

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



EMILY SCHOENDORF *bassoon*

Though twenty-five-year-old Emily Schoendorf loves playing her bassoon now, it wasn't exactly second nature when she started at twelve years old.

"I remember being embarrassed playing it in my house because it was so loud and honky," she says with a laugh. "But I liked that it could go low. I thought that was really cool."

Schoendorf switched to the bassoon at her band director's recommendation after playing clarinet for two years. And although she had wanted to try out bass clarinet instead, she soon found herself fascinated by the bassoon's double-reed and overall unusual structure. By her junior year of high school in University Park, Maryland, she had decided she wanted to go after a career in music.

Now with a master's degree from the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, Schoendorf is still focused on playing in a professional orchestra. She earned her undergraduate degree from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, where the transition to a bustling university was initially overwhelming. Although she's had moments of doubt, she always comes back to her dream.

"[Undergrad] was really hard at first," she says. "I kind of got lost, and I actually had doubts about pursuing music for that whole year. But then when you actually step back and have the experience of playing in orchestra, or playing chamber music, or having a really great lesson, or teaching a really great student, then you remember it's all worth it."

Speaking of which, Schoendorf will soon begin teaching many great students right here in the Roaring Fork Valley; she's been chosen as an ArtistYear fellow and will spend the next year working with Basalt Elementary School's music teacher. The non-profit ArtistYear was launched in Philadelphia in 2014 with the goal of providing music education to Title I school communities. Now the program is expanding to two more locations: New York City, and the Roaring Fork Valley, thanks to a newly announced partnership with the Aspen Music Festival and School.

"It's just as rewarding to see a classroom full of kids enjoying a music lesson as it can be to play with a great orchestra," Schoendorf says. "I'm still taking orchestra auditions and trying to figure out what's next, as this program is only for a year, but I know I like it here, and this was a great opportunity."

This is Schoendorf's second summer in Aspen, where she's studying on scholarship with AMFS artist-faculty member Nancy Goeres. She says she returned this year after her first summer in 2014 because she wanted to take full advantage of all the AMFS has to offer. Plus, studying in Aspen is quite simply a lot of fun.

"I like that it's a pretty small community," Schoendorf says. "You run into people in town who have just seen you perform, and it's really fun to talk to them about what they enjoyed."

On today's program, Schoendorf is most looking forward to performing Brahms's Second Piano Concerto.

"It's a great piece and a great soloist," she says. "I love Brahms as a composer; I love the intricacies of his writing, both rhythmically and melodically."

Performing great pieces of music is something that doesn't get old for Schoendorf. Being a musician offers her the opportunity to communicate, both with the audience and with her fellow orchestra members.

"One of the ways I've found that I can really communicate well with people is playing music with them," Schoendorf says. "I love that playing in orchestra is different every time. It's so amazing how the person you're sitting next to can affect or inspire you."

"I like that [Aspen] is a pretty small community. You run into people in town who have just seen you perform, and it's really fun to talk to them about what they enjoyed."

– EMILY SCHOENDORF