

Student Stories Project: Tyler Trepp

Audio version available at: <http://www.alumni.indiana.edu/profiles/students/trepp.shtml>

[IU fight song]

Welcome to the Indiana University Student Stories Project, a production of the IU Alumni Association. I am your host, Alana Salata. In this series, you'll get an insight into what it takes to be a student leader here on the Bloomington campus, from the perks –

“When we did a Katrina event, people – a group of people that pulled together an organization that could benefit something so great – it was amazing to see.”

– to the hard work –

“... Pushing me a lot more, it's – my initiative's gone way up, especially with so much on my plate right now.”

– to the memories that will last a lifetime.

“I was in a photo op with coach Hep...”

“... ten-year reunion was just, it was a lot of fun. It was great to see 30-plus guys come back for the show.”

Join me on this journey through the lives of IU student leaders.

[IU fight song]

SALATA: Today we're speaking with Tyler Trepp of Straight No Chaser.

TREPP: My name is Tyler Trepp. I'm a senior this year, I'm a telecommunications major, and I am from a suburb of Des Moines, Iowa, Urbandale. And I am the music director of Straight No Chaser.

Why did you choose to attend IU?

Well, I chose to attend IU first of all because I wanted to go somewhere where everyone in my high school *didn't* go – I wanted to get out of the norm and do something different. I also heard about Straight No Chaser when I was in high school from a friend of mine who had a CD and thought that it might be cool to come to college and be in a group like that, and I said, why not come and try out for this group? So I came and did it my senior year of high school and got in the group, and that's what made me decide IU.

Tell me about a meaningful or enjoyable experience you've had at IU.

Probably just being in the group. Just overall, it's been a great experience: meeting different people, making some of the best friends that I'll have for the rest of my life, the guys in the group. Meeting great alumni and just having fun, you know, on and off the stage.

What advice would you give to incoming freshmen and other students just starting out at IU?

If you can get involved in anything, that will make your college experience better. In college there's a lot of down time when you're not in classes, and I think that making yourself busy or getting involved in groups and organizations other than school can help you, you know, develop as a person, which can later influence how you want to get a career or what you want to do for the rest of your life.

How did you find out about Straight No Chaser, and why did you decide to become a member?

I really like the idea of a cappella music. My dad sang, and sings, in a gospel quartet, which is kind of the same – not really the same because they had a band and stuff with them, but you know, they sing harmony and stuff – so I kind of knew what it was. And my dad had introduced me to some a cappella CDs that he had when I was growing up, and once I found out about this stuff in college, I just thought it was really cool and I really wanted to do something like that, so I just kind of searched online and stuff like that, and I found out about this group, realized that they sounded really good and that it was something that I wanted to do, so I came out and tried out.

What are your responsibilities as music director of Straight No Chaser?

As the music director I am responsible for, well, all the music, obviously – arranging, helping other people arrange songs, deciding what songs we're going to sing for each show, collaboration with my business manager on big important decisions of the group. I keep in contact with the alumni through e-mails, and I also – well, this may not be as the music director – but I also kind of maintain the Web site and make sure it's up to date.

Tell me about a Straight No Chaser event or program that you were involved in that you are particularly proud of.

My sophomore year, which was my first year as director, in 2005, we decided to compete in the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella, which is like March Madness of college a cappella – just a competition that every group in the nation can be a part of. We decided to do it that year and ended up winning the divisionals and winning regionals and going all the way to New York City for the finals. And to me that was a really, really cool experience, and I was proud of my guys for making it that far, and we

had a great time. We didn't place in the finals, but, you know, we didn't really care: we just wanted to get to New York, and we had a great time and it was just really cool to be there. I'm glad to say that I did that with this group.

How have your leadership skills developed over the course of your participation in Straight No Chaser?

The biggest thing that's helped me with my leadership skills is probably experience. I think that when I was first inducted as the music director that I really didn't know what was going on and I just kind of did my thing and tried to be maybe a little too much of a dictator and didn't listen to people as much as I could. Experience has helped me so much, so now I can just run it smoothly without any trouble at all.

What have you gained through your interactions with IU alumni?

It's really cool to talk to the guys that actually started the group, the original ten guys, as we call them, because they, you know, they had an idea in mind to start this group, and we're still going ten years later. And we kind of put it all in a full circle last year at our spring concert: our 10-year reunion. It was just, it was a lot of fun, it was great to see 30-plus guys come back for the show and the ten – well, nine – original guys come on stage and perform, and it's just, it was just really cool, and we e-mail each other, you know, every now and again – they're all just really cool guys, and some of my really good friends are now our alumni. Yeah, it's a really cool thing, and I hope that when I'm an alumni, guys will still keep in contact with me.

What are your future goals, and how do you think IU has helped prepare you to meet those goals?

I don't know. I think IU is a big enough school where it wasn't, like, forcing me to decide on anything really quick, or it wasn't, you know, pressuring me to be like, "you need to do this and you need to do that." It gives you a lot of options because there's so many different majors and so many different courses you can take. But also at the same time, for the majors that weren't maybe for me, you have a couple of weed-out classes that made me realize that, "Oh, this class was maybe not for me: I didn't work hard enough in it or I didn't care too much about it, so I obviously don't really care about that too much, so I should probably do something else." It helped me kind of decide what I wanted to do, too. I'm in the College of Arts and Sciences and they require you to have two years of foreign language, which is kind of cool. It sucks, but it's kind of cool that, you know, they make you do that and you have to take these classes and take so many classes in science and take so many classes in whatever: it's just kind of cool that they do all these things as well as take your major classes. And I'm going to quote one of the IU alumni, Paul Caine, who's the publisher of *People* magazine. He came in and talked to one of our classes one time and he was like, "The biggest, one of the most important things you can do at this school is take advantage of what all IU has to offer." I think he's right.

What will you miss the most when you graduate?

I'll miss a lot of things. Definitely the college atmosphere. I mean, it's just something that you can't beat, you know? I mean, everyone in the United States knows about college and knows the atmosphere, and they did it once or they're going to do it – you know, it's just a really cool atmosphere to be in, especially with athletics. The social scene, obviously – I have too many friends to count, and definitely I will miss them – I'll keep in contact with them. And I definitely also will miss the group.

We've been talking with Tyler Trepp of the IU Bloomington men's a cappella group, Straight No Chaser.

[IU fight song]

This series was produced by the Indiana University Alumni Association, with special thanks to the IU Marching Hundred and director Dave Woodley. I'm Alana Salata.

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