

Humans of SCSU: Drew McWeeney

By Victoria Bresnahan

Drew Michael McWeeney, a senior double majoring in early childhood education and music composition and technology, said he is currently working on separate projects with a Grammy Award-winning composer, a member of Eric Clapton's band, and the director of bands at Drexel University.

"The top of the line people I have worked with have given me actual scenarios of what to expect in real life," said McWeeney. "There is just nothing else you can do that is better than that."

McWeeney said he began to compose music in his freshman year of college, but has been playing percussion and the piano for 16 years. He said he is a composer of wind ensembles, orchestras, jazz bands and creates electronic compositions using music platforms.

McWeeney said Southern Connecticut State University was the only college he applied to due to its strong education program and "booming" music program. In addition, McWeeney said none of Connecticut's state schools allowed him to pair early childhood education and music as majors.

"That is also why I chose Southern because they were able to make those two majors compatible," said McWeeney. "So not only will I get an early childhood certification, but I will also get music education



PHOTO | VICTORIA BRESNAHAN

Drew McWeeney, an early childhood education and music composition and technology double major, sitting at a piano.

certification. So, I am going for a whole handful of things."

Currently, McWeeney said he is working on a project with Nathan East—a member of Eric Clapton's band for over 30 years—whom he met during a soundcheck in the Lyman Center.

"I said to him, 'If I wrote you a very big solo piece for an upright bass and we confirmed an orchestra to play it would you do it?'" he said. "Absolutely," McWeeney said. "So, we have been in touch every week for about a year going through the music."

McWeeney said he would not be the richest person in the world for these projects, but he is grateful to receive more side work. He said the expected date this piece will be played is 2020. Additionally, he said he recently received a call from the director of bands at Drexel

University to commission and perform a wind ensemble piece he wrote. In September, McWeeney said he will be going to Drexel University to attend the rehearsals and prepare the piece to be played this coming December.

Lastly, McWeeney said he has been working with David Darling, a Grammy award winning musician, and has been arranging, orchestrating and transcribing his music. He said he will finish this project tentatively at the end of February and Darling will be distributing the music to be performed.

"There are talks of collaborations in the works, so that is a big project," said McWeeney. "I am fortunate enough to land that opportunity because he is a Grammy winning artist."

Upon graduation, McWeeney said he would like to teach preschool children and have a music career on the side. He said he has been interested in early childhood education since the second grade.

"I knew I wanted to be a preschool teacher because there are a lot of young boys that do not have father figures," said McWeeney, "and they need that role model."

McWeeney said music is also an important aspect for young children.

"Kids need movement," said McWeeney, "and there are certain aspects of schooling that you cannot teach, [but] you can teach through music."

The challenges of renting textbooks

By Victoria Bresnahan

Textbooks; they collect dust on our desks, roll around in the back of student's cars and rarely see the light of day. The Southern Connecticut State University bookstore offers students the option of renting or buying these books. Sometimes, a rental period ends with students purchasing it if damage is done.

Ashley Connolly, a freshman and elementary education major, said one of her SCSU rental textbooks had a little water on it and she had to buy it back at the end of the semester.

"It was not bad; it was probably 30 dollars," said Connolly. "It wasn't that bad of a water stain. I was like, 'If someone is going to complain about this, I would be surprised.' I was a little annoyed."

Adrianna Breda, a junior and an employee at the SCSU bookstore, said water damage and issues to the spine of the book are some reasons why the bookstore may not take back a rental.

"If the book is falling apart, or out of its spine, we can't take it back," said Breda. "It is company policy."

Breda said students should put their books somewhere safe, or leave it at home unless they know they need them.

Mac Linsley, SCSU Bookstore general merchandise manager, said the bookstore tries to not let damaged books appear back on the shelves for rental. Linsley said if a student is given a damaged book as a rental, they should bring it to the attention of the bookstore immediately.

"You can leave it [a rental textbook] on your desk, but do not put water there," Linsley said as a suggestion to students looking to avoid buying

back their rentals

According to a 2013 Cash4Books survey, out of the 532 students polled, 83.6 percent primarily buy their textbooks and 16.4 percent rent them. The survey stated Chegg and Amazon were the top websites students used to rent their textbooks. 94 percent of the students stated they choose to rent their books because it is cheaper

Allyn Petrillo, a freshman and elementary/special education major, said she was able to buy and rent almost all her textbooks from Southern Connecticut State University's bookstore.

"Everything was there more or less," said Petrillo. "There was one time I did not have my art history book, so I had to buy that."

Petrillo said the art history class she took had a large number of students enrolled in it. Connolly, who was also in the class, said due to the class's large enrollment number there were too many people who needed the book at once.

Additionally, Petrillo said she had to purchase back a rental book from the bookstore due to damage to it.

"One of the books I had I kind of messed up a little bit," said Petrillo. "I had to buy it because it wasn't usable anymore—my dog kind of got to it. It was right before I was going to bring it back, too. It was okay; it was only 30 dollars."

Petrillo said in the future she would buy her textbooks through whatever platform is cheapest.

"Sometimes it is just easier because they [the bookstore] are right there," said Petrillo. "Whereas [with] Amazon, you have to order ahead."



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