

# Tackling Music—and Football

At age 22, pro football player Lorenzo Carter is having a dream year: it's his rookie season as a linebacker for the New York Giants. The Norcross, Georgia native also studied cello—and plays the tuba. Here, he talks about his love of classical music, his wish to bring his cello to New York, and why you should always listen to your mother.

**M**y parents always told me and my sisters that we have to be well-rounded. My mom was in a marching band, so she made sure that we knew how to read music. She knew that you start with recorder—and she taught us how to play it. We could play sports, but we had to pick up something besides sports. We all ended up picking up instruments—string instruments. My older sisters played the violin and viola. I picked up the cello. I really didn't have a choice. I was the youngest, so I just kind of got strong-armed into doing the orchestra. But I loved it. I just liked the sound of the cello. In sixth grade, I think we spent a day trying out each instrument, and the cello sounded the best to me.

Around the same time I started playing cello, I started playing football. When I got really busy with sports in eleventh grade, I had to stop cello. I transferred high schools my sophomore year, to a school that had a better basketball program and academics. The school I transferred to didn't have an orchestra, so I ended up joining the band. Before then, I was never really a brass instrument kind of guy. I was like, 'Since I can't do orchestra, I might as well not do music.' But one of the teachers at the school convinced me to join the band, and I started playing the tuba. I was so happy I did, because when you're together with other people in music, as one, in a band, it's a great experience.

College was tough to stay connected



Off the football field, New York Giants rookie Lorenzo Carter plays the cello.

to cello—at the University of Georgia I played four seasons of football, while majoring in psychology. But I always liked listening to classical music. I download classical music onto my phone. I listen to Yo-Yo Ma. I also listen to some of everything. In college, I used to go out to hear bands all the time, whenever I could. I loved it. Athens, Georgia has a great live-music scene. I like pop and country music. Rap and hip-hop are the latest style in my life! But I always liked classical music, anything from church organ to clarinet music and violin music.

Some of the skills you learn studying music and playing football are the same. I didn't expect that. In football, you see the players running around, and you think that



they make it look easy. It's the same with music. Great musicians make it look effortless. Once you sit down and start playing, or you're on the field and start moving around, you realize that it isn't easy. But it comes with time, and as long as you keep practicing, you can get there.

If I had a son or a daughter I would encourage them to take up an instrument. It's just a great skill to have. You get a lot out of yourself by joining the band or orchestra. Like being on a sports team, you have to sacrifice, you can't just go off chart, off the script. You have to realize everything is lined up for a reason. Music is something that everybody can do. Everybody can make a beautiful sound—sad music, upbeat music. Music makes the world go round.

I've heard the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. It was amazing. When I came to my first New York Giants pre-season training camp this summer, I didn't bring my cello. But I am trying to find a way to get my cello up here. And I hope to hear some great music in New York City. This summer I didn't have much free time, but this fall, I'm going to be looking forward to everything that I can get in New York City. So much art—so many possibilities! And the New York Philharmonic and Carnegie Hall.... Everything! [S](#)