

## ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



### SEAN O'HARA *bass*

Twenty-five-year-old Sean O'Hara feels strongly about the nobility of music as a profession. "I like that music doesn't use a lot of resources. There are so many professions that are detrimental to our civilization and I like that music just stays in its lane," O'Hara said. "I really like the entity of the orchestra. It's a good example of how humans can work together without ego to come up with something special."

O'Hara, currently a master's student at Rice University, attended UCLA and has spent the past three summers at Verbier Festival in Switzerland, but this is his first summer studying at the Aspen Music Festival and School—studying under Chris Hanulik and Timothy Pitts.

"I think I was just attracted to the size," O'Hara said when asked why he chose to play bass initially. "I like the range and richness to it," O'Hara said.

O'Hara was new to classical music when he first decided to pursue it. Apparently, a late-night listening session of the complete Beethoven symphonies was all it took. "I always saw myself going into jazz and then I just decided I really loved orchestral music and I didn't really question it," O'Hara said. His mother was the one to push him to pursue music through middle school. "She saw something in me—some kind of connection to music at a young age that I didn't even know I had," O'Hara said.

When O'Hara decided to pursue music, he quickly started to see how talented other people were and he realized he was not quite at that level. "I specifically remember one lesson with Chris where I broke down a little bit. I just said, 'Chris, I don't know if I have it. I don't know if I have what it takes.' I explained how I was feeling, and he said, 'Look, Sean, this is really hard, but I saw something in you when you auditioned. You're not where you need to be, but I wouldn't have accepted you if you didn't have it.' From that day, I just never questioned it again. I just let the process ride out," O'Hara said.

"I just want a fruitful life with music surrounded by people who want the same things. I don't want to have a negative impact on the world. I feel like music is unbiased and that's a good thing," O'Hara said.

O'Hara is most excited to perform *The Rite of Spring* this summer. "It digs deep and it's just a really savage piece," O'Hara said. Watch O'Hara perform this Sunday with the Aspen Festival Orchestra.

*"I like that music doesn't use a lot of resources. There are so many professions that are detrimental to our civilization and I like that music just stays in its lane."*

— SEAN O'HARA