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CSU professor releases album "You and I are Brave"



by **Anna Groeling**
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Professor Phil Turk, in pursuit of balance and passion, has occupied his life with new ambitions and complexities. This includes rejecting tenure at Western Virginia, moving to Colorado and releasing his music album "You and I Are Brave."



"I gave up a lot to get out here," Turk said. "I could have had a comfy existence, but if I've learned anything in life, you should never settle and always optimize."

Turk started working as a statistics professor and consultant at Colorado State

University this fall. According to the professor, his intention is to stay here for the distance despite his travel bug habits.

Recorded and released before the Colorado move, "You and I Are Brave" features a range of instruments: acoustic and electric guitars, keyboard, tambourine, cello and violin among others. It also showcases pianist and Western Virginia professor Juliana Yap.

"I could be playing a studio session with her, and the next day she's playing at the John F. Kennedy Center," Turk said. "She's truly a giant among flute [and piano] players."

With its range of talent and instruments, the CD includes a more unusual instrument: **The Hulusi**. Professor Duncan Lorimer of Western Virginia, who plays bass in the songs, described the Hulusi as a bowl-shaped instrument with pipes that originates from China.

"It's tuned in a Western scale, so it doesn't have the 12 notes," Lorimer said. "That made it quite challenging to fit into the songs."

Quichen Li first knew Turk as her statistics advisor, and now sees the professor as a close and valued friend. Li said that each song on "You and I Are Brave" is dedicated to each friend in Turk's life.

"The name of the CD is actually based on one of our conversations," Li said. "I'm an international student from China and sometimes you have to be brave [living in a different country]."

While emphasizing a balance between life and work, Phil Turk said that students are often surprised to hear that he sings. Forty to 60 people, including students, celebrated the album's release as well as Turk's time at Western Virginia during a last open mic event.

"The music kind of humanizes me," Turk said. "Professors sometimes have a Human-of-Oz kind of appearance."

Both Turk and Yap described music as a universal language without age that binds people together.

"I just wrote from the heart," Turk said. "Didn't pay attention to what anyone thought."

Li, Yap and Lorimer each expressed gratitude to have worked with Turk. According to Li, Turk was one of her best professors while she was a student.

"Sometimes he would do push ups during his lectures," Li said. "I don't know why his classes were three hours, but students would get tired, so he would do funny things to cheer us up."

Turk plans on pursuing more open mic nights in Fort Collins, and starting up a new band in Colorado as he begins a new journey in his life.

"I just try to do something every day," Turk said. "It's a slow process, but I suffer from no illusions of grandeur. I'm not quitting my day job anytime soon. I love my department and the research."

Find out more about Professor Turk by liking the "Phil Turk Band" on Facebook or at www.philturkband.com.

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