

MEET SAM D'AMICO (BUTI'19,'20)

Meet Sam D'Amico (BUTI'19,'20), a bassoon player and classical singer from Portland, Maine. Sam attended the Bassoon Workshop in 2019 and was planning to attend the Young Artists Vocal Program in 2020. Currently, he is studying as a dual major at Walnut Hill School for the Arts, an independent boarding and day high school offering a transformational educational experience purposefully designed for student artists in grades 9-12.

Why did you choose to attend an arts boarding school?

"Living in Maine, there aren't many opportunities in my area for youth programs in the arts, particularly in classical music, so when I found Walnut Hill, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for." He goes on to explain, "Walnut Hill offers you an arts education that prepares you for whatever challenge comes next and also gives you a community of like-minded people that you know will be with you and support you in whatever you do."

What is the balance between arts and academics at Walnut Hill School for the Arts?

"Walnut Hill offers an academic program that could rival many private schools, in my opinion. Not only is the faculty talented and highly qualified, but our small class sizes and highly specialized teachers help create an environment that nourishes growth in all areas." Sam explains how important academics are in his life and wanted to make sure that he would still be challenged at Walnut Hill. "So far my classes at Walnut Hill have challenged me and prepared me in ways that had far exceeded my expectations. Not only are the classes in depth and extend the full range of concepts and topics, but they also offer all of the standard academic classes you would expect to see at any other school."

Why did you choose to attend BUTI?

"I knew I wanted a program where I could both study and further myself in my craft while also having the opportunity to explore and watch professionals to find more inspiration, and that's exactly what BUTI was: a place where I could better myself while being able to listen to the BSO and get even more inspired by them."

How do you think your time at Walnut Hill School for the Arts prepared you for BUTI?

"Walnut Hill showed me what focusing on music really means, and what it means to be in a community of people with the same goal. At Walnut Hill, I've not only grown as a musician, but also as a person who can appreciate art and value others' work in different areas of art."

What was your favorite part of BUTI?

"Within a couple days my whole studio became like one giant family. From meals to hikes to trips to Walmart, we did everything together, and it helped foster a space where when we were in classes I felt safe to make mistakes and ask questions, and I knew everyone there would support me no matter what I did, which was an amazing feeling."

How has BUTI and Walnut Hill School for the Arts helped you grow?

"I think more than just musically, BUTI and Walnut Hill have helped me grow into a person who can better understand the arts and support them. When I think of what it means to be an artist, I'm constantly reminded from my time at BUTI and Walnut Hill that being an artist isn't just about your own performance."

Advice to students interested in attending an Arts Boarding School?

"My advice would be to keep looking no matter how unrealistic it seems. Walnut Hill and other schools like it aren't as far away and crazy as it might seem, so I would just recommend that anyone interested apply, because without applying you'd never know if it was actually possible."

Since BUTI, Sam has further explored the realm of vocal music and was cast as Orpheus in Walnut Hill's production of "Orpheus in the Underworld". He has also been arranging pieces for bassoon quartets and is starting his own vocal quartet at school.