



May 10, 2004

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Slovakian native says music brought him to U.S. and to Texas Wesleyan
*Shoveling coal paid for his first guitar***

FORT WORTH, May 10 – Bass guitarist Jozef Bobula was born in Prievidza, Slovakia, where he held odd jobs doing just about everything, from working as a mechanic, then in a hospital, to shoveling coal. But it was music that brought him to the United States, leading him to Texas Wesleyan and to his destiny.

While in Slovakia, Bobula worked for a year in a coal mine to save enough money to buy his first guitar, a Yamaha six-string.

“It was just night for one year,” says Bobula of the experience. “There was no sun for one year. It was dark and it was difficult. (If I had to do it over again) I would probably still do it, but I would really think about it first. Dreams do come true, but they don’t come free. You have to give yourself to it ... you have to go all the way or not at all. It’s one of those lifetime commitments.”

At 20, after buying his guitar, Bobula taught himself how to play. He was invited to attend the annual international Pink Jazz Festival, in 1996, a three-week event that encourages musicians to learn more about jazz and includes classes and competitions such as music reading

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and improvisation. The festival was held in Germany, where Bobula met Tim Ishii, jazz musician and chair of the music department at Texas Wesleyan, and Lou Carfa, bass guitar instructor and adjunct professor at Texas Wesleyan. Ishii and Carfa encouraged Bobula to continue his musical training and suggested he think about attending classes in the United States.

Bobula continued his training, attending the annual Pink Jazz festivals for two more years before traveling to Arlington, Texas, where the 1999 Pink Jazz Festival was held. Bobula found opportunity and a home in Arlington, enrolling at Texas Wesleyan for intensive English courses and later studying music. During his senior year at Wesleyan, Bobula released an independent album titled “Letters from the Virtual Universe,” featuring original arrangements of some of the best-known composers of all time, such as Gershwin and Bach, and the unique manipulation of sounds made by bass guitar, midi sound modules and effects processors.

Bobula recorded the album on his laptop while on tour with Destination Known (DK) Band, a Christian rock group, with four CD’s to their credit. The DK Band performs roughly 250 times a year throughout the United States, with Bobula as their bass guitarist. For the past five years, Bobula has also played the bass guitar for the Texas Wesleyan Jazz Ensemble.

He attributes his success to the challenges he has faced and to the friends who have helped him through it.

“When you’ve pushed to the corner, that’s when you learn the most,” says Bobula. “My friends taught me to do what you can and don’t worry about the rest of it. I couldn’t have done it without my friends.”

Bobula will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in music in front of friends and family,

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including his mother, who has come thousands of miles to share this moment with her son. The graduation ceremony will be on Saturday, May 15 at 11 a.m. in the Will Rogers Auditorium located at 3401 W. Lancaster Ave.

Bobula says he is unsure of what the future holds after graduation. Much of it depends upon the status of his Visa. Regardless of where he ends up, he hopes to help others succeed.

“My goal for the future is to allow somebody like me to do the same thing as me. I got this opportunity and support from people and without them I never would have been able to make it, and I want to give that opportunity to somebody else,” says Bobula.

For more information regarding Texas Wesleyan’s spring commencement exercises, contact Texas Wesleyan University’s Office of the President at (817) 531-4401.

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