

Senior Spotlight: A Passion for Viola Leads to a Musical Future

Mia Greco

For more than six years, the viola has been at the center of her musical journey. What began in the sixth grade has grown into a defining part of her identity – one she's excited to carry with her into college as she prepares to minor in music. She describes the viola as her “baby,” a nickname that reflects both affection and dedication. One of her favorite aspects of the instrument is the alto clef, a space where she feels most at home. “I enjoy playing in the alto clef to get a deep and richer sound, but still have the ability to play higher pitches,” she explains. That balance – warmth with flexibility – mirrors the way she approaches music itself.

At Independence High School, she has been a member of the Chamber Orchestra, an honors-level ensemble that has allowed her to grow alongside other passionate musicians. Beyond the viola, she occasionally plays guitar and sings, though she admits those are side hobbies compared to her primary instrument.

When asked about her favorite string player, she doesn't choose a single name. Instead, she appreciates the diversity of sound and style across many musicians. “I enjoy hearing a variety of players each with their unique playing styles and sounds,” she says – a perspective that reflects both openness and curiosity.

Her next chapter will take her to the University of Kentucky, a school that immediately felt like the right fit. She was drawn to UK's wide range of majors, clubs, and internship opportunities, as well as its ideal location. “It's just close enough to home where I get to grow as an individual but can still come home to see my family,” she shares.

At UK, she plans to participate in the university's orchestra and hopes that minoring in music will continue to shape her as a musician. One of the experiences she cherishes most from high school is playing alongside her teacher – learning, connecting, and truly feeling the music together. Those moments, she says, have been some of her favorites. As she prepares for graduation and the exciting road ahead, her love for the viola remains steady.

With years of dedication behind her and new opportunities waiting, she's ready to keep growing, keep learning, and keep making music.



“When Music Becomes Strength: Celebrating Elowen’s Remarkable Journey”

Elowyn Zito

Some students show dedication. Some show talent. And then there are students like Elowen, who show us what true courage looks like – and remind us how deeply music can heal.

In midNovember 2025, Elowen and her family received news that would change their world: an 11centimeter tumor had been found on her left kidney. A biopsy confirmed it was Wilms Tumor, a form of childhood kidney cancer. The tumor had overtaken the entire kidney, and surgery was the only option. She spent five days at Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital recovering from the removal of her kidney, supported by a team of compassionate nurses and providers.

Recovery was not simple. She needed an epidural for pain, and she experienced reactions to anesthesia that caused real worry. But as soon as the heavy medications lifted, her bright, silly, playful personality began shining through again – a glimpse of the strength that would carry her through the months ahead.

Since that surgery, Elowen has completed six rounds of radiation and four months of chemotherapy, finishing her final treatment on April 21st. Her doctors report that the treatments have been effective, and she is expected to reach full cure status. She will have followup scans at the end of May and one final procedure to remove her implanted port. But here is the part that continues to amaze everyone who knows her:

Through every appointment, every treatment, every moment of uncertainty... Elowen never missed a single lesson. Not one. Week after week, she showed up – sometimes tired, sometimes sore, sometimes fresh from treatment – but always with determination. And in the middle of it all, she stepped onto the recital stage in March and performed with a confidence and joy that moved the entire room.

Music became more than a hobby for her this year. It became a refuge. A steady place. A way to breathe, to focus, to feel normal when everything else felt uncertain. In the quiet moments of practice and the shared moments of lessons, music offered her something powerful: a space where she wasn’t a patient – she was simply Elowen.

Her perseverance has inspired her teachers, her classmates, and her family. Her strength has reminded us all what resilience looks like. And her spirit – steady, joyful, uncomplaining – has been a light through a very difficult season.

We are incredibly proud of Elowen. Proud of her bravery. Proud of her heart. Proud of the way she continues to rise to every challenge placed before her.

She is a remarkable young musician, a remarkable young girl, and a reminder that even in the hardest moments, music has the power to heal, to comfort, and to carry us forward.

