

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## MING LIU

*first violin, third stand, outside chair*

Ming Liu has known she wants to be a professional violinist from the time she was eight years old. The twenty-two-year-old Shanghai native grew up with a violin teacher for a mother, so she started studying the instrument when she was just five. But it took a little while for her to really fall in love with being a musician.

“Actually, I wasn’t that interested in violin when I started to learn,” she says. “However, I started to become more interested in watching my mom’s violin lessons with her other students. Because of that, I started to practice regularly. When I was eight years old, I decided to be a professional violinist. It became an indispensable part of my life.”

Ming Liu will enter her fourth year at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music this fall, and she is studying in Aspen this summer for the first time with Aspen Music Festival and School artist-faculty members Paul Kantor and Bing Wang with the support of a Miné Sawahara Crane Memorial Fellowship. Not only is this her first summer at the AMFS, but it is her first summer festival ever.

“Before this Festival, I was always doing competitions in the summers,” she says. “But here, the atmosphere is not competitive. Everyone is finding true music together. This is something I’ve never experienced before: being able to be happy and relaxed and just enjoy making music. I’m so glad I can be here.”

Something else she’s learned to love in Aspen is performing in an orchestra. Before this summer, she tended to play more solo works, and although she would enjoy listening to orchestra concerts in Shanghai, she didn’t have many opportunities to play in one.

“I was really impressed and amazed every time I listened to orchestra concerts, but I couldn’t have any deep comprehension of what the feeling of being a formal orchestra player is like because I didn’t have many opportunities to play in one,” she says. “Now that I’ve studied in Aspen, I have started to feel more and more comfortable playing in an orchestra. To be honest, my English is not that good, but it is not difficult for me to talk with other friends here because I believe that music is the connection. Through music, I’ve made a lot of new friends this summer.”

When she’s not rehearsing or performing, Ming Liu is enjoying the fresh mountain air, going on hikes, or spending time in town. Today, she’s most looking forward to performing R. Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero’s Life).

“I have watched a lot of brilliant orchestras perform this piece live or on video, but it’s the first time I’ll be playing it as a performer, and I’m so looking forward to it,” she says. “It is a glorious composition full of individualism. And I can’t wait to see our concertmaster, Bing Wang, play this solo part.”

Ming Liu says she plans to audition for graduate school after she finishes her time at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She hasn’t decided whether she wants to play in a professional orchestra in China, the U.S., or another country entirely, but she knows now more than ever that she wants to spend her life as a musician.

“Whether in the U.S.A., China, or other countries, I just want to play in orchestra with this big family,” she says. “I’m a very sentimental and emotional kind of person, so I think music can express my feelings very well. It’s the best way to express myself.”

*“To be honest, my English is not that good, but it is not difficult for me to talk with other friends here because I believe that music is the connection.”*

– MING LIU