

Noah: Okay, so we're here with Dylan, how do you pronounce your last name?

Dylan: Therriault.

Noah: Pterio. I've never pronounced you last name correctly, Dylan Therriault, and he's a big piece of the CMI. So I guess, what do you do? What do you use the CMI for?

Dylan: For the most part, it's just a practice space. It's a nice quiet area that I can always come to, and can always play instruments poorly, especially, if I need to. Other times, its juts an area I can gather with other people who are interested in playing the same kind of music as me and just, you know, jamming out for an hour and a half or so. It's just a good space for that, the equipment is here, I can have my computer open, or I can print out something if I need it, a couple music stands, just a good space to be playing.

Noah: So I guess, how did you get involved with the CMI?

Dylan: I hadn't been playing music until about this year, and so not only is my, at the time, is my skill wasn't that great, and I mean like, when I play I'd squawk, so if I was playing the fiddle for instance, I would be squawking and squeaking all over the place, and if I was playing banjo, it was often just going through chord progressions and things. And I was looking for a place where I could, I mean, I can't really practice in my room cuz I don't want to bother the people around me, I don't really know anybody in the music department, especially, I had no connections there. I didnt know if those spaces where open to me or not. But Tom Crisp, the founder, came by and was like, hey look, were trying to start an area where you can kind of play alternative styles music and get to get acquainted with what music's all about, have a space to be playing, and so I just went, Sure, yea, absolutely perfect. And then me and him would play together down here at times, or I would find somebody else to, or I just come down here and frequently use the room on my own, if I can.

Shamus: So, the incubator and this space, it seems to provide you with a good place for you to come to practice music, to learn, to improve your skills. So what do you think having this space means for you, what is being able to have that place to go to practice music, being at Colby?

Dylan: This becomes sort of a – I mean, it consolidates any kind of musical effort I have. Its no longer just messing around in my room with my banjo for instance, its like I'm gonna go sit and play music for an hour or a half, in like whatever context I want it to be, either with somebody else, on my own, maybe learning some kind of new style with other people I know. I've played with Jelly Sauce one or two times, and that's totally out of my genre range, but it still works out.

And it's always just sort of an open community in that sense. You can kind of shoot for the musical hip, things are all low key, there's low stress, there's not a lot riding on whether or not you're playing well, which I really appreciate, especially starting out.

Noah: Just along those lines, quick question, just to clarify, how would you say sort of the structure of the CMI compares to sort of the structure of how you were playing before hand? You know what I mean, like you just sort of mentioned how when you come down here it seems like you're playing with other people, you might be playing with different styles, instead of sort of just playing in your room, so I guess how does the mentality of playing music change when you come here as compared to playing in your room?

Dylan: It just becomes, it's like I've said, everything becomes sort of, this is a space for music, and it's a space for like a lot of alternative styles of music. So coming down here means not only kind of devoting myself to the style that I like to play, a lot of American folk, a little bit of Irish, but also exposing myself to musicians that are playing other ways, that I like to try to, not to incorporate into my music, but I'll try to mimic at times. Like if they're looking to play something like, like Tom plays a lot of this kind of, what does he call it, its like baroque pop kind of deal, with a lot of these horns, I'll try to find a way to be able to play with that for instance. And in that sense, it turns the music more than just, its no longer like just me, my room, a tablature, learning songs. Now it's me and a musical community. It's a little bit of putting myself out there in that sense, which is, I mean, easily the most I've ever learned about music has been playing with other people. I mean, recognizing the way that chord progression works or is relative based on the key that you're playing out of, that's something I totally only learned after starting to play with other people, in those other keys, outside of the tablature. Most of my improvisational skills came from just jamming with people. So, in that sense, the CMI affords a lot of just musical interaction with other people, as well as just a place to on my own playing, if I need to be.

Shamus: So the CMI space has been an opportunity for you to expand your skills and open yourself to different genres, but what would you see in the future of the CMI, what resources do you think would make the experience better or more beneficial for you as musician, and as a growing musician in particular? Anything you think you're missing out on, or you think can be improved?

Dylan: I don't ask anything of it more than it's there to offer. So like right now it is just a practice space and a meeting place for other musicians at the time, and it'd always be nice to have more people involved. Like some of the coolest experiences have been coming down here, and somebody already using the room, doing something cool. I mean, sometimes it feels like I'm blocked out of the space if I need it for a specific way, but it is always cool to see somebody

coming down and playing like, traditional Indian music, for instance, is one that I came across, and I was like wow, this is really, im really kind of stoked about this, this is really cool to hear this and see that this exists. And its cool to see the skills that students have, I haven't really thought much about what else it could offer me. I definitely feel like I have a lack of, there's not a lot of other students who are interested in the very particular kind of music I want to play. I want to play bluegrass, I wanna play old time American fiddle tunes. There's nobody in the CMI knows those exactly-if I want to play it I have to teach it to 'em, I have to get involved, etc. And I don't think I would go looking in the CMI right now for more people that would be interested in that kind of music. I would probably go off campus, to try to find people that I can – the very, very knowledgeable kind of people. But for right now, the CMI is a great place to practice, and it's a great place to get exposure, and just experience playing with other people, whatever genre or style they're playing in. It's cool.

Shamus: Yeah, that's interesting. A quick addition: how do you think that exposure to those different genres and this atmosphere, being so collaborative, what do you think the impact has been on you, like, as you've been growing?

Dylan: It's been actually very cool to see the ways that I've learned to play my instruments. Clawhammer banjo, especially, and even fiddling are very not versatile, generally considered. Clawhammer plays in like one rhythmic pattern. Fiddling music has like one structure of AABB. But in playing this music with these other people, I've learned ways by which I can now play on clawhammer banjo as a sort of rhythm guitar, for instance, by avoiding hitting the fifth string. I learned that through playing backup for somebody on the trumpet or playing backup for somebody on the organ which are instruments that weren't typically measured or played with clawhammer banjo, for instance. I wouldn't have learned that if I was just playing fiddle tunes with fiddlers. On the fiddle, I've learned to improvise certain keys because I've been playing with horn players or I've been playing with that piano again. In that sense, it's just the exposure allows for a sense of innovation that might draw me a little bit further away from the traditions of the style that I play but still offers me a way to become better at and more familiar with the instrument I am playing.

Noah: So you've talked a lot about how you've used the CMi for your music and how much it really means to you and what you've gotten out of it, but to summarize that, how would you say that the CMi specifically, alongside your music, but specifically this space, plays into your overall experience at Colby? This was created... what, like 10 months ago? 8 months ago? If you had to compare how your Colby experience is now to a year ago at this time, how would you do that? How would you view it?

Dylan: I've only been playing music as long as the CMI has been around. They started simultaneous to each other. The CMI didn't start my music and my music didn't start the CMI, for instance. But I can't say, for instance, what my musical life looked like before the CMI because there was one. I can imagine that- because I don't see a place for the banjo in the music department- if I were still playing my music without the CMI, it wouldn't be part of my "Colby experience." It would just be part of my personal life. That's all it would be. It would be "I play the banjo" not "I play the banjo at Colby." Having the CMI allows it to become a community experience in some ways. I mean, there's certainly a group of musicians here that I can engage with otherwise it would've just been me in my room playing my instrument, which would have been fine. But this is much more interesting, I think. I think, potentially, if I wanted to be a part of the music department, I would have to, you know, adopt playing the violin or something like that. Choosing a new instrument and conform with that- what it offers is a very good program for Classical music. I know they play jazz and I know they play a variety of things, but not necessarily exactly what I was looking for. But I was looking for can be adapted and incorporated here, which is cool to see.

Shamus: I think it's interesting that we see that with a lot of music. You have your folk background / blue grass background and then there's Tom's baroque pop background, EDM music, rap music, all these genres that we just don't get from Colby's music department, like you were saying. Coming to this space and having this opportunity to experience other genres in a low pressure setting. How do you think this affects your experience as a Colby student, just in the role that music is playing in your life?

Dylan: This is a reiteration of everything I just said. It's a space where I can take my music, the one I'm interested in, and have it both- it has a place here but also in having a place here allows it to be exposed to other things. Like I said, I would not have Colby musical life if it wasn't for the CMI. I would just have my personal music life. That's cool to see that this club offers the alternative genres a metaphorical space. It's a physical space down here, but there's a metaphorical space in the Colby community for this kind of music to interact with itself.

Noah: You talk a lot about having a personal music life, especially before you came to Colby. A musical life that is separate of Colby that is just your own. What role has music played in your life before, like before now? How has music just been a big role in your life?

Dylan: It hasn't at all, would be my answer to start off. I mean, I listen to music, music's everywhere, it's hard to avoid. I never disliked music, for instance. However, I never had a genre where I was like "I can identify with this genre" "I'm very interested in this genre. I never played- I mean I played fifth grade clarinet, for instance, but that lasts for a year and then I just passed it over. Then music kind of faded from a forward position in my life until I heard

bluegrass on Spotify and I went “This isn’t that bad.” I kept listening to it on my own and went, “I want to play one of these instruments.” I picked up one of these over the summer on my own; a lot of free time. I would sit down and I would learn these instruments in a non-traditional way. I learned a very old style of playing banjo from the internet, which is cool. But it was for the most part, self taught, in that sense. I had no exposure to other musicians who wanted to do what I’m doing. If I wanted to learn, it was me, of my own volition, finding the tabs online, sitting down with it on my porch for like an hour and a half. Two hours in the morning. That became very recent. It’s hard to imagine me having developed very quickly with these instruments if not for the priority that the CMI could provide in my personal life. It’s a space where I go to play music. If I want to play music, I come here, and when I’m here, I just play music. Having that sort of focused determination of what I’m doing offers my quite a bit. Things are very vivid down here because the people who are interested in the CMI are also passionate about the things that they’re doing and just music in general. Everyone wants to be down here playing music.

Shamus: Thank you, Dylan, for talking to us. It was really interesting getting your perspective as a folk musician using the space. I hope you continue to use it and grow as an artist.