

ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Duncan McDougall plays the violin in the Aspen Festival Orchestra.

DUNCAN McDOUGALL *Violin*

Pubs aren't famous for their service to two-year-olds, nor are they famous for inspiring the career path of a classical violinist. But Duncan McDougall and his family owe one East Coast pub far more than the tab.

The now 19-year-old McDougall was inspired to start playing the violin on a family vacation to Canada's East Coast. While stopped at a pub, he encountered a fiddler and was immediately taken with the instrument. After that, his parents enrolled him in the Suzuki program.

Until he was 11, the prospect of becoming a musician never crossed his mind. Hailing from Uxbridge, Ontario, a small town outside Toronto, it didn't even occur to him that music was something worth seriously pursuing—until he joined Toronto's Youth Symphony Orchestra. "Living in a small town, I was one of the only classical musicians," McDougall says. "It didn't pop into my head that this could be what I do with my life, but when I studied in the city and was surrounded by all these people with the same passions as me, I kind of had a light bulb moment."

The reason for his continued passion on the violin is that it allows him—as he puts it—to sing through the instrument. "It's amazing, being able to emote in a way I can't with my voice," McDougall says. "I don't have a good singing voice to begin with, so having the violin is quite nice."

McDougall studied at the music academy in Toronto until the end of high school, where he got experience as a soloist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. "It was amazing," McDougall says of the experience. "Up until then, I'd just been playing with community orchestras, so getting to play with an orchestra that matched what I wanted to do exactly was really powerful."

McDougall is now pursuing his bachelor's degree at the Colburn School in Los Angeles. A keen hiker, his summer at the Aspen Music Festival and School has spoiled him. "Besides the music, the nature has been one of the best things," McDougall says. "Being in the mountains and not waking up to an ambulance going by outside—it's not bad." Buckskin Pass is one of his favorites hikes, along with Shadow Mountain.

Musically, McDougall says that playing in the Aspen Festival Orchestra every week has been especially impactful. "Up until now, I haven't done that much orchestral playing, so going to a fully orchestral festival was really nice," he says. Weekly studio class was another highlight of the summer; he says he learned a lot from studying with Masao Kawasaki, a teacher with whom he had never studied before Aspen.

McDougall has been looking forward to playing Berlioz's Requiem for most of the season. Like most, he's never been a part of such a massive production. "Having the full chorus with us too—that's going to be quite an amazing concert."

Looking forward, McDougall aspires to play the violin professionally in various ways. He hopes to secure a seat in an orchestra "for stability," but also plans to continue performing chamber music, one of his main passions. "At some point, I want to find a quartet or trio I can stick together with, enter some competitions, and go down that path," McDougall says.

Duncan McDougall is the recipient of the Miné Sawahara Crane Memorial Scholarship

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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

