways was the ability to collaborate with professional clarinetists from all over the world through Zoom clarinet masterclasses. As a result, I made lots of new friends during my time away from school. Another thing was that I took an online Zoom course for learning the basics of how to repair a clarinet myself, considering how expensive it can be to take your instrument into a repair shop and have someone else fix it for you. Also, as I mentioned before, I worked as a Deli clerk part-time at Jewel Osco for a whole year and ended up making a considerable amount of money from that job. So, the pandemic did have some good things come out of it despite it keeping us so isolated and uncertain.

Looking back now at the recent pandemic, which is now in the rear view mirror, I am happy that we have gotten through the worst of it. And since I am almost a DePaul graduate now, I'm looking forward to what new things the future holds in store for me.



Junior Recital, playing with mask on.

Me and an old friend of mine  
post-concert, for which we had to  
where masks while playing.



Clarinet Repair course online via Zoom.



Everything was online during 2020-21, from lessons to masterclasses and more.



My Senior Recital a couple weeks ago. The mask mandate was finally, FINALLY lifted.