

Meet Trailblazer Fellow, Isabelle

[Violin music]

ISABELLE: Today we are in Elstad Lutheran Church. My great-great-grandfather helped build this church. This is where I had my first concert at five years old and it's where I will have my graduation recital.

[Isabelle playing violin]

ISABELLE:

When I really know a piece and it just flows out of me, it's an incredible feeling. It's just ink on a page. It's just a wooden box. It's just horsehair going across the strings. And yet for me to bow the strings and place my fingers carefully and create something out of nothing is incredible.

My name is Isabelle. I live on a farm. I'm the sixth generation to work this land. My favorite thing is walking outside on a crisp early morning and just smelling the aroma of farm life. My precious dog will come bounding up. I can hear cows bellowing in the distance. If it's the summer there are crickets chirping in the background as well. To work this land, to go out there in a tractor or combine or cut hay, bale it, rake it. Whatever needs to be done. A lot of these things might sound like chores, like you have to go outside and clean up the muck, but it really is a joy for me.

My parents have been vitally important to my journey as a musician, as a farmer, and as an individual. They've driven me to lessons. Currently piano lessons are an hour South and violin lessons are two and half hours North, opposite directions, and yet they're so willing to invest all this time and energy into me. I plan to use my grant to go to college to study violin and piano performance, then to come back and set up a studio so that children can come learn how to play the violin and the piano.

One of my favorite things about playing my instruments is the ability to look back and see how far I've come and having that freeing sense of ability to be able to create something out of nothing. To breathe and feel and convey human emotion. When music changes, society changes. And when society changes, music changes. If you watch the flow of music, you watch it through history. You'll come to see a greater purpose for music in our lives. It teaches you hard work. It teaches you cooperation and teamwork. It's a lifelong endeavor. So too is playing one instrument, let alone two. And music will always be with me throughout my entire life. My name is Isabelle and I am an Ann Bancroft Foundation Trailblazer Fellow. Imagining something bigger means to me to go further with my music, to really develop my purpose as a musician.