



Field *and* String

When sophomore nursing major Maren Werth finishes the soccer season, she'll play the harp with the Augustana Orchestra.



Maren Werth's Augustana experience reads like a page from the liberal arts playbook. She is smart, a skilled athlete, and a gifted harpist. Her career choice is caring for others, and she is devoted to family.

The sophomore from Bloomington, Minn., is totally focused on whatever requires her attention at the moment. That she performs at a high level in all endeavors is no surprise to those who know her.

"Maren is an amazing young woman with a ton of talent," said Brandon Barkus, Augustana's head soccer coach. "She is constantly striving to get better, and I absolutely love that about her."

Dr. Christopher Stanichar, Augustana's director of orchestras, said: "It has been a huge blessing to work with Maren. She is respectful, kind, and immensely talented. Like many of our students, she is a model of a well-rounded individual."

Werth is a student of Anna Vorhes, principal harpist with the Sioux City Symphony and a member of the Augustana music faculty.

"Maren approaches the harp with intensity and joy," Vorhes said. "Her delight in playing the standards of harp literature with technical skill is matched with her delight in learning to arrange pieces that make the people around her happy."

Soccer

As a true freshman in 2010, Werth inherited a starting role when senior Katie Shandri, arguably one of the best players in Augustana history, suffered a career-ending knee injury.

"I had played pretty well in practice and was getting a feel for game conditions," Werth said. "I was playing next to Katie when she got hurt. I was concerned about what was going to happen, but the next thing I knew Coach was telling me that I was taking her spot in the game. He told me to play like I know how to play."

Werth started 11 games and played in all 19. She led the team in points (11) and shots (39). She tied for the lead in goals (4), assists (3), and game-winning goals (2).

"Maren takes coaching points quite seriously," said Barkus. "If I give her something to improve upon she works tirelessly until she masters it. I admire her ability to be empowered."

Werth's passion for soccer was ignited at age 5. She has competed with the Bloomington Youth Soccer Club, the Edina Soccer Club, the Woodbury Soccer Club, and for Thomas Jefferson High School. She first met Barkus when he recruited her to play for Woodbury. Four months later, Barkus accepted the coaching job at Augustana.

The Werths were in Sioux Falls for a regional soccer tournament when they contacted Barkus and arranged a visit.

"I seriously fell in love with Augustana," said Werth. "It's a small school, but not confining. It was one of the few schools where I was allowed to play soccer, be in orchestra, and major in nursing. I knew it was where God wanted me to be."



Sophomore Maren Werth goes for the ball during a game against Nebraska-Kearney.

The Harp

"I played the piano for about three years and took up the harp when I was 8," Werth said. "I watched a lady at church playing the harp and thought it was so cool. My teacher was 84 and the cutest lady you could imagine. I started with a Troubadour Lever Harp. I played basic pieces and would memorize them before moving on. I eventually moved up to the pedal harp that requires use of the feet and hands at the same time. That was an adventure."

The pedal harp — also known as the concert harp — is a large and technically modern harp, designed primarily for classical music and played either solo, as part of chamber ensembles, as soloist with or as a section or member in an orchestra.

Werth joins the Augustana Orchestra at the end of the soccer season. A year ago, she performed in concerts with the ensemble in addition to playing solo at various functions.

"I think Maren could easily play harp as well as any music major, yet she has an equal love for soccer and nursing," said Stanichar. "I suppose that a lot of other students with her schedule would

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— Maren Werth, Class of 2014

choose to do other relaxing endeavors. Instead, Maren seeks to enrich her life with music."

Playing the harp is a form of stress relief for Werth. This summer she performed at the wedding of Augustana assistant soccer coach Dale Weiler.

"Arranging the theme from "The Princess Bride" for her coach's wedding was a summer project that made her time at the harp very satisfying," Vorhes said. "Whether it's adding harp to the orchestra at Augustana, playing a solo for recital hour or adding the magical sound of the harp to someone's special day, Maren loves what she can do with

the harp."

To hear Werth play, Stanichar suggests a recording of the Augustana Orchestra performing Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnole from a concert last fall. "She is playing the scintillating harp cadenza, which gives the impression of a fiery flamenco dancer," he said.

Nursing

Werth has been accepted into the nursing program at Augustana. "I can't think of doing anything else," she said.

"I like the thought of taking care of people. Sometimes my teammates call me Momma Maren."