



THIDWICK ENSEMBLE

SUSAN GREEN

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WHEN DAVID NIERENBERG, MD, WANDERED INTO VERMONT VIOLINS SEVEN YEARS AGO, he was struck by the beauty of the instruments on display and flooded with fond memories of playing in his family’s string quartet. Inspired to begin playing again, he returned to the shop to have his old cello, which had spent the past 35 years in its unopened case, repaired.

As much as he enjoyed playing solo, he missed playing with like-minded musicians.

By happenstance one evening, Nierenberg followed the music he heard coming from a tent during an outdoor reception at Geisel. Flautist Faith Goodness, MBA, was beautifully playing a movement from one of Bach’s Six Unaccompanied Cello Suites, a piece he knew well. He asked Goodness if she would like to get together to play duets—she said yes. Neither realized it was the beginning of the Thidwick Ensemble.

The duo serendipitously became a quartet. Nierenberg and Goodness were joined by Erin McNeely, MD, viola, and Sherry Wu, MED ’18, violin—who both knew Nierenberg—their pitch perfect synergy was apparent the first time they played together.

Though each of the musicians has a different vocabulary, Goodness says their synergy springs from the same dynamics of a good conversation—

rhythm, speed, pitch, intonation, and balance. The personal spin they give these elements is evidence of their high level of musicianship.

In playing together, McNeely likes the emotional vulnerability that doesn’t exist in medicine—while music may feed her soul, it also informs her work as a physician. And for Wu, playing in an ensemble helps balance her demanding life as a first-year medical resident.

A love of music brought them together, but Nierenberg says it’s their special chemistry that keeps them humming, “It’s a blessing to play with these delightful and talented people.”

David Nierenberg is a professor of medicine at Geisel; Faith Goodness is director of administration in the Geisel Dean’s Office; Erin McNeely is an internal medicine physician at Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital; Sherry Wu is an internal medicine resident at Dartmouth-Hitchcock.