

The Sanders County Ledger  
And The Paradise Center Present

**Laurel Miller**  
Noxon High School  
Spotlight on the Arts – June 2022



I had the pleasure of interviewing Laurel Miller. Miller is 18 and has just completed her senior year at Noxon High School. During her last year, she was the teacher's assistant to Mrs. Sari MacArthur. Miller plans to attend the University of Idaho in the fall of 2022, where she plans to major in the field of Computer Science and Cyber Security, but also hopes to incorporate her interests in music as well.

Miller's interest in music developed early in elementary education when she joined the school band. But after a year of learning various instruments, she became drawn to choir and singing. Miller said that she "realized that she enjoyed singing more than playing an instrument." Miller added, though, that she truly enjoys both forms of musical expression. Of all things music,

Miller especially enjoys both the element of "beat" (the rhythms and flow) and lyrical expression - particularly when singing in a foreign language. Not surprisingly, she began taking piano lessons, which allowed her to explore both melody and rhythm, since piano - while having strings - is predominantly a percussive instrument.

Miller recounts the many people who inspired her to learn, to be educated, and to appreciate the world of music: particularly her mother and grandmother, many of her teachers, but especially her music teacher Mrs. MacArthur. Her interests were also piqued by popular rock bands such as Queen and Metallica, where the beat, multiple instruments, and especially guitar solos were of highlighted enjoyment. However, Miller added that she has also developed an

avid interest in classical music by composers such as Mozart and Beethoven; particularly those pieces that include piano and violin. Miller recounts two choir pieces that she enjoyed learning and performing: "Bella Ciao" (arr. by Jerry Estes) which was sung in Italian, and "Bonse Aba" (arr. by Victor C. Johnson), which is an African folk song, with an upbeat drum accompanying an acapella chorus. Outside of school, one of her favorite songs was "Midnight City" by M83, which has a great driving beat with an ethereal sound around it - "a great mix of techno music with drums."

Miller plans to pursue other avenues of music education, such as college choir, checking out drum class, and perhaps learning to play the violin along with her continued piano studies. She is not clear what follows college, nor what role music will hold, but is "interested in exploring possibilities that will keep it an active part of her life - perhaps even playing or singing with a band." "I think this will happen," she continues, "because I have always had a value and interest in all things 'creative' such as music and the visual arts - it is one of the best ways through which I can express myself." While she is mainly pursuing a career that involves a great amount of math, she finds that there is a significant correlation between math and art, especially when one considers the recent developments in technology - where the math driven technology allows for greater creativity and options with creating and expressing music. Miller continues: "For example, the manner in which you build a website or a software program is so very similar to creating music in that each requires a vast number of components that eventually need to be blended and built to function as a whole. It is how they are eventually assembled that gives them their meaning - their sense and purpose."

As Miller prepares to leave for higher education, she reflects back on what she would have done differently and what message she would leave for students attending Noxon school in the future. Miller states: "Find ways and explore opportunities to create in all art forms. Use these tools to express yourself as best you can. Be more willing to 'do things' - taking risks - and put yourself out there as often as you can." Miller hopes that the community will continue to develop the value of not only sports, but the equally important area of the arts, by creating more opportunities, options, and public awareness for the arts. Emphasizing and encouraging this value can only increase the expression and enjoyment of life and living.

"Spotlight on the Arts" by The Paradise Center honors and encourages students in the arts by highlighting their talent and acknowledging the support they receive through their schools and teachers.