

## Summer Music Festival Survey

### Q1. Which summer music festival did you attend? Why did you choose this particular festival?

My son went to Aspen Music Festival and Meadowmount. It was recommended by my son's private teacher, and many of her students have attended those music festivals before.

I attended Marrowstone for two years, and I chose it because it was fairly local and affiliated with SYSO. Me and my family weren't comfortable with me being across the country for a month or more by myself when I was 14.

National Youth Orchestra 2 (NYO2): Younger alternative to NYO, free, sounded fun going to NYC and studying music. Bowdoin: Great chamber music program, good performance opportunities. Aspen Music Festival: High-level festival, the best teachers from conservatories and universities, great orchestra and chamber programs, other serious musicians, tons of concerts.

Boston University Tanglewood Institute. I chose it because I heard it was a great camp for serious, high-level musicians to do orchestra and chamber music intensely for 6 weeks.

Marrowstone Music Festival - I was recommended it.

Interlochen - it was recommended by our private teacher.

Aria Summer Academy This camp is unique because it is many master classes with different teachers so you get exposed to lots of different teachers (good and not so good) and understand what teaching style you prefer. It also is 3 sessions of about 2 weeks each. I did all 3 but many people do 1-2 or 3 sessions.

Indiana University because it offers private lessons and practice.

Interlochen Institute, I chose this because I wanted to be exposed to a new environment with more feedback on my playing and an environment with better players.

### Q2. What was the application process like? What was required? i.e. a letter of recommendation.

A letter of recommendation and recordings were required.

The application process for me was very simple, with the only requirements I remember being a music resume and a basic application.

You always apply with a few recordings, usually a letter of recommendation. The rest is usually just filling out the online application. The recording requirements could be "one movement of a concerto and a contrasting piece".

Yes, application was required. I sent in videos of me playing orchestral excerpts and some solo repertoire. I also needed 1 or 2 letters of recommendation.

Quite easy, since I am a SYSO student and therefore enjoyed a streamlined application process.

Audition video tapes, letter of recommendation, resume that included repertoires for chamber and solo pieces.

Typical: letter of recommendation, recordings (1 Bach, 2 contrasting movements), application fee

Online application, recorded audition, recommendation

The application took a while to do, it was all online and it consisted of submitting basic information as well as a resume and a recorded audition. The audition was a couple scales, orchestral excerpts, and two contrasting solos.

### Q3. Did it require a recording or a video tape? What did you record? Did you record at home or at a professional recording studio?

Yes, we had the recordings done by a professional.

Because I was in Junior and Youth when I went to Marrowstone, I was not required to submit a recording. However, this policy has changed and all students, regardless of their position in SYSO, has to submit a recording.

Yes, they always required a video recording. I have always done professional recordings but it's definitely not required. As long as the sound quality is rather good and you do your best with visuals like lighting and nothing distracting in the background, it's usually acceptable.

I recorded Mendelssohn violin concerto, mvt 1 and Bach Partita no. 3. I recorded Mozart Rondo as well. I recorded these at home.

No, but the normal application for non-SYSO students in Junior or above does.

Video tape and recorded by a professional at their home.

Yes, Jack Straw

Yes. recorded at Jack Straw typical requirements for a festival: 1 Bach, 2 pieces of contrasting styles

It required a recording that I did at home. I recorded a couple scales, orchestral excerpts, and a concerto as well as a virtuoso piece.

### Q4. Can you tell us about the faculty at the music festival? How did the faculty shape your experience?

The faculty came from top music schools and orchestras at Aspen. Many were nationally and internationally well-known. It was a great opportunity to make connections and network.

Faculty at Marrowstone, and how well I learned and got along with them, could be pretty hit-or-miss. I will admit, a significant part of this was probably because I was on the younger, less skilled side of things and I doubt much of the faculty wanted to interact with a student who needed help with a lot of basic technique-type things. However, for the faculty who took the time to acknowledge my playing and teach me, their help was incredibly valuable for my growth as a musician.

The faculty at NYO2 were mostly people from the Philadelphia Orchestra. Their mentorship was very helpful, especially in orchestra. The faculty at Bowdoin were such experts in chamber music and we had the best coachings. The teaching faculty were also pretty high-level. Aspen: The faculty was one of the biggest reasons I went. Going to meet these teachers greatly impacts your success in college auditions. They helped me transform my playing and were a big part of Aspen.

The faculty were Boston Symphony members and conductors, and I found their insight and coaching to be extremely detail-oriented. We had 3 conductors over the 6 weeks, and working with each of them for 3-hour orchestra rehearsals daily made it feel like a professional orchestra. We also learned new music every 2 weeks.

The faculty often dictate the experience. I personally enjoyed my time, and that is in no small part to good experiences with the faculty.

The faculty was fine. It would have been nice if there were more private lessons.

This was the best part - having different teachers from Cincinnati, Juilliard, etc.

I had a Hungarian cello teacher who gave me 2 lessons per week.

The faculty at Interlochen gave priceless advice and was very helpful. There were professors from conservatories and they had clinics as well as some personal time where I was able to speak with them and converse on my own plans.

## Q5. What were your peers like at the music festival? How did they shape your experience? What did you learn from them?

His peers were all advanced students, and it was good to get to know the top musicians at the national level. Meadowmount: 4 hours daily private practice required. Cell phones were taken away. The program had chamber music, with no orchestra. Aspen: Most students attend music colleges or conservatories. Orchestra repertoire changes every week. It was very busy because the program also included chamber music.

My peers were great! I made a lot of friends both in and out of my section, and older students were a valuable resource, when I could muster the courage to ask them for help, usually coming in the form of fingerings or advice on how to play a specific piece.

NYO2: All very inspiring dreamers. They inspired me to pursue music professionally. Very friendly. Bowdoin: wider age range, still very friendly and supportive. Aspen: very supportive, inspiring, willing to help. There's always competitive and fake people at camps but you find your group easily.

My peers were overall kind and supportive and I made lifelong friends. Their own self-motivation inspired me to become a better musician and more meticulous in my practice routine. I also learned from them that music can be a part of my life, whether I do it professionally or for fun.

They were often from quite diverse backgrounds.

Peers were great. The experience of playing chamber music and orchestral music with other students my age was a good learning experience. The cabins that we stayed contained students who were there for other camps like Drama, Art or Voice so that made the stay really interesting.

Lot of college kids who drove, smoke and drank. But I found friends. Also interesting to hear from performance majors at college.

All high school kids and younger which was good because I was 15 at the time.

My peers were all very talented and it really improved my playing to be exposed to such advanced playing among those my age. From masterclasses I learned very many helpful techniques as well as just in general, as friends, we continue to keep in touch to provide information as well as updates to each other on our accomplishments.

## Q6. Can you tell us about the housing and food at the music festival?

The food at Meadowmount was not good at all.

The dorms at Marrowstone were pretty okay. They could get hot during the day, but they were at a good temperature in the night. Unfortunately, for both years, my room was right by the street and I would be kept up by the sound of construction. I wasn't a fan of the food at Marrowstone, mostly because the menu didn't change a lot from day to day and I got tired of the food.

NYO2: average college dorm and college food. Pretty good food. Bowdoin: nicer college dorm. They have one of the best college cafeterias in the US so it was pretty good. Aspen: Older buildings usually used as ski lodges during the winter. Smaller rooms, not as nice as Bowdoin but still okay. Food was sometimes good sometimes okay and sometimes terrible. There's two dining halls and the quality varies in between.

I had a roommate who I knew before the camp, and we shared a tiny dorm... barely enough space to walk around in, pretty much good just for sleeping. My floor was all girls, so it was a great close-knit community. The food was not fantastic and probably not very healthy.

The food is the least appealing part about the entire festival. The housing is better than other dorms I have been in for music camps.

We were in a rustic cabin with camp counselors and in bunk beds with same age campers but not orchestral. Food was cafeteria food plus ice cream.

Dorm at Mount Holyoke College

We stayed at a dorm. I had a roommate. we ate at a cafeteria. there were small restaurants nearby

We lodged in cabins that had maybe a dozen people with a couple counselors. These people were all from different institutes so we made friends with people other than our own instrument and even other forms of art. The food was served at a cafeteria in a buffet style for every meal.

## Q7. How easy or difficult was it to travel to the music festival?

It was difficult to get to Meadowmount. First, he had to fly to Vermont, then ride a taxi, and finally a ferry. Aspen: My son flew to Denver, then got on a shuttle.

Bellingham is a long drive from Seattle and the Eastside. However, as it was only one round trip and I wasn't the one driving, I didn't think that it was that hard of a journey. My parents may disagree with that, though.

NY02: Easy flight and drive in NY. Although I got a bit of special treatment because I was an unaccompanied minor so I got picked up and all from the airport. Bowdoin: more difficult. Had to fly to Newark, run around lost, get on another commuter plane, and take a bus to Bowdoin college. Aspen: pretty simple. Flew to Denver and drove with my dad to Aspen. There's also a bus that takes students I'm pretty sure.

I flew by plane to Albany, New York, and a bus took us to Lenox, Massachusetts. The journey wasn't too difficult, just long hours.

Not too bad.

Travel was difficult since we had to stop over at Detroit and spent a night there before heading to the final destination. Once at the airport, the camp representatives were at the airport to greet us and take us to a Interlochen on their bus. They were super organized.

all camps can pick you up with a shuttle service from the airport. my relatives picked me up from the airport and took me to the camp, and took me home for the long weekend between sessions. You could also stay on campus between sessions

Buy a seat for my cello was too expensive so that summer I rented a cello nearby. However, this required a family member to take me to the festival, rent a car and pick up the cello. Hard to find high caliber rentals so this was the last time I rented for a festival. I need to practice with my own cello

I personally was able to get there by two flights. One to Detroit and then to Traverse city. Once I got to the Traverse city airport, there was an Interlochen booth out the gate so none of us would get lost.

## Q8. What was the best experience and the worst experience you had at the music festival?

Aspen: It was easy to go into town with a rental bike or a bus, and have fun. He was able to attend opera concerts or any masterclass. Because Aspen is a resort, living costs are high and my son ran out of spending money. It has a nice environment to study, though. Meadowmount helps a lot with time management and establishing a schedule.

The best was probably spending time with my friends, both in and out of rehearsals. Chamber music was pretty reliably fun and the outing to the farmer's market on the weekends were a great way to unwind. The worst is probably just the strain Marrowstone puts on you. As I mentioned before, I wasn't a huge fan of the food and it took a lot of motivation to just eat day after day. I'd wake up pretty early and go to bed fairly late, and I'd have this cloud of exhaustion hovering over my head. However, it's important to note that despite all of that, I managed to have a blast at Marrowstone.

NY02: Best - performing with everyone in Philadelphia after so much work and fun. Worst - literally nothing. Leaving?  
Bowdoin: Best - coachings and performing with my chamber group Worst - breaking my bow hair Aspen: Best - constantly

learning whether in chamber coachings, lessons, or working with my friends on our solo pieces. Worst - spraining my arm. (Nothing bad relating to the festival)

The best experience I had was performing at Tanglewood on Parade with the orchestra, and then sitting afterwards outside the Koussevitsky Shed to listen to John Williams conduct the Boston Pops. The worst experience I had was working with my chamber group because the people I got paired with were not very motivated to practice chamber (although my friends in other chamber groups sometimes had better experiences).

Best: playing any of the repertoire with my peers. Worst: a masterclass where no one ended up playing.

Best part was there were other fun activities that were age appropriate and staying in a cabin and making friends. Worst experience was the long trip.

No structured activities in the evening so we hung out or practiced. I would have liked to go to more concerts in the evening.

One of the best parts was having a concert every night to go to I wish there were more chamber opportunities. I didn't get into a chamber group (I think there was just one)

Playing ensembles with oboe/English horn was very enjoyable as well as just in general getting to know the other students and the professors. The worst part may have been just trying to get used to the new environment or Michigan, since it very much affects my instrument.

## Q9. The cost of attending tends to be expensive. Is it worth the money?

It's a different story if your child gets a scholarship, but if they are capable of practicing on their own at home, it might not be the best deal.

In terms of straight-up improving musical ability, I'm not sure whether Marrowstone is the best deal. Marrowstone definitely helped me streamline my music-learning process and helped with my endurance, but Marrowstone, in terms of cost per week, isn't the cheapest camp out there. In addition, you very much have to seek out the faculty to get meaningful one-on-one time, something which I didn't always have the time or energy to do. If you're someone with boundless energy and don't have the time for a long music festival, Marrowstone is probably a good choice.

Yes. 100%. Especially for Apsen where meeting teachers is crazy beneficial for not only your learning, but for the connections when starting the college application process. NYO2 and NYO are also free so look for those opportunities. The camps have been the best experiences of my life and are completely life changing.

Absolutely! I recommend Tanglewood to anyone considering going into music, or anyone who just loves playing with other high-level musicians! It takes a lot of practicing there, but it's worth it.

It is a good experience, but I would recommend applying for the financial aid application anyways.

Yes. Interlochen is unique since it provides great outdoor activities in addition to music in a beautiful setting and they are well organized. We will not go again but would recommend for anyone to go at least once. It's especially good for students that are too young to go to Marrowstone but trying to find an overnight camp.

Necessary for a performance major

You have to do it if you are going to be serious about performance.

Attending Interlochen institute was definitely worth the money, the feedback and connections made was irreplaceable and priceless.

## Q 10. Do you have any recommendations or advice for younger SYSO students?

Try to get scholarships or financial aid.

Even if you don't think you can get in, try anyway! And if you don't, don't let that discourage you. Try to learn something about the music festival beforehand and make a list of the resources available. Finally, make sure to have fun!

Meet as many teachers as you can. When it comes to pre-screening videos for college and live auditions, if the teachers know you, then they are informed beyond your playing. Things like work ethic, character, passion, are all harder to communicate through a recording. If the teachers know you, they judge based on the person, not just your playing. Apply for festivals and don't be afraid to embrace the big changes that will come your way.

If you have never been to camp before away from home, I guarantee you'll make lifelong friends at this one and you'll learn to be a better musician. I had improved so much and still keep in touch with the friends I made. Even though I don't plan to pursue music professionally, this experience will be one of the closest I have to being in a professional orchestra and I will always cherish it deeply. This camp is probably best for students in Youth Symphony because of the level of dedication it takes and hours of rehearsals. Apply to BUTI!

Get sleep and bring your own food.

Marrowstone in the City is the best camp! Well organized and well run and saves money for travel. Interlochen is great too if you are looking for an overnight camp.

1. Most programs have college kids, if you are younger, choose programs with fewer college kids. They smoke, drive and are apart from us 2. Figure out if you want lots of solo/practice time with private lessons or chamber or orchestra experience. choose a camp like that 3. Some camps have lots of concerts in the evening and structured activities. Others do not.

If given the opportunity younger SYSO students should consider attending Interlochen institutes, and remember to audition early or at least be aware of auditions so there's no panic as the deadline approaches.