

SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with **WESLEY FERREIRA**

YEHUDA GILAD

With a storied musical career that spans well over three decades, Yehuda Gilad has been highly influential as a clarinetist, conductor, artistic director, and professor. Recognized as one of the world's prominent clarinet pedagogues, he takes time to sit down and answer some questions.

What's the best part about being a musician? That we can translate our voice into reality via the clarinet, through communication of music. To cut through the barrier of words. It's one of the most beautiful freedoms that we have.

What's the hardest part about being a musician? The frustration of going through those big waves of emotions. There are so many lows. Sometimes when you go through many lows it is hard to recognize the highs, of which there are many.

What is another art form that resonates with you? Impressionist paintings and painters.

What are your hobbies? Teaching is my hobby. What recharges me, and this has been the case from a very early age, is an ability to be helpful. If you treat teaching like a hobby, even with the ups and downs, you get satisfaction and personal rewards because you are helping others.

What do you do to wind down at the end of the day? By eating very good food! I get home, relax, take care of my dogs, and spend time with my family. It takes me a long time to wind down. I have to do something that is completely mindless. I call the TV my sleeping pill.

What's your morning routine? I wake up very early, unfortunately! I prepare my coffee, return some phone calls to the east coast or overseas. If I don't leave by 6:00am, then I'm in trouble because Los Angeles traffic is terrible! I usually stop by a little cafe close to school and have a small breakfast, and then mosy to school to start the day. As I'm describing it now, it's actually really boring!

What other type of music are you a fan of? I'm a fan of really good jazz. I love the ethnic music that I grew up with. Actually, I am very versatile with my musical tastes. There is no hierarchy in music. Music equals music, and so in my opinion everything is on the same level.

What's something that you used to love doing as a child that you still enjoy today? I used to love to play ping-pong, a lot, a lot, and I used to be good! In the military band we had tournaments, and I remember that I won one. I still love to play, but now I'm not as good. When you don't practice... well, you know what happens when you don't practice!

What was a dream you had when you were younger, and has that come true? I grew up in a small village. I never took anything for granted, and I never had any expectations. My dreams were that with hard work, I could find myself in a place where I could be very free to express anything. To a large extent, I am quite satisfied with the directions that I have taken. I look back now and I would say that I would not change a thing.

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If you weren't a musician, what would be your profession?
Medical doctor.

If you had a superpower, what would it be? **It would be to snap my fingers and travel to any place in an instant. Boom, no freeway!**

Have you ever been starstruck?
I would say no. I can tell you that I have a strong dislike when people project themselves to be elitist or "famous." Essentially, it's wrong when anyone tries to put themselves above others. This is a big problem with our society. I believe that human equals human.

If you could take back one sentence from your past, what would it be? **"You cannot do it." That was said to me and I have said it to myself, but I never say it to my students. I am a great believer in freedom. I would like to take that phrase out of the lexicon.**



If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be? Brahms. He transformed so much and was also greatly influenced by his time, by poets and philosophers. I would also like to visit with Mozart because he hardly wrote any indication of what he wanted in his music, but yet, his style speaks for itself. I also feel sympatico with him because he was a little bit crazy, a little bit out of the box.

If you had to describe yourself in three words, which would they be?
Maverick, Caring, Humor.

If you could be remembered for a few things, what would they be?
A person who helped to change dogmas and create opportunities and different options for how to approach the clarinet and music.