

2014

## Focused on Fiddling

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### Recommended Citation

Townsend, Alyssa '15 (2014) "Focused on Fiddling," *Linfield Magazine*: Vol. 10: Iss. 3, Article 8.  
Available at: [http://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield\\_magazine/vol10/iss3/8](http://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine/vol10/iss3/8)

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# Focused on fiddling

Tabitha Gholi '15 is making her mark in fiddling circles.

With nimble fingers and focused energy, she's taken the top young adult award at the Oregon Old Time Fiddlers Association Competition the last two years and placed seventh in the national competition in Weiser, Idaho, last year. The Jessie Goergen Crew, in which Gholi plays alongside Goergen '12 and Evan O'Kelly '13, won the Oregon State Texaco Country Showdown last fall.

Gholi was 8 when she first picked up a violin, and later became hooked on the instrument after hearing a fast-paced fiddle performance. She learned that while a fiddle and a violin are the same instrument, the difference is how the instrument is played.

Now a versatile musician, Gholi performs both classical and fiddle music, and also plays the viola and mandolin. The varied music styles demonstrate different aspects of her talent and personality, Gholi said. Fiddling, often associated with folk and bluegrass music, is more intuitive, showing off her individual style and interpretation of the music. In contrast, classical violin playing takes more discipline – compositions usually have specific musical direction with prescribed tempos and dynamics.

"When I play the fiddle, I can express my personality through my music," said Gholi. "When I play classical music, I can show off my technical training and discipline. Fiddling is my favorite though. It helps take my mind off of my problems and meditate."

Victoria Gunn, the violin/viola/chamber music instructor at Linfield, said Gholi is unique in that she plays the fiddle, the classical violin and the viola.

"She approaches her classical pieces with the intensity and verve of a fiddler, without a lot of fear," Gunn said. "She works well in high-pressure situations and this makes her a good performer. She has a lot of flair on stage."

Gholi won the college concerto competition and performed a solo with the Linfield Chamber Orchestra as a sophomore. She's clearly not afraid of hard work, practicing at least an hour every day. That increases to three to five hours a day as performances approach.

As a nursing major and music minor at Linfield, Gholi has learned to balance her rigorous studies and dedication to music.

"I have always had a great interest in the healthcare field," said Gholi, inspired by her mother who is a registered nurse, "and music has always been a huge part of my life as well. It was never a question in my mind that I wouldn't do both."

She said the Linfield Music Department has honed her skills as a musician. She's learned to read and compose music, in addition to enhancing her classical music skills.

"Professors have encouraged not only my classical career, but my fiddling as well," she said. "I apply everything that I've learned at Linfield in so many aspects of my fiddling

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*– Tabitha Gholi '15*



career. It has made me a better musician."

After college, Gholi hopes to become a nurse and continue playing music.

"Music has changed my life for the better," said Gholi. "It's a universal language, and I like being able to speak that language. Without it, I would be missing a part of myself."

*– Alyssa Townsend '15*