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A Typed-Up Archibald

A man I know, who will henceforth be referred to as Archibald, is a prolific champion of the Type A archetype. Archibald is a double major in biology and jazz performance. As I myself am a minor in jazz, I have shared the classroom, rehearsal room, and stage with him many times. Archibald is competitive to the point of lunacy, a consummate multitasker, and an overachiever to the utmost degree.

Archibald's ultra-competitiveness is elucidated by his favorite register on the saxophone: altissimo ("highest"). Because it requires a great amount of skill to play, he can assert his musical superiority over those who have not yet mastered the range. Typically, when one warms up on the saxophone, they will play long tones in the lower register, go through the overtone series, and run a few scales or patterns. In a feat of dominance, Archibald warms up by playing the highest, most difficult, shrill note possible; it is a mystery to all in the department whether Archibald himself actually enjoys the sound. Whether he enjoys it or not, he begins every rehearsal by squawking out an altissimo pitch – as a predatory bird marks its territory against other, less-skilled, saxophone-playing birds. After rehearsals, he often challenges trumpet players to high-note offs, which he rarely wins, as the theoretical range of the trumpet is much greater than the tenor saxophone. Despite the great number of defeats he suffers, you can bet he will be challenging them again days later. Weeks and weeks of rehearsal culminate into a concert, where he is inevitably found, during every solo, in the altissimo register – squealing away like a pig in heat. Afterwards, he often

articulates exactly how high he went to the band: “I hit a ‘D’ twice above the staff tonight, boys!” I thought it was impossible to “win” at jazz before I met Archibald and his Type A personality.

With his double major, Archibald is always fluttering from one thing to the next, trying to balance his hectic life. When he is not studying biology, he is practicing his saxophone; when he is not practicing his saxophone, he is studying biology. Once, he did both simultaneously – studying off of a paper from the floor during a rehearsal. When asked about it, he claimed that he had memorized the music to the point that he could do so, and had an upcoming exam to prepare for. He is regularly seen in a practice room working on his altissimo while watching some sort of video for class. Gene regulation goes in one ear, altissimo goes in the other, and a Type A personality comes out.

Archibald goes above and beyond the scope of any task he performs. Last year he decided that he wanted to improve his arranging skills and now brings more charts to Jazz Ensemble One than the graduate students. Last semester he wished to become a better flute player and joined the university’s Symphony Band, which many flautist music majors struggle to do. This semester he became sick of bringing his horn to someone else to repair, studied some manuals, and has been doing it himself. Were Archibald to take a personality test, I have no doubt that he would find a way to be labeled Type A+.

Upon showing Archibald the previous paragraphs, he said, “well how else do you expect me to do it!” He can’t imagine another way of going about life, which is the epitome of Type A. Everything he does, from pushing the sonic envelope to multitasking assignments from two completely unrelated majors, is ingrained in his

psyche. Archibald blesses me daily with his Type A personality. Come to a Jazz Ensemble One concert and he can bless you too.