##### [00:00:00.090] - Brian Shelton

I'm Brian Shelton, and you're listening to Harper Talks, a coproduction of Harper College Alumni Relations and Harper Radio. Today on Harper Talks, I'm excited to speak with Joe Plazak. Joe is a graduate of Harper College, a 2022 Distinguished Alumni award recipient and a senior principal software development developer for Sibelius. Joe was heavily involved at Harper college, serving as a student trustee and received his associate of fine arts and music from Harper in 2005. I'm happy to be in the WHCM studio with Joe today. Joe, how are you?

##### [00:00:33.870] - Joe Plazak

I'm doing well, Brian. How are you?

##### [00:00:35.440] - Brian Shelton

I am fantastic. You've had a busy day today because today was the Distinguished Alumni kind of like induction ceremony. How's the day been going?

##### [00:00:43.740] - Joe Plazak

We had an amazing lunch with Dr. Proctor. I let Dr. Proctor know that how much this award means to me and that when she called to tell me about the award. That was actually the first time I received a call from the president's office for doing something good. (laughter) And it's amazing to be back on campus. A lot has changed, but a lot has stayed the same and it's just as beautiful and brings back all sorts of good memories and feelings to be here.

##### [00:01:10.800] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, that's a good question. Who was president when you were a trustee here at Harper College?

##### [00:01:15.400] - Joe Plazak

I was a trustee with Dr. Breuder.

##### [00:01:17.730] - Brian Shelton

Okay. Dr. Breuder. Yeah. Okay. I've met Dr. Breuder. He wasn't here when I was here, but, yeah, I've met Dr. Breuder. On other occasions. Okay, cool. You've had quite a career that was spawned by your time here at Harper college. What was your experience here like because you did a lot while you were here. What was it like here at the time?

##### [00:01:34.200] - Joe Plazak

So I knew that I wanted to do music. I was a little bit late to the game, though, so I did one year at Northern Illinois University and I wasn't doing music there, just doing, you know, general classes. And I decided to sort of regroup over the summer after my first year. So I came to Harper just to take guitar lessons and that's when I met Steve Svboda, who sort of sung the praises of the music program here, pulled me on in and it was a perfect match. I knew this is exactly what I want to do with my life. I'm going to dedicate my life to music. I didn't know what I was going to do yet. I thought I was going to be a film composer. I was stunning guitar. I ended up doing a lot of other things. I became a university professor. I taught music theory for a while. Now I work in industry, but it all started here at Harper. It all started in 2003 when I took some guitar lessons.

##### [00:02:19.660] - Brian Shelton

Okay. What did your family think about you wanting to major in music? That's always a good..

##### [00:02:25.460] - Joe Plazak

So my family has always been really supportive of all the things that I want to do. I do remember two conversations with my father. So one was the conversation where I said, you know, I don't know if I want to go to college. I think maybe I can just do this rock and roll thing.

##### [00:02:37.600] - Brian Shelton

Sure.

##### [00:02:37.920] - Joe Plazak

And that conversation sort of was very short. It just was, you're going to go to college.

##### [00:02:42.060] - Brian Shelton

Yeah.

##### [00:02:42.480] - Joe Plazak

And then I remember a follow up conversation where we sort of said, why don't you just do a liberal arts degree? Why don't you just take a bunch of general classes and let music be a part of that? And I think that was the short conversation on my end when I said, I'm going to do music.

##### [00:02:55.860] - Brian Shelton

Right, right.

##### [00:02:56.770] - Joe Plazak

And it just happened. Honestly, I think it's pretty scary if now that I have kids, if they were to say to me, I'm going to go into music, I think I would feel that fear. But it all worked out. It's amazing how well it all worked out. I don't know if I'm a super lucky person or how it all happened. I think really, it just comes down to I ended up meeting the right people at the right time, and they all said, run this way and I ran that way. And it worked out. Yeah.

##### [00:03:24.580] - Brian Shelton

And I think that that's something that we all have to be a little more cognizant of, because some of us are in these positions. I'm a tenured professor at a community college and I teach film history and run a radio station. That's like a unicorn job. Right. It's the way that I look at it, and it's like, that's not just me, that's some luck. I just met the right people at the right time, and the right things fell in place. So I think it's good to be honest with our students about that sort of thing as well, too.

##### [00:03:47.890] - Joe Plazak

Absolutely. And knowing what it is that you want to do and you don't have to sort of jump right to that job, but if you keep taking small steps in that direction, then after 19 years of being away from a place, it's amazing. You sort of look back and you say, no, I've got that unicorn job.

##### [00:04:02.350] - Brian Shelton

Right? Yeah, you do, right. Yeah. It's amazing. How did you become a student trustee? That's such a weird position here at the college. I mean, you're like, you're like you're on the board, you're kind of running things at the school. How did that come about?

##### [00:04:15.490] - Joe Plazak

Well, two things. The first to say is that when I came to Harper College, I didn't know anyone, so I had no friends that were here. I was just sort of trying to figure things out and I thought getting involved is a good thing to do. And so I got involved with the Harper College Student Senate because in high school, I was involved with student government and had some leadership positions and really enjoyed that work. So I thought student senate seems like the equivalent of Harper's equivalent of this. And I'll get involved at that point I was super lucky to meet Michael Nejman who was the director of student activities at the time.

##### [00:04:46.600] - Brian Shelton

Oh yeah, Michael, yeah.

##### [00:04:47.920] - Joe Plazak

And Michael I think helped me with some challenging situations as a student senator. Right off the bat we had an impeachment.

##### [00:04:56.850] - Brian Shelton

Oh no.

##### [00:04:58.310] - Joe Plazak

That had to be handled and it had to be handled the right way. And as a 19 year old that's a pretty heavy task. But I felt like I was up to it and I went around and I ask people for help and I thought we did a good job. So from there I sort of found other opportunities to be a student leader in the student trustee position. Was coming open in my second year here and I thought why not I'll throw my name in the hat. And I took some pictures and printed them out on a piece of paper and stuck my face all around campus. And I really think it was the music department that came together for me. I think every music student voted in the election that day and I became the student trustee.

##### [00:05:35.380] - Brian Shelton

You just got to get a good group to come out and vote, right? Because not everybody votes in that election.

##### [00:05:39.780] - Joe Plazak

And you're going to find a hard time finding a better group than the music students they really did pull together for me.

##### [00:05:47.800] - Brian Shelton

That's a great story. Hey Shannon Hynes who produces the show was telling me that you are responsible for the student trustee parking spot in the parking lot out by the W building. Tell me the story there. That's got to be be something.

##### [00:06:02.470] - Joe Plazak

This is in fact a true story. So once I became a student trustee there were two very nice parking spots right next to what used to be the police building and they were labeled Trustee parking only. And so I took it upon myself as a member of the board to park there and I had a 95 Jeep Wrangler with a soft top and I just don't think the optics looked that good. My beat up old Jeep sitting in the trustee parking lot and people would look at me really strange when I would get out of my car. So anyways, one day I was asked very politely, I should add, could you only park in that parking spot when you're here doing trustee duties as opposed to when you're just being a student? Because it was the closest parking to the music building. It was amazing. We all know how important parking is on campus around here. So I said, of course yes, I'll park in another lot. And no more than a few days after they had me move, I had a guitar in my car while I ran to class and somebody stole my guitar out of my car.

##### [00:07:07.740] - Brian Shelton

Oh no.

##### [00:07:08.960] - Joe Plazak

And so the police felt terrible. And the person who told me to not park in the parking spot anymore, I think felt really terrible that these two events seem almost like they were related. And so they came up with a nice way of making me feel better, which is they said, we'd like to make a special parking spot just for the student trustee, which I thought was a very nice gesture. And of course I accepted it. So I parked in the student trustee parking spot for the rest of the year. It's the same sign. So as I came into campus today, I was so tempted to park there, but it's not my spot anymore.

##### [00:07:41.100] - Brian Shelton

It's not your spot anymore, yeah!

##### [00:07:42.400] - Joe Plazak

It was one of my legacies as a student trustee that thanks to my stolen guitar, we now have a student trustee parking spot at Harper College.

##### [00:07:51.190] - Brian Shelton

That's great. Was the guitar ever recovered?

##### [00:07:53.640] - Joe Plazak

You know it. So a couple years later, I really missed that guitar. It was a blue dan electro guitar with a sparkle finish. And I just needed it for a recording project that I was working on. I thought, I'm going to go buy another one. And so there was a shop, it was a couple of towns away and I knew they dealt in that type of guitar. So I went in and I started playing some things off the wall and I actually saw a guitar that looked like my guitar. And so I picked it off the wall and I started playing. And as I was running my hand up and down the neck, I felt a little bit of a divot in the neck and I thought, no way, this is my guitar.

##### [00:08:26.760] - Brian Shelton

Yes.

##### [00:08:27.180] - Joe Plazak

And I didn't recognize it because my guitar was covered in stickers.

##### [00:08:29.920] - Brian Shelton

Sure.

##### [00:08:30.330] - Joe Plazak

So I flipped the guitar over on the back and sure enough, the name of the person who sold it to me was still written on the top of the headstock. This is my guitar. So I'm sitting in a shop holding my guitar after it's been stolen three years prior. And so I got really excited. I walked outside, I called the police. They got the police report from Harper College. And within about half an hour, the police walked into the store with me and I walked out with my my guitar.

##### [00:08:56.650] - Brian Shelton

Oh, wow. You actually got the guitar back! They had to give it back to you.

##### [00:08:59.910] - Joe Plazak

They gave it back to me, no questions asked. Hey, that's your guitar, man. I still have it to this day. I'll never, ever sell that guitar. It's just too good of a story.

##### [00:09:07.620] - Brian Shelton

That's amazing because something like that, that's like a real violation. Like, I'm a cyclist and I've had two bikes stolen and it's like, oh. What have you done to me? So having your guitar stolen?

##### [00:09:16.020] - Joe Plazak

Yes, it's the worst feeling. And, you know, I guess, like, when I pass away, we should probably bury it underneath the student trustee parking spot or something.

##### [00:09:23.960] - Brian Shelton

(laughs) That's such a great story, but I'm so glad that you got your guitar back and you still get to play it. That's fantastic. I still have my guitar that I saved up forever for to buy when I was 14 years old, and I think it's not ever going anywhere.

##### [00:09:36.640] - Joe Plazak

What type of guitar is it?

##### [00:09:38.100] - Brian Shelton

It's a really strange guitar. It was manufactured by Gibson, but designed by Wayne Charvell. And so it's called an SR 71, and they only made a couple hundred of them. It's a strange little electric, kind of a Stratocaster style, but strange guitar. But anyway, after Harper College, where did you go? What was this educational path that you took? Because I know that you eventually wound up with a PhD. Right? So, I mean, you went all the way, right?

##### [00:10:06.490] - Joe Plazak

That's it. So the bulk of my time here at Harper was focused on transferring to a four-year program, and I applied to five different schools. And where I ultimately ended up transferring to was Elmhurst College. Now. Elmhurst University.

##### [00:10:20.130] - Brian Shelton

Okay.

##### [00:10:20.620] - Joe Plazak

And the really nice thing about that is my guitar instructor, Steve Svboda from Harper was also teaching at Elmhurst. So it was about as seamless of a transition as you could make. But there was a reason that I chose Elmhurst, because the other schools that I had applied to, for example, at UCLA, I would have been a guitarist. I would have had to do classical guitar all day, all night. Whereas at Elmhurst, I sat down with some of the professors and I said, hey, how would you feel if I did a little bit of jazz, and how would you feel if I did a little bit of composition? And how would you feel if I did a second degree in psychology? And the answer was yes. Yes. No problem.

##### [00:10:57.130] - Brian Shelton

Right.

##### [00:10:57.550] - Joe Plazak

And so this is why I chose Elmhurst. And while I was there, I was sort of bringing music into all these related disciplines, but the one that really clicked was music and psychology. And I started doing research on music and emotion and why music makes us feel a certain way and why we turn to music when we're feeling bad and trying to deal with certain things or music and memories. And so I found this new passion for doing psychology research on the topic of music. And that led me to read a book one day. It was a new book. It was actually it was Amazon spam. Amazon says, you might like these books.

##### [00:11:30.300] - Brian Shelton

You might like these books, right?

##### [00:11:31.600] - Joe Plazak

There's this book. It's called Sweet Anticipation the Psychology of Music and Expectation by David Tyron. And so I bought that book, and I loved that book. And as I closed the book, on the very last page, I said, this is the book I always wanted to write. I'm going to call this guy right now. So I went online, and he's got a website, and he's got an office phone number, and it's probably one in the morning. And I called him, and I was thinking, as it's ringing, I hope he doesn't pick up the phone. And he didn't, thank goodness, but it was a voicemail, and I sort of laid it out in the voicemail. I said, look, this is an amazing book. I don't know how you learn how to do these things and how to do this type of research, but this is exactly what I want to do, so please call me back if you've got some openings in your research lab. And he did. And so I went to Ohio State. I did a master's degree in music theory and a PhD in music theory doing this music cognition thing. And that's how I ended up with a PhD in music theory.

##### [00:12:25.050] - Brian Shelton

That's fantastic. But see, that's the thing, is that we talk about being lucky and talking to the right people at the right time. You were I don't like the word brave, but you were brave enough to make that phone call, because a lot of people wouldn't make that phone call, right? And one time I was at a conference. And the president of iHeartRadio was there. And he put his personal cell phone number up on the screen for the 200 people that were sitting in the room. And he said. I put this up here because the ones of you who will actually call me are people I want to hire. And the rest of you won't ever bother to pick up the phone and call. And I was like, wow, what a thing to do. And it really was his personal cellphone number, and two or three kids in that group made phone calls and wound up with gigs.

##### [00:13:06.860] - Joe Plazak

That is amazing. But, you know, that's it really every now and then you have to take a daring leap. And that's one of my daring leaps that I just told you about. And, yeah, it's exactly right. You've got to know in your heart that the effort that you're about to put in is worth the sort of risks of feeling rejected or ignored. Just go for it.

##### [00:13:28.420] - Brian Shelton

And just go for it. Yeah. So how did we get from a PhD and being a professor to living in Canada and working for Sibelius? How does that happen?

##### [00:13:37.990] - Joe Plazak

Cool. All right, well, I have to back up because this is typically the way the story goes, and it skips over an important period of my life, which is in my last year of doing my doctorate. I was writing my dissertation. It was coming along. I had done some research, but I started applying for jobs because academic jobs are really, really hard to find. Yes, a needle in a haystack. And so you start early while you still got time and a safety net of having graduate funding. And I got lucky. My first year, I got an interview I got invited to campus, and I landed a tenure track job.

##### [00:14:11.050] - Brian Shelton

Great.

##### [00:14:11.430] - Joe Plazak

And I had to compress my dissertation then as fast as I could. I spent a month solid, not doing anything except for writing. And it was an amazing time. But that was why I went to grad school to become a music theory professor, so I could do my own research, so I could teach. And that was that. And so I landed that amazing job. I was 27 years old, and I quickly learned that academia is a tough place for a young person.

##### [00:14:38.860] - Brian Shelton

Yes.

##### [00:14:38.860] - Joe Plazak

Yeah, I think young people want to change. They want to do things the new way. They sort of see a path, and change can be slow in academia.

##### [00:14:49.560] - Brian Shelton

Very.

##### [00:14:50.280] - Joe Plazak

You take your time. So I found academia to be a bit of a frustrating place. But at the same time, I was doing cool research. I had the freedom to do cool things. And the problem was, I ended up with a classic academia problem, which is the two body problem. So I had met my girlfriend at the time, and she had a university position in Montreal, and I spent a lot of my time as a professor trying to find music theory jobs in Montreal, applying to anything that came up, got close, a couple of interviews, just never quite made the cut. And at some point, you just have to say, I'm going to wait forever, or, I'm just going to move out there and figure out what I'm going to do. And so I requested a leave of absence from my academic position, and I moved to Canada as a student. It's the only way I could get into the country, so I retrained as a computer scientist. I did a one year program, thinking that maybe I could find a job in Canada. I didn't know if it would be in music or not, so that's what I did.

##### [00:15:51.840] - Joe Plazak

I moved to Canada, I followed my heart and retrained a computer scientist. And sure enough, at the end of my program, you know, just finishing things up, the Sibelius team opens this position, and they're looking for somebody who can teach computers how to read and write music. And I just thought, this is the perfect job. This is exactly what I was doing, except for rather than teaching humans, I'm teaching computers. And so that's how I ended up on Sibelius. But I had to go through this whole period of my life of doing what I thought I wanted to do and finding out that maybe it wasn't the right thing or the right time for me, and then realizing that love is more important. There are things that are more important than work, and you just got to follow your heart and figure it out.

##### [00:16:31.620] - Brian Shelton

That's great. So tell our listeners, obviously, I know because I work in the industry, but what does Sibelius do? And what do you do for them besides teach computers to read music.

##### [00:16:42.820] - Joe Plazak

Cool. So Sibelius describes simply as like a Microsoft Word for music notation, right? So a composer who wants to create a score in parts for a group of musicians to play would use our software in order to make that score or part. Now it's a composition tool. It's a tool for arranging, it's a tool for orchestrating, it's a tool for educators to make worksheets for their music classes. So a wide range of people use Sibelius. Now, as I joined the team, I came in as a developer. So I spent two years just doing development, teaching Sibelius how to properly place notes or accidentals or sharps and flats on a piece of paper. Thereafter, I started doing a bit of design work and this was something I was not trained how to do. I had to sort of learn the concepts of design on the fly and thereafter doing a bit of what my official Scrum role is a product owner. But it's essentially product management on the technical side or on the sort of tactical side. And so that's what I do now. I actually serve three roles for the team. I serve as the product owner, where I act as the voice of the customer and I do a little bit of design and I do a little bit of software development as well.

##### [00:17:53.650] - Brian Shelton

That sounds like fun. It sounds like it's a challenge every day.

##### [00:17:55.720] - Joe Plazak

Yeah, it's the hat trick of Sibelius. Yeah, I score three goals every day.

##### [00:18:02.590] - Brian Shelton

Three goals every day.

##### [00:18:03.810] - Joe Plazak

It's a lot of multitasking, but it's also a lot of fun too.

##### [00:18:06.960] - Brian Shelton

It sounds like it. So how do you like Montreal?

##### [00:18:10.240] - Joe Plazak

Montreal is amazing.

##### [00:18:13.090] - Brian Shelton

I've been once. I've been once, so yeah.

##### [00:18:15.250] - Joe Plazak

Great, great. I tell everybody now is a great time to go to Montreal. The exchange rate is killer, but it's a short hop from the Chicago area. You can get a direct flight into Montreal. It feels like you've landed in Europe. When you go down to the old port, you climb the mountain and you sort of feel like you're like in some sort of nature park, but you're in the middle of a big urban city. It's just a really magical place and we haven't even started talking about the food yet.

##### [00:18:43.150] - Brian Shelton

The bagels. Oh, man, the bagels.

##### [00:18:47.960] - Joe Plazak

I should caution people. I mean, like, if you've never had a Montreal bagel, you might have to change your definition of bagel.

##### [00:18:53.490] - Brian Shelton

Right.

##### [00:18:53.940] - Joe Plazak

In the same way that Chicago pizza maybe sort of pushes the boundaries of the definition of what pizza is.

##### [00:18:59.710] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, definitely. One of the things that I was really struck by when I was in Montreal is how almost everyone seamlessly transitions from English to French and back again during a conversation.

##### [00:19:13.840] - Joe Plazak

For us, we just kick into two languages all the time. Say, complete montfu is encrypted. You can never just get one person to stay en francois.

##### [00:19:26.810] - Brian Shelton

Just being in a restaurant and the server comes over and starts speaking to you completely in English. Right. And then another server speaks to her and she turns her head and speaks to her completely in French and without missing a beat, comes back to you. And it just blows me away. The fluency of that and how that works there.

##### [00:19:44.250] - Joe Plazak

Montreal very much. It's almost like it's become the language of Montreal to sort of speak two languages at once. And we've got certain expressions that are pretty heavy and funny, but it's a great place to practice French. The problem is everybody you run into will want to practice their English, too.

##### [00:19:59.590] - Brian Shelton

Sure.

##### [00:19:59.890] - Joe Plazak

So you sort of have to insist that we're going to go into French. So one of my hobbies is that I also fly airplanes.

##### [00:20:07.600] - Brian Shelton

Oh, wow.

##### [00:20:08.130] - Joe Plazak

And the thing that impresses me most about Montreal is the air traffic control is in two languages, and you have these air traffic controllers moving airplanes full of people in the sky without even batting an eye, switching between two languages. And it's just part of the culture, it's just part of the way it goes.

##### [00:20:25.240] - Brian Shelton

It's pretty amazing.

##### [00:20:26.110] - Joe Plazak

It makes the art scene really cool, too, because I think the Franco community wants to one of the Anglo community in terms of arts, and so you end up with just gorgeous murals on buildings and street art and sculptures and it's a totally life place. Montreal is great if you've never been definitely go.

##### [00:20:44.320] - Brian Shelton

How long have you been there now?

##### [00:20:46.010] - Joe Plazak

Seven years.

##### [00:20:46.900] - Brian Shelton

Seven years? Okay. Yeah. Great place. I'm with you. I would encourage everybody to take a visit to Montreal. It's worth it alone, just for the bagels. But maybe you don't feel that way. I do.

##### [00:21:00.040] - Joe Plazak

I remember as I was going back and forth and doing the two body problem and commuting to Montreal every six weeks or so, I would always come back with a suitcase stuffed full of bagels in the freezer.

##### [00:21:09.690] - Brian Shelton

Yes. It's the best. It's the best.

##### [00:21:11.290] - Joe Plazak

I wish I would have known Brian. I would have brought you a whole roll next time I'm in town.

##### [00:21:15.510] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, I had my daughter there several years ago. We were doing a trip. We were going across Canada. We went up as far as you could go and the Bay of Fundy and everything, and we came back through Montreal and it was great. It was a totally unplanned stopped going through Montreal. It wasn't planned on the trip, and it was really, really made the trip. We had a great time there.

##### [00:21:37.330] - Joe Plazak

Driving in Montreal if you don't speak French is a bit of a hazard. I would caution anybody to take public transport until you can figure out how to read the signs.

##### [00:21:46.230] - Brian Shelton

Yeah, I was kind of panic studying French on the drive in, you know what I mean?

##### [00:21:50.830] - Joe Plazak

I had some friends who found a great parking spot and they were trying to tell me what the sign said, I was like, you guys better go move your car right now before the fire truck shows up.

##### [00:22:00.610] - Brian Shelton

That's great. So the day we're recording, this is the day where we induct the distinguished alumni into the hall of Fame. And so that was today. How was that how did that make you feel? I mean, you mentioned a little bit earlier, but how did that make you feel?

##### [00:22:17.370] - Brian Shelton

So we've had to lunch the ceremony as this tonight.

##### [00:22:20.890] - Brian Shelton

Tonight? Tonight. Yeah. Sorry.

##### [00:22:22.350] - Joe Plazak

But I mean, I have strong feelings already from the moment I got the phone call until now. It's sort of been it's been a humbling experience. I think there have been so many impressive people that have come out of this college, and you can find them looking online. Just there's been so many accomplished people and I just feel like I'm just sort of getting started and getting things off the ground. So I'm really touched and honored and I just can't even believe that I'm here today to accept this award.

##### [00:22:54.040] - Brian Shelton

That's great. Fantastic. I look forward to you receiving that this evening or the day that we're recording this. Anyway. Always trouble with dates when you're doing a podcast, something that's going to play back later. So I always ask everyone who's here, community college is weird, right? So people come to community colleges for different reasons, some of them good, some of them bad. And people have perceptions about community college. And I guess I'm curious what advice you might give someone who is either a thinking about coming to Harper College or is here and not really sure if they're doing the right thing.

##### [00:23:34.610] - Joe Plazak

That's a really good question. And you have to think for a second about the most important thing to say. I just feel like when you're a student, you will be in a place for say, two years or three or four years, it just depends. But in the end, it's not a lot of time, right, where you'll spend most of your time as you build your career and you go on. I mean, there's a big difference between student life and the life that comes thereafter, where it's very much the same thing day to day. It's not the super rapid, fast paced, 16 week semester. And so I would say that wherever you go. Try to make the most of the opportunities that are around you for that short period of time. Even if it means not sleeping as much or putting in more effort. Really working hard. And students do work hard. Just know that it's for a concentrated short period of time in your life and it's an investment that will pay off as soon as you're done for the rest of your career. For the rest of your life. Yeah.

##### [00:24:42.270] - Brian Shelton

A little bit of pain goes a long way, right? A little bit of suffering goes a long way.

##### [00:24:47.740] - Joe Plazak

When I was teaching, though, I remember seeing students sort of struggle. Around exam time and you know, when big projects would come up and you could see it on their faces and I would say something which they didn't like to hear, but it's true. And I think we should we should just be honest about it, which is you'll never have more free time than you do right now, right. And they look at you like you're crazy, like they haven't slept, they're hungry. There's all these things, but you think you're going to get older, you're going to take on responsibilities in terms of a house or a car, you might have kids, you might have somebody in your family gets sick, and next thing you know, just all of your time is gone and you're just doing the bare minimum. So I think going to school to block out two years, four years to just focus on you and investing in yourself, that's a magical time. And you got to make the most of it.

##### [00:25:41.770] - Brian Shelton

You really do. Well, I thank you so much for being on the show today. It was great to talk to you. I'm so happy that you got your guitar back because I was afraid that story was going to have a sad ending. Just a parking spot.

##### [00:25:54.190] - Joe Plazak

Just a parking spot. No, it's back in safe and sound.

##### [00:25:57.970] - Brian Shelton

I will say that every time I pull into that parking lot and that parking spot is empty, I'm like, I should just go ahead and park there. What are they going to do, give me a ticket? I don't know.

##### [00:26:05.590] - Joe Plazak

I thought the same thing today and it was so tempting to scratch the word former student trustee on the side.

##### [00:26:13.530] - Brian Shelton

Just put a sticker on there.

##### [00:26:14.740] - Joe Plazak

That is not for me.

##### [00:26:15.970] - Brian Shelton

Not for you. All right. Thanks so much for being here. I appreciate it.

##### [00:26:19.480] - Joe Plazak

Thanks, Brian.

##### [00:26:20.530] - Brian Shelton

Joe Plazak as a graduate of Harper College and a 2022 Distinguished Alumni. If you're enjoying Harper Talks, please subscribe and while you're at it, rate and review us so that others might find us. Harper Talks is a coproduction of Harper College Alumni Relations and Harper Radio. Our show is produced by Shannon Hynes. This episode was edited by me, Brian Shelton. Our online content producer is Erica Berger. Our theme music was created by Aidan Cashman, a music student at Harper College. And I'm Brian Shelton. Thanks for listening.