

Graduation Alumni Speech at SRH Berlin 2024

Fabian S. Klinke

2024-11-29

Dear graduates, parents, friends, and teachers,

When Robert called me to ask if I was open to speaking to you today, I was quite surprised and speechless at the honor at first... and being speechless isn't the best starting point for giving a speech.

But first of all, I want to congratulate you all on completing your studies and thank your close friends and family for supporting you through the process of writing your thesis and helping you avoid one or two mental breakdowns—because I know I had them when writing mine.

I guess now you might expect me to tell you something along the lines of “follow your dreams, set big goals, and push through all adversity with discipline and hard work.” But instead, I wanted to tell you a little bit about the journey of a small-town boy, riddled with chaos and indecision:

Growing up, I was soon engulfed by the feeling that I wanted to move away from this little village, which felt like it had more cows, pigs, and sheep than people. I never really felt at home. I always knew I needed to leave as soon as I could; I just needed to find

out where to go and why.

After finishing school, I was on a very different path. To be precise, I still didn't have one, and so I did nothing and some stupid stuff on the side for a year while trying to decide between math or law. Before that, music had been a big part of my life, but years of dull music education had left me completely uninspired. However, during my law studies, I quickly spent more time in clubs listening to techno and starting to DJ. This, combined with my still deeply anchored feeling that I needed to move away even further and do what feels interesting and not what is expected, led me to start my studies in Audio Design here at SRH, HdP K back then. I still remember my grandma not being too happy, as she expressed on a phone call where she told me why I couldn't just train to be a local bank clerk. I kind of would've loved for her to see me finish my studies and realize that it wasn't the worst idea after all.

But I digress... When I started here, I was probably one of the many who began dreaming big about becoming a successful artist. However, very quickly, a teacher, and now a friend, rekindled my childhood passion for technology, but now with a purpose: to do cool things with audio, which I am now, through a happy circumstance, even able to share with students in my own class here this semester.

To cut it short: my own journey has been full of twists and turns I never could have planned for. To be honest, I still don't know what I will do one day. All I know is that I want to follow the path life is giving me, following it always to the best of my abilities, but also knowing when it's time to make a turn. To be open to new opportunities, friendships, and ideas, and to not plan the future too much, since it might make you blind to more interesting stuff going on on the sides. And I wanted to take the time today to encourage

you to do the same. For the longest time, I judged myself for meandering through life, but now I've learned to embrace it and made it my life's credo.

But it's not just about the knowledge and cool projects you collect along this journey; it's about the people you meet and the friends you make. To me personally, at least, the greatest gift this university gave me wasn't the theory or practice, because let's face it: if you're curious enough, you can learn almost anything these days by asking ChatGPT or watching YouTube videos.

But for me, the greatest gift I still carry with me is the people. The friendships I built with classmates, students from other programs, and even some teachers. These are the people who inspire me to try new things, begin new projects, and most importantly, remind me to do whatever the hell feels right. So if I can leave you with one last piece of advice: cherish these relationships and try to stay connected. It's so easy to lose sight of each other.

So, I guess all that's left for me is to stop rambling and again wish you all the best. Go out there, enjoy the ride, and don't forget to embrace the meandering — it's what makes the journey much more interesting!

(as delivered on November 29th, 2024)