

ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Soomin Kim plays the cello in the Aspen Festival Orchestra.

SOOMIN KIM

Cello

When Soomin Kim was young, her mother didn't encourage her to play the cello. In fact, her mother hid her older brother's cello from her, as she was worried young Kim would break the instrument. However, during her brother's lessons, whenever she had an opportunity, Kim would give the strings a pluck or two.

In first grade, when Kim got to choose her instrument through her school in Korea, she of course chose the cello. In her early years she would entertain her family by imitating the famous cellists of the day, closing her eyes and rocking back and forth. Today, while her skills are earned, not imitated, her goal is similar.

"I think what makes me go on, why I love to play, is my time on the stage when I'm performing," Kim says. One performance in particular stands out. Kim remembers that a year ago, when she was performing Saint-Saëns's Cello Concerto, she had a particularly transformative moment. "I actually felt like I was in a different world. I could only think about the music, nothing else," Kim says. "I think I've just been trying to recreate that moment, because it felt so magical—it was very timeless."

Despite her intense passion for cello, Kim's life does not stop there. Entering her sophomore year at Columbia University, Kim is also a prospective Computer Science and Mathematics double major. She participates in the Columbia-Juilliard Program, where she plans to pursue a Master of Music degree in addition to a Bachelor of Arts from Columbia. Maintaining a work-life balance can be, to understate things, a challenge. "I don't really even know how to find the balance," Kim admits. "It can be rare, but the balance can really work. A lot of my friends are in the library 24/7, so for me to have another option to have an escape for a couple of hours can be nice."

Maintaining a healthy relationship with music is important to Kim. She reminds herself that music is not the end-all be-all of her life. Kim recalls a conversation with Richard Aaron, one of her teachers at Juilliard, that was especially important. "He told me that at the end of the day, music is just a means for you to have fun in your life," Kim says. "It's super hard to realize that when you're in a practice room and you're just thinking, 'Why can't I play this?' But really, music is just one aspect of your life that can improve it—it shouldn't be your whole world."

Still, for the summer, Kim says she is excited to be immersed in Aspen's musical environment, surrounded by elite musicians. She is studying with Julie Albers and Darrett Adkins. "The fact that you can play with faculty and people from all over the world who play in professional orchestras, seeing their attitude in rehearsals and how they approach things, it's so exciting," Kim says.

Many years, performances, and awards later, Kim can appreciate how far she has come from her attempts to pluck her brother's cello. Her cello—now her very own—will surely never be hidden again.

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Soomin Kim is a recipient of the Ruth Coates Roush Fellowship

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

