

My Bohua Story

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August 1, 2016

Six years ago I still remember filing into the auditorium waiting for the Chinese New Year performances to begin. Through all the flying colors and dancing and singing, the one thing that caught my eye was the last performance – cymbals, strings, exotic instruments that I have only ever heard of and never seen. My parents were also surprised, they hadn't seen a Chinese musical ensemble outside of China, apart from professional touring orchestras in America. But in that moment, my parents and I were all entranced.

It wasn't long until my father asked around and eventually joined Bohua, driving up to Qualcomm every Sunday with his erhu. My mother and I knew that every Sunday was his practice time, and often hiked outside or took a nap as we waited for him to return. As I was involved in my school bands and my flute, I never took enough interest to join because why would a Chinese orchestra need a Western flute?

One day, after my father returned from his weekly practices, he asked me to sit in on one of the practices. Grudgingly I accepted, and I woke up earlier than usual and sat through the endless rehearsal with a book in my hands. However, one of the songs required a strong woodwind part, and the conductor had adapted a western flute part. My father then told me about the new addition, and skeptically I agreed to play flute for Bohua. Little did I know that not only was I becoming a member of a Chinese orchestra, but I was also becoming a member of a new family.

It became a ritual – every Sunday, my father and I would pack up our instruments and drive up to Qualcomm to meet with the rest of the Bohua members, catching up on their week, sharing homegrown fruits, and weaving new music together. I became close with many of the members, and especially with the other young musicians who attended practice. Not long after my father and I joined, my mother also joined as a percussionist. Every Sunday, my family and I would pack up our instruments and drive up to Qualcomm and bond as a family, with other families, as a Bohua family.

Not only had I gained closeness and musical skills from Bohua, but I also gained leadership skills, teamwork, cooperation, and responsibility. I gained an opportunity to lead my own group of youth musicians, Bohua Youth Group, in achieving similar goals as Bohua in spreading awareness of our culture and music.

I became the president in my own musical ensemble, a position I would have never dreamed of, and a position I respected and loved. It was an amazing experience, being able to reach out to other passionate youth musicians, some with Chinese instruments and others with Western instruments, and weave different skills and styles into one cohesive beautiful ensemble. It reminded me of why I joined music in the first place – to spread my love for music

to others, and to make music with other musicians. With the love and passion that I learned through Bohua Youth Ensemble, I still carry in my college endeavors in working through a medical program, and I am certain I will still carry them through my medical career. Bohua has given me the precious skills of leadership, dedication, and recognizing my own cultural and musical background.

I can never describe how many experiences and skills Bohua has given me, but I do know that Bohua will continue to do great things in the community and for aspiring musicians. Happy 10 Year Anniversary Bohua, and thank you for everything.