



FEATURED ALUMNI

Alumni Q&A *Adele Etheridge Woodson*

Adele Etheridge Woodson is a classically trained film composer and violinist. She recently completed a documentary starring Dr. Jane Goodall. Adele's music has premiered in New York City, Austria, Los Angeles, Nashville, Phoenix, and Cleveland. She currently works as a composer for a contemporary dance company, in addition to composing, producing and arranging strings for artists around the world.



"Being resilient is not possible without taking care of your body. Rest, eating well, and proper exercise are needed to keep your soul light. I cannot create or write music without my body feeling taken care of. Number one lesson: never feel guilt for taking a rest day."

Tell us about a "failure" or challenge that taught you something valuable.

As an artist (and human), I fail pretty much every day. At ASA, I did not prepare for an orchestra audition properly, and lost my seat to a younger student. That experience not only taught me that I need to be more disciplined, but that I started to find more joy in composing than playing. Perhaps that was the most valuable realization of my time at ASA, and started me on my path towards becoming a film composer.

Share with us an ASA moment or memory that always brings a smile to your face.

Every time I finished a 3rd quarter presentation! Such a great feeling -- knowing I did my best, and I completed a big project!

Creative thinking. Leading. Being globally minded. Which of these resonate with you or remind you of something you learned from ASA, and why?

As a freelance musician, I must constantly be thinking bigger than myself. What art does the world need right now? How can I market myself as a creator? All of these ideas require creativity, imagination, but most of

all -- discipline and a plan. Growing up at ASA meant that all my teachers were encouraging us to think outside of the box, and also held us to a high standard academically and musically. I continue to hold myself to that high standard.

What was an "a-ha" moment with an ASA teacher?



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In the 8th grade, I was taking private violin lessons with the violin teacher at the time, Sadarius Slaughter. I was a young teenager, and *extra* annoying. I did not want to practice, put in the hours at violin. I wanted to quit. To take the easy road. Mr. Slaughter had a real "come to Jesus" moment with me there. He made me really think about why I wanted to quit. Did I really want to? He is the reason I am still playing violin today. Thank you for the tough love!!

How did ASA's "Arts + Smarts" combination help shape where you are today in life?

As a freelancer, my art is also my business. ASA gave me a great musical training, but it also taught me how to write, plan, act. Proper email etiquette, knowing how to budget. The art would not happen without the day-to-day tasks. ASA taught me agency as both an artist and businesswoman.

Let's look back to a memorable (or not-so memorable) moment in the classroom or on stage. What are you thinking of?

When my string teachers (Mrs. Blandino, Mrs. Simiz, and Dr. Schreffler) found out I was interested in composing, they encouraged me to write for the school orchestra! They allowed me an entire class period to conduct and walk the orchestra through my work. That first try at composing will never see the light of day...but we all have to start somewhere, and I'm glad I began in a safe place, with encouraging mentors.

How did that experience help you grow or persevere?

That experience helped me rip the bandaid off. I was no longer just *talking* about composing, I was actually composing! After that experience, I began private composition lessons, which prepared me for composing in college.

What's your message to current ASA students?

No matter what your path in life is, give it your all. Give it all the love, all the discipline, and work hard. You can accomplish anything you set your mind to!