



Student Spotlight: Victoria Hain, 17



- Senior, Winchester High School Class of 2015
- WCMS student since age 3
- First Chair, Percussion, Massachusetts All State Festival
- Percussion Section Leader, New England Conservatory Youth Philharmonic Orchestra
- National Honor Society member
- 2014 Girl Scout Gold Award recipient
- Captain and 2014-15 MVP, Winchester High School Girls Volleyball Team

As one of the top high school classical percussionists in the state, WCMS student Victoria Hain is certainly an accomplished musician. But when we sat down to talk to her, it became clear that she is achieving great things in most every other aspect of her life as well. As we compiled her lengthy list of accomplishments (above), the obvious question became “How does she do it all?”

"My life has been pretty fast-paced," Vicky answered, "So I'm used to fitting a lot in." As an example, she recounted a story about her family managing to visit four Florida Disney parks in a three-day vacation.

Her family is indeed a large part of her success. Vicky's parents, Roger and Reena Hain, brought her to Music & Movement class at WCMS at three years old. At six, Victoria and Roger played four-hands piano together. Three years later, when Victoria wanted to try drums and asked to attend WCMS summer percussion camp, Reena realized it wouldn't fit in the schedule but enrolled her in private lessons with WCMS percussion teacher Sylvie Zakarian. Although Vicky had picked up clarinet at the same time, percussion ultimately won. Seven years ago, when the



With father Roger, playing a duet

family finally decided to invest in a 4.3-octave (7-foot-long) marimba and make a place for it in their house, their commitment was clear. The fact that Reena knows how to expertly take the family marimba apart and put it back together in record time shows just how many hours she has spent supporting the musical ambitions of Victoria and Victoria's sister, Cristina, also a WCMS percussionist.



The early years learning mallet percussion

As all parents know, serious extracurricular activities require serious transportation efforts, especially with Vicky going to Boston for the last three years to play with the NEC Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (YPO) and take lessons with Matt McKay of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The family's sacrifices have been well rewarded, however, by Vicky's status as the lead percussionist in the YPO as well as in the Massachusetts Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra this year. Most people don't know that this ranking is even more significant given the scarcity of female percussion players. (On average, women represent less than 25% of professional or college percussionists.)

Playing with the YPO also took Vicky to Argentina for 10 days in 2013, where she performed with local youth orchestras and learned about traditional Argentinian instruments. "I speak some Spanish," Vicky commented, "so it was fun to talk with everyone there. But really we didn't have to talk much because it was all about music, and that's a universal language. We'd play the rudiments together, which are mostly the same all over the world. And then we'd just sort of jam out."



Playing timpani with the YPO at Jordan Hall, and below, with sister Cristina, left, and friends

In fall, Vicky fits volleyball practice and 20 games into her schedule as well, leading her team as captain and winning the MVP honor this year. She has the added challenge of serving as captain to her sister Cristina, who also plays on the varsity team, though only a sophomore. The girls manage to balance their relationships as athletes, musicians, and siblings, and still be good friends. "I'm pretty much a carbon copy of my sister," Cristina jokes, "just better."

When we asked Vicky how she juggles so many activities, her WCMS percussion teacher, Sylvie Zakarian, answered for her with one word: "Focus!" A second later Sylvie added, "And procrastination."



“Vicky’s level of dedication and her ability to be ‘in the moment’ is admirable even for professionals,” Sylvie explained. “But she’s also given me a lot of gray hair,” she joked, laughing with Victoria over memories of last-minute preparations for important recitals.

Victoria clearly has a system that works, though. Last year as a junior, she added a Girl Scout Gold Award to her list of achievements with a music-related project. After re-organizing the percussion department at Winchester High School, she created a website of videos demonstrating how to play instruments such as tambourine and cymbals. She also held marimba “clinics” for young students at Vinson-Owen Elementary in Winchester. The instrument amazes the children, she said, because they’ve only seen the usual bells, glockenspiels, or drum sets.



Playing percussion in the All-State Festival at Boston Symphony Hall

When all the projects, practice, and homework are done, what does she do to chill out? Ballroom dancing with her boyfriend and two other couples, Vicky responded, noting she has an advantage finding the beat as a dancer, given her many years of training in rhythm. “When I learn new things I always want to immediately be the best I can be,” she explained.

Vicky is still waiting for responses to her many college applications before she decides her path for next year, but she expects she’ll pursue a dual degree in science and music performance, “possibly biomedical engineering,” she added. Her immediate goal, though, for the end of her senior year and the summer, is to learn to play drum set, the instrument she originally longed to play as a child. “We finally own a drum set now!” she exclaimed. Who would be surprised if sometime in the next few years we hear that Victoria Hain has become a world-famous scientist *and* drummer?

