

Joseph Yungen accepted to Juilliard School in NYC

Written by Nick Morgan, Mail Tribune, Medford, Ore.

Joseph Yungen is on track to earn master's degrees in solo piano performance and collaborative piano performance at the end of May from Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., but two advanced degrees won't be the end of his academic pursuit.

Yungen has been accepted for the sole open position in the doctorate program at The Juilliard School in New York City, N.Y. "To be honest, I had to go into the process not expecting to get in," Yungen said. "I'm glad that's over."

With a single opening in a competitive conservatory, the audition process that led to Yungen's admission into the doctoral program was rigorous. But with the admissions gantlet behind him, Yungen is ready for the next step in his career. "Being in New York City will be great—more opportunities and more fantastic musicians to work with, as well."



Pianist Joseph Yungen is headed to The Juilliard School in New York City, N.Y. as he was recently accepted for the sole open position in the doctorate program.

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He said he's looking forward to working with his primary instructor, Jonathan Feldman, whom he met last summer at the Music Academy of the West.

Yungen said he'd originally planned to become a freelance musician once he earned his master's degrees, but Feldman encouraged him to apply to the doctorate program.

"People have warned me that I'll probably be camped out in the library while I'm there, but I'll also be working with wonderful musicians," he said.

As part of his master's work, Yungen is preparing for a big performance.

"Most of the day is taken up with rehearsals and planning for lessons of the other students," he said. "There's a pretty high emphasis on academic work here."

In Yungen's first year at Eastman, his primary focus was on solo piano performance, his second year centered around collaborative piano performance, and the past year has been focused on his final performance for his collaborative piano degree.

"They complement each other greatly, and to a certain extent they overlap," he said. "There's a lot of playing and a lot of repertoire to deal with."

Yungen said his time at Southern Oregon University helped him develop into the musician he is today, thanks to the attention and practice time its small classes allowed.

"It's easy for young students in a larger conservatory setting to get burned out or overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of musicians," he said.

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Yungen credits the support of his parents, Steve and Verna Yungen of Central Point, Ore., for helping him succeed.

“I’m sure things wouldn’t have been as successful without the support of the community and my parents,” he said.

Looking back, Yungen knew early on that music would be a major component of his future.

“I always assumed that it would be my life’s work,” he said. “I didn’t necessarily set my sights on Eastman or Juilliard, but I assumed music would be a part of my life somehow.”

Editor’s note: Yungen, age 25, lived in and attended school in Holyoke from March 1997 to March 2001. Before attending the Eastman School of Music, he graduated from Crater High School in Central Point, Ore. in 2006 and earned his bachelor’s degree in music performance from Southern Oregon University in 2010.

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