

ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Edna Jeon plays the flute and piccolo in the Aspen Festival Orchestra.

EDNA JEON *Flute*

Edna Jeon did not have a typical start to her journey as a flutist. While others may be inspired by the lovely timbre of the flute, or are continuing a family tradition with the instrument, something else caught her eye. “I liked it because it was shiny,” Jeon says.

A native of Austin, Texas, Jeon already has launched a promising flute career. She is returning to the Aspen Music Festival and School for a third time, this year studying with Nadine Asin and Demarre McGill. Jeon also holds a master’s degree in flute performance from Carnegie Mellon University, has professional experience as the piccolo and third flute with the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, and helped co-found her own wind quintet. Still, despite her many accomplishments, Jeon always finds another goal to chase.

After a middle school flute career that she described as nothing more than “mediocre,” she decided to play the flute in high school as a hobby. Her long-time teacher would come to her house for weekly lessons, but given her busy schedule of school and extracurricular activities, she could hardly find time to practice. “I was just playing duets and fun tunes with my teacher, doing boring etude books, doing stuff that they do in middle school band when I was still in high school,” Jeon says.

So, when Jeon announced in the middle of her senior year that she wanted to major in music, everyone, including Jeon herself, was taken by surprise. “I grew up in a pretty stereotypically Asian upbringing—my parents always wanted me to be a doctor or a scientist or mathematician,” Jeon says. “That’s what I expected would happen for me as well.”

To prepare for auditions, Jeon and her parents would make a weekly seven-hour round-trip commute to a new, more intensive teacher. “I had never played or practiced any of these audition pieces,” Jeon says. “You would have the regular Mozart concerto and a list of excerpts—I had no idea what any of that was.”

Despite her hurried preparations, Jeon succeeded in accomplishing her goal and was admitted to the College of Music at the University of Colorado Boulder. Still, like in high school, Jeon felt behind the curve. “All of a sudden, you’re in this giant environment where everyone is so good,” Jeon says. “I’d never heard of a youth orchestra, I’d never heard of music festivals, I didn’t know anything.”

When two friends whom she especially admired were accepted to the AMFS, she set a goal to attend herself, although she was far from confident.

“If I get into Aspen, I’ll probably not be as good as the other people, but at least I’ll be at the bottom rung of the same tier,” Jeon remembered thinking. Once Jeon first made it to Aspen in 2019, she says the experience was overwhelming. “It’s a feeling I get every time, every year,” Jeon says. “I think I prefer it that way, so I don’t grow arrogant or cocky.”

Still, with a flute in hand, Jeon’s skill is undeniable. So many years later, Jeon and her flute sparkle and shine as brightly as the one that first caught her eye.

Edna Jeon is a recipient of the Nadine Asin and Thomas van Straaten Flute Scholarship

“When I actually arrived in Aspen, and saw the people in the studio, it was really overwhelming. It’s a feeling I get every year. I think I prefer it that way, so that I don’t grow arrogant or cocky.”

— EDNA JEON

DID YOU KNOW?

The Aspen Music Festival and School is one of the world's leading training institutions for emerging young musicians. The talented students perform side-by-side with our artist-faculty to make up the Festival's summer orchestras and ensembles, including the one performing for you today.

The AMFS's diverse body of **470** students hails from the world's top conservatories and schools of music. While the average age of students is **23**, many have already started promising careers and return to Aspen for further professional development with sought-after mentors from the world of classical music.

Artist-faculty members for the 2022 season, numbering more than **100**, are the leading performers and teachers in the field today, coming to Aspen from **31 major orchestras**, **9 opera houses**, and **49 music schools and conservatories worldwide**, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, the Metropolitan Opera orchestra, The Juilliard School, the Shepherd School at Rice University, and the Houston Grand Opera.

2022 STUDENT SNAPSHOT

470
TALENTED
STUDENTS

Nearly
1 1/2 RECEIVE
FELLOWSHIP
SUPPORT

From
31
COUNTRIES
and
40
STATES

More than
\$3.1 million
IN FINANCIAL AID

