

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## MARK CHIEN *Violin, First stand, inside chair*

As the Aspen Festival Orchestra assistant concertmaster, Mark Chien has arguably the best seat in the house, sharing a stand with talented artist-faculty, who are concertmasters from top orchestras across the country, and right behind the weekly guest soloist.

“It’s exciting because when I’m up there, I feel the energy from not only my stand partner and all the others, but I can feel the emotion of the soloist,” says Chien. “It gives me a whole new perspective on what it takes to be a great musician. The focus, drive, and conviction that they have when they play is outstanding. It is a great learning experience for me being right in the center of the action.”

Chien returns to Aspen for his second summer studying with Aspen Music Festival and School artist-faculty members David Halen and Sylvia Rosenberg as a recipient of a Wall Family Foundation Fellowship. This fall he will continue working towards his masters with Rosenberg at The Juilliard School.

His story with music started at the age of six, Chien recounts, “I have an older brother who also plays the violin and when I was younger I always wanted to copy him, so I was jealous that he was playing the violin and I wasn’t doing anything. I begged my parents to let me play and haven’t looked back.”

Music was not the center of Chien’s childhood, he has played tennis longer than the violin and thoroughly enjoyed sports. “It was nice because I had a good balance of school, violin, and athletics,” he says.

Chien’s love of sports continues and Aspen offers a wide variety of options. “Aspen is beautiful,” he says, “and when I’m not practicing, I like to walk around town, go on hikes, and just enjoy the quiet nature of this area.”

It wasn’t until high school that Chien decided that music was his calling after attending a summer music festival and connecting with fellow musicians. “Classical music wasn’t the biggest thing in my hometown and there weren’t too many of us who played,” says Chien. “I didn’t really understand what the music world was like until I went to this festival. I came home, and I was just like, ‘I want to do it.’”

The opportunity to be surrounded by a community of musicians is one of the reasons Chien decided to continue his studies at the AMFS, together with the incredible experience of playing under the direction of AMFS Music Director Robert Spano. Chien is most excited about the Final Sunday concert because he will be closing out the season with his favorite conductor.

“Spano has an energy that translates to the orchestra and makes every performance of every piece we do, no matter what it is, just very exciting,” raves Chien. “When he’s up there on the podium, somehow it feels like everyone is just locked in. He has a very good way of balancing what to rehearse and when to rehearse it. He’s very efficient, and working together, the orchestra always produces great results!”

This Sunday’s program is especially enticing as the afternoon concludes with Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* giving a final nod to the season theme, *Paris, City of Light*. Chien is thrilled to have the opportunity to play this work because he performed it last summer with the Aspen Conducting Academy as Spano taught student conductors.

“After watching Spano instruct student conductors on this work a year ago, I’m excited to play the Berlioz under his direction and leadership. Every time he takes the podium it is a musical adventure,” says Chien.

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