

Colorado Springs Youth Symphony

What does it take to really be great at something? Is it natural ability, luck, or just something you're "born with"? To a handful of Mesa Ridge musicians, the answer is none of those things. Instead, they agree that hours upon hours of practice and a strong sense of hard work are the keys. As current and former members of the competitive, audition-based Colorado Springs Youth Symphony, their dedication to the development of their musical skills has helped them achieve Grizzly Greatness.



Junior Gabe Brownlowe, who played upright bass in different ensembles with the Youth Symphony for four years, emphasized the importance of practice to become a better musician.

"You'll get discouraged that you're not performing up to the level of the rest of the group if you're not practicing," said Gabe

Instead, he emphasized the importance of a routine - something you can expect to do every day - in order to get better.

Freshman Gavin Montmeny, who plays bassoon, hopes new players don't get discouraged when trying to learn something new. He gave this advice to those who are just starting out: "Don't compare yourself to others because they've gotten a lot of practice. They have different skill sets that you will learn over time." Junior Mari Marsh plays violin in one of the Youth Symphony's ensembles and she agrees with Gavin. "Take baby steps if you have to but don't compare yourself to others. It makes things so much worse! Focus on just getting a little bit better every time."

Sophomore Sophia Nardis played upright bass in the Youth Symphony and learned the importance of managing time. Between honors classes, homework, practice, and rehearsals, things can get overwhelming but time management was key to Sophia. Junior Hayleigh Duez, cello, emphasized the importance of balance in order to achieve success. "I really learned about professionalism and being able to manage my own time for myself".

So what does it take to be great? According to these Grizzly gurus of music, it takes dedication to practice, a sense of aspiration to others without comparing yourself to them, the discipline to experience slow and steady progress, and the ability to balance the time learning your skill with everything else in life. To these Grizzly Greats, we say "Bravo!"

