

Zahraa Al-Ogaili
 Michael Alverson
 Jackson Amy
 Jenevie Anderson
 Frances Arellano
 Alexandro Artigas
 Lewis Baker
 Diego Barraz
 Zoe Barrett
 Julian Barrios-Garcia
 Saylor Barton
 Anna Bausman
 Charlotte Bearse
 Maddie Beaton
 Lukas Bednar
 William Benson
 Faith Bicknell
 Alysa Bijl-Spiro
 Keira Boehle
 Kenneth Bond
 Cooper Borman
 Miles Bourgeois
 Oliver Boyd
 Quinn Boyd
 Asher Brinton
 Veronica Britton
 Miles Butler
 Ella Cameron
 Bieke Campos-Rivera
 Sofia Candanosa
 Calder Carey
 Ava Carlson
 Emily Carroll
 Sophia Carter
 Peyton Casey
 Lily Christie
 Noah Cirkiel
 Bridget Cole
 Tex Cortez
 Jackson Cox
 Jacob Coy-Castro
 Joseph Crosnoe
 Elise Crouse
 Sarah Crow
 Kenna Dahlberg
 Luke Damon
 Benek Danenfelzer
 Parsa Danesh
 Milo Darlington
 Risa Darlington-Horta
 Lily Dashner
 Nathaniel Davidson
 Brock Davis
 Kaden Davis
 Colin Dean
 Natalie Dean
 Cooper Demont
 Claire Denton
 Lily Dickey
 Julia Doga
 Naya Domingo
 Christopher Driscoll
 James Dunham
 Owen Earthman
 Pascale Easterday
 Daisy Elizondo
 Clara Elliott
 Stella Falkin
 Major Faught
 Zoe Fisher
 Haley Forward
 Stella Fracasso
 Gavin Freedman
 Scarlet Frese
 Giselle Fuentes
 Ridley Gardner
 Marina Garfield
 Emily Garza
 Hannah Gates
 Nye Geisler



In making violin, junior double fine arts major strings together his love for art and music

Precision, planning, patience proved instrumental in helping Shackelford realize a labor of love he first envisioned in sixth grade

After working on it for a summer, junior Mason Shackelford could feel the end of his project getting close. Just a few more weeks, he thought to himself, until his hand-crafted, working violin would be complete.

A few more weeks passed. Then months. Then a year.

"It was one of things where time just disappears," he said. "If I had realized I was a whole year and hours and hours away, I don't think I would have finished it," he added with a laugh.

In the sixth grade, he decided he just wanted to play more violin music.

"Some of my friends were like 'Oh, you can just borrow my violin', but then, at that point, it was more that I actually wanted to make something," he said.

"For art class, I made a cardboard viola, and ever since then I wanted to combine my love for art and love for music and make something to play on."

As a double-major in music and visual arts, Shackelford is used to working with his hands. Making an instrument from scratch, however, didn't prove to be simple.

"I found a website that had so much information — it would take a few days to read through all of it," Shackelford said. "It had the sides, the front and the back, and then each of those had ten different steps, and each step had a few pages of

instructions."

Shackelford says the process begins with a base mold. Wood is cut and carved to form the exterior, with each movement of the knife allowing the right frequency of sound to resonate in the material.

"That's what makes the difference between a really good violin and a really cheap one," he said.

Next up is carving the neck and scroll.

"At the time I thought, great, those are the hard parts, but then you have to put it all together," he said. "And that takes a whole bunch of angles and precision."

The pieces are carefully placed together, and the instrument starts to take shape. Strings are put in place, and the ending seems to be just around the corner. But with each step closer to the finish line, the race seems to come to a ritardando.

"That's kind of the frustrating part," Shackelford said. "I finished all the carving, and then I strung it up to make sure it played, but then I had to set it down for about a month, to varnish it. And that took a long time."

Many summer nights and a coat of varnish later, the instrument was complete.

"It was weird when it was finally finished," he said. "It was very satisfying, but it was also something I had, towards

the end, been looking at every single day, working on for about six hours, so it was very normal to just be looking at. So I don't even think it seems like something I made; it feels like somebody else made it."

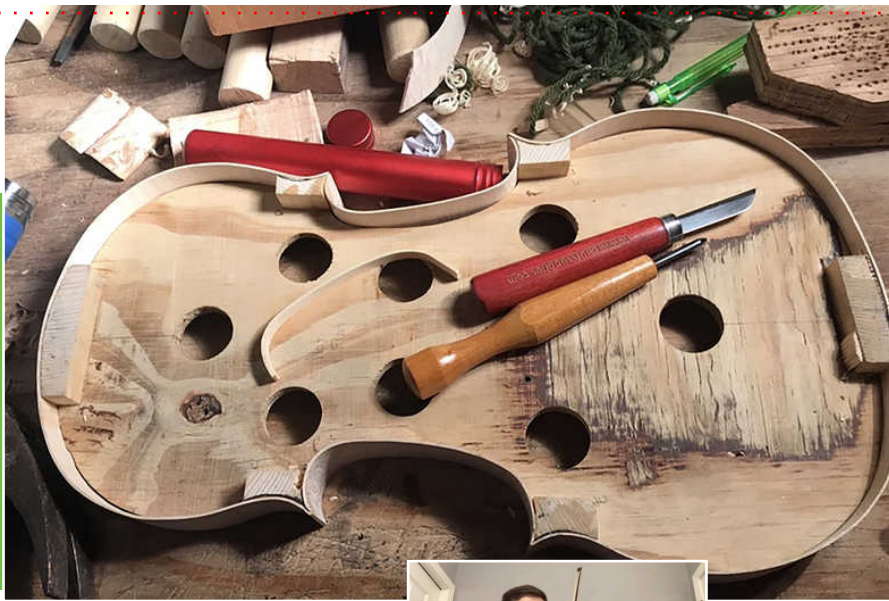
As for making music with his own work, Shackelford can only describe the feeling as just really cool.

"I get the feeling that people don't believe it," he said. "If you look it up online, there is basically a pre-made violin with most of the parts already made, so I think a lot of people think 'Oh, he just got that and worked a month on it'. But then I have to show them that I actually started with, you know, blocks of wood, and I went from there."

Although his brother teases him that a homemade cello is somewhere in his future, Shackelford feels that a break from carving and crafting is much-needed.

"In the beginning, I really did think I would do it multiple times," he said. "I thought, 'I'll do it once, and then next time it'll take half the amount of time or a quarter the amount of time!' But as I was doing it, I realized that it was only gonna shave off maybe 50 hours. Most of the process is very unique to the violin, and you can't rush through it. Every single little part counts. I have a lot of respect for violin-makers," he added with a laugh.

Story by Madelynn Niles



MAKING THE CUT: Shackelford's carving tools and violin base lay on his desk at the start of what would become a year-long crafting process. From the early preparation stages to the final coat of varnish, the process was one of time and dedication. "It was one of things where time just disappears," he said. *Photo courtesy of Shackelford*

MORE BLUE: To watch Shackelford play the violin he built, use the QR code to the left



Liam Glancy
 Ella Glass
 Mia Gomez
 Mayra Gonzales
 Marisol Gonzalez
 Eden Goodman
 Cora Green
 Evelyn Griffin
 Reid Grotevant
 Daniela Guajardo
 Jamie Guckenberger
 Ava Guerrero
 Isabella Gutierrez
 Silvio Guzman
 Jackson Hall
 John Hamlet
 Lucy Hamre
 George Harris
 Rachel Hermes
 Isabella Hernandez
 Isabella Herrera
 Ceder Herring
 Grace Hickey
 Jake Hissey