

# Youth Artist of the Month



## Sandra Hagen

My name is Sandra Hagen and I am a senior at Coronado High School in the Westside of Colorado Springs. I am 18 and I have been singing in different choirs for 10 years.

I like classical music because it tells stories that have been told a lot, but every retelling is unique. These stories have been passed down through generations and it's very special to be able to pass them along. The music takes you away and drives how you're feeling and every performance portrays a different emotion. Even the same song can mean ten thousand different things depending on the performance.

Singing and music has always been a part of my life. It has shaped me into the person that I am today, and I don't know who I would be if I didn't have music. In general, I am very shy. I tend to hide behind the thoughts of others to avoid conflict, and form opinions that will please people. Often, I feel as though I am looked over in a crowd, and no one will listen to what I really have to say. When I sing, that insecurity disappears, and a confident young woman starts to shine through. Over the years, I have discovered that singing clears out the negativity in my life, helps me to shine bright among my peers, and brings out the best version of myself. I am the most confident when I am belting out one of my favorite songs in front of a huge crowd because, in that moment, I know they are listening, and I no longer feel overlooked. In short, singing has changed my life for the better. It has opened doors for me that I thought would be forever closed, helped me to form some of the greatest friendships of my life, and given me a voice when I felt no one would listen.

Throughout my 13 years of being a student in District 11, I have worked with incredible teachers and mentors both within and outside of different art programs. Starting with Ms. Meyers at Trailblazer elementary, she was who first introduced me to choir and recommended me to the Colorado Springs Children's Chorale, an organization I still perform with today and opened many doors for me. She first showed me ways to improve on my skills and taught me how to grow. Mr. Fowler at Holmes Middle School allowed me to sing solos at different band concerts which grew my confidence and helped me fall in love with performing. Finally, Mr. Hodur at Coronado High School provided me with all the tools I needed in order to thrive in my musical capabilities. He not only taught me the inner workings of songs through theory and Italian terms, but he also taught me the true meaning of music. With every lesson my love for music grew, and I realized that it is okay to pursue your passions and dreams in life. All three of these faculty members have made such a difference in my life, and I would not be where I am today without them.

There are so many people in my life that have inspired me and supported me throughout my journey. Most importantly, my parents. They have inspired me to always go after what I love, and they have pushed me to do the best I can both academically and musically. My dad is one of the main reasons why I fell in love with music. Ever since I was a baby he would play guitar for my sister and I in the living while we would dance around to the songs we now know by heart. Without these precious moments in my life, I can't even imagine how my musical journey might be different. I also look up to my older sister who has always been a part of music as well. I have always wanted to do everything she has, so naturally, everyone knew that when she joined the choir I wouldn't be too far behind. She is my best friend, and I am so thankful that she led me to find my greatest passion in life. Lastly, I am inspired by my amazing directors that I have had throughout the years. They have pushed me to become the best musician possible, and with every note correction, dynamic shift, and theory lesson, I became stronger. All these people have inspired me each and every day, and I am forever grateful for all of them.

