

ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Today, Katherine Woo is the assistant concertmaster, sitting next to Robert Chen.

"I love sharing my energy and music with an audience and the most gratifying feedback is to hear that the audience was touched and transported through my art."

— KATHERINE WOO

KATHERINE WOO *Violin*

It's not often that a student studying neuroscience on the pre-med track does a one-eighty and changes career paths entirely to become a violin soloist who performs and shares music with people all over the world. Twenty-two-year old violinist Katherine Woo returns to Aspen this year for her fifth summer at the Aspen Music Festival and School.

"Since I have been participating in the festival for so many years, the AMFS has become my second home in providing me with a gratifying and nurturing community to further develop my artistic voice," says Woo.

Woo has been playing the piano since she was five years old, and the violin since she was seven. She made her Kennedy Center solo debut at the age of 11 and a few years later made her Carnegie Hall solo debut at the age of 14. Recently, Woo was invited to compete as a quarter-finalist in the 2021 Isaac Stern International Violin Competition and awarded third prize at the 2019 Gisborne International Music Competition in New Zealand.

"I love the performing aspect of playing the violin," Woo conveys. "I love sharing my energy and music with an audience and the most gratifying feedback is to hear that the audience was touched and transported through my art."

After spending two years in the Columbia-Juilliard Exchange Program as a Neuroscience and Behavior major, Woo graduated from The Juilliard School as a recipient of the Jerome L. Greene Fellowship, studying with Sylvia Rosenberg and Masao Kawasaki. She is currently pursuing her Masters of Music degree at Juilliard.

This summer, Woo will be performing with the Aspen Festival Orchestra studying under Bing Wang and Paul Kantor. "During my first summer in 2016, I remember that I was extremely young and very intimidated by all the talent surrounding me," Woo admits. "Looking back, the artists who I looked up to that summer are now both my mentors and friends. We continue to stay in touch about future projects and collaborative opportunities."

The most memorable piece of advice that Woo ever received from one of her teachers was not from a violin professor, but a humanities professor at Columbia University who reminded Woo of a quote by psychologist, Viktor E. Frankl: "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom."

"Similarly, when sharing my music, audiences are given a stimulus in which they have a choice for how they respond," Woo explains. "In this process, I think that artists have an inherent responsibility to share their craft in an inclusive way that will stimulate a sense of community among even the most diverse audiences. In this way, a community made of divergent people will grow together into a more harmonious society."

Katherine Woo is a recipient of the Anne and Arnold Porath Scholarship