

Notes to Ben Zander on BTPO Tour

Though I was very excited for the opportunity to perform for the first time at Carnegie Hall, I was stressing out over how I was going to have time to study for finals and my jury in the coming week. When you read one member's white sheet which said that we should give our whole effort and mind to this concert rather than worrying about finals, I laughed it off telling myself that there was no way I could forget about finals for a few days. However, after visiting the MoMA and seeing the inspiring exhibits, I realized that everything I was doing on this NY trip was shaping me into a better musician. Finals are important, but this performance would teach me strong musicianship skills that would benefit me as I pursue a professional music career. When we played in the concert Monday night in Carnegie Hall, I let nothing stop me, but played my soul out, putting finals and papers temporarily at the back of my mind. I wanted the audience to encounter the same love for orchestral music that I have found through BPYO. After hearing the different stories of who had played in Carnegie Hall and how the hall had nearly been demolished, I knew I could not take performing in the Isaac Stern Auditorium for granted. Thank you again, Mr. Zander, for giving me this incredible opportunity. -Melissa Cheng

I can't find the words to properly describe how amazing an experience it was to perform at Carnegie Hall. Especially after visiting the hall's archives, it was as if I could feel the weight of history all around me, as I thought about how many incredible musicians of every genre had stood exactly where I was standing. It felt like walking on sacred ground. During our actual performance, I felt incredibly connected to the other members of the orchestra and to the music itself. Although we were initially intimidated to play in such a magnificent place, I think being in Carnegie Hall heightened our awareness and helped us to play with everything we had. A few months ago, I never would have thought I could have performed at Carnegie Hall ever, let alone so early in my life and career. I know that I will treasure the memories of this concert forever, and I hope that our performance brought as much joy to the audience as I know it did to us. -Emily Edelstein

Performing in Carnegie Hall is any musician's dream. To achieve this accomplishment so early in one's career is not only exciting, but empowering. The experience was incredible, but it was incredible beyond playing in the hall itself. Personally, the support I received, and have since received from extended family, friends, and even people from my home town in North Carolina is unbelievable. It is very rewarding to know that people care about your work, especially since the process can be difficult. Essentially our job as individual musicians is to sit in a room, by ourselves, and critique our playing for hours on end. Sometimes we achieve the desired outcome in a matter of minutes, but often times it takes days, weeks, even months, before we start to see a product we are proud of. Playing in Carnegie Hall was extremely rewarding because it was a clear indication that hard work paid off. I am thrilled I got to share this moment of success with my family and friends, but I'm most excited that I was able to share it with the other members of BPYO. Beyond our individual work, our dedication to the music, to the orchestra, and to each other ultimately made our Carnegie Hall debut an unforgettable. -Katherine Haroldson

The Carnegie Hall concert left me speechless and was the most incredible experience of my life. At the end, seeing so many smiling faces and shining eyes in the audience is something I will never forget. There is nobody else in the world I'd rather make my Carnegie Hall debut with than you and the rest of BPYO! Thank you for making this possible. -Emma Churchill