

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

My teacher was right when she said that I had no zeal for playing the piano... I was walking slowly down the hall of my musical school, disturbed by the cacophony of sounds from a dozen of rooms. Suddenly, my ear detected something familiar and inspiring. This very sound led me to the door of our chamber hall. "You're simply the best!"—my favorite song sounded as reassuring as the drum beat. In a minute I found myself sitting at the back row hypnotized by the performance of a student band. The drummer, a longhaired charismatic guy, and his drum set made an organic whole orchestrating every piece the band performed. When I came back to reality at the end of their rehearsal, I felt invigorated.

This was how I set out on my journey through the percussion universe. The very next day I came before the drum teacher with a firm intention to study. Unlike my previous music experience, I started advancing at a tremendous pace, practicing daily both at school and at home, listening to the records of famous drummers, mimicking their style and improvising my own. Carried away by the rhythm, I put all my heart and energy into it and got immersed into the music I played.

Rediscovering the excitement of my first encounter with a student band, I attempted to recreate the setting. I embarked on a challenging yet exciting venture of creating my own group. Through relentless persuasion I managed to engage four of my schoolmates into the band and motivated our music teacher to supervise us. We used to practice in empty classrooms until the security guard showed up in the doorway to ask us to leave. Sometimes we gathered in my flat or in my father's garage. Our new songs came easily, inspired by our mutual dreams and aspirations to convey our love for music.

After a long and tireless period of practice we ventured our first public performance. All the worries and fears vanished away as soon as we started playing. With the first beat of my drums the audience was captivated. We began performing regularly at community concerts, regional and state music festivals, charity events and international workshops, sharing our zest for music with the others. In the end I feel grateful to my piano teacher who unintentionally pushed me to discover my passion for drums and the exciting world of performing arts and self-expression.