

ASPEN FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Today, Sam Atlas is second/third trumpet.

SAM ATLAS *trumpet*

There isn't one moment or experience that Aspen Music Festival and School trumpet student Sam Atlas can pinpoint as when she decided to pursue a professional music career, she "just kind of knew it was what I wanted to do from 6th or 7th grade. I started [playing trumpet] in the 5th grade and beginning in middle school, it was my entire personality," she says.

Atlas, who just completed a master's of orchestral performance at the Manhattan School of Music, has already created a fruitful career for herself—starting while she was still in school. A freelance trumpet player in New York City, Atlas performs with the Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra and has been performing as a substitute trumpet player for the New York Philharmonic since last fall.

It was conversation with Cristina Cutts, then the principal tuba of the Phoenix Symphony, that launched her early career. "She told me to advocate for myself, because nobody is going to do that for you. And that really resonated with me," says Atlas. She credits getting hired with the New York Philharmonic to this piece of advice, and it also gave her the courage to pursue other avenues of freelancing in the city, because "if you don't advocate for yourself, nothing is going to happen."

This summer marks Atlas's second in Aspen. "Just by being here I get to meet new people doing what I want to do. I have the chance to get better at my instrument; there are lots of playing opportunities," she says, simply stating that "location, prestige, and program" were the most important factors that brought her to the AMFS.

In addition to her private lessons, she sees the opportunity to perform alongside her teachers (Stuart Stephenson, Kevin Cobb, and David Krauss—all some of the country's top orchestral and chamber players and teachers) as invaluable. "There's something about playing with such amazing faculty. It brings your own playing ability to a higher level. [When] you can hear them right next to you, you match them and blend with them, and it makes you a better player," she says.

She'll continue to take advantage of the performance opportunities and prestige of the AMFS, but Atlas has big things to look forward to when her time in Aspen ends. When she returns to New York City in the fall, she'll continue to perform with the Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra as the newly promoted principal trumpet, sub with the New York Philharmonic, and perform around the city with her brass quintet, Mahogany Brass.

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—SAM ATLAS

SAM ATLAS IS ONE OF 480 YOUNG ARTISTS STUDYING IN ASPEN THIS SUMMER.
SHE IS A RECIPIENT OF THE ANNE AND CHRIS REYES SCHOLARSHIP.