

Take Five with...

Take 5 with Tim

Reporter Tim Brouk asks arts folks for the scoop on their latest projects.

In the hot seat: Brent Laidler

Got a problem with your piccolo? A broken bassoon bringing you down? Take those ailing instruments to Brent Laidler, a Lafayette musician and owner of Brent's Bench. Laidler repairs woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments in his workshop located within Klaverenga Guitar and Piano Studio, 521 Main St. An accomplished blues guitarist, Laidler took instrument repair courses while studying music education at Minnesota State College. He's been tweaking instruments for 25 years.

1] What's the strangest repair you've made? The weirdest instrument?

I've worked on really old instruments that were made from unusual materials, like a bone flute... I've repaired instruments that had been run over by cars - and in one instance, by a tank.

2] What are some tips for people wanting to get a longer life out of their instruments?

It's a little different for each instrument and each stage of a players' development. Younger students need to learn to hold, carry, assemble and handle instruments carefully. For everyone the rules are "keep it clean and keep it dry." Use common sense.

3] When it comes to playing music, most people know you as a guitarist. Can you play any of the instruments you work on?

Guitar was the first instrument I ever picked up. I was actually playing in public at age nine... I started on trumpet in sixth-grade band. Trumpet is an instrument I honestly don't have time for anymore. The commitment to practice and keeping your lip in shape is full time.

4] Ever play trumpet or any of the other instruments you work on live?

I have learned to play and play test all of the instruments to make sure they are properly repaired, but the only thing I perform publicly anymore is guitar.

5] Who is your favorite musician?

One of the people I'd most like to be at a dinner party with is Dizzy Gillespie. I wouldn't mind being out for dinner with Candy Dulfer either. But seriously, each instrument has players that truly cross the boundary and in their Zen way become one with their instrument. It's beautiful to see and hear, and there's no way to pick the best one.

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