Spotlight: Katia Waxman

Katia is a clarinetist who has attended Apple Hill for many years and is currently a student at Oberlin.

Tell us how you first became involved with Apple Hill.

I first came to Apple Hill in 2012, when I was 13 years old. I had started playing clarinet a few years ago in a public after-school band program. I was getting antsy for new peers, teachers, and opportunities so my mom perused the Internet looking for chamber music programs that accommodated a wide range of ages and abilities. I knew virtually nothing about Apple Hill when I first rode up the dirt road, but after ten short days I was absolutely addicted. I’ve only missed one summer since, and now I’m 21!

What are you doing now? What is it like?

I’m currently a third-year double degree student at Oberlin College and Conservatory in Ohio, studying clarinet performance and economics. An average day here includes a lot of individual practice, rehearsing with ensembles of all shapes and sizes, going to classes as diverse as “The Artist and the Public Intellectual” or “A History of Black Incarceration in America,” going for runs in the nature preserve, cooking and hanging out with my friends, and drinking way too much chai tea. It’s a healthy combination of challenging, rewarding, and exhausting!

In the summers, I split my time between visiting family back in Chicago where I grew up and studying at various music festivals. But I always save the best for last, usually arriving at Apple Hill in early August.

How has what you learned at Apple Hill helped you in what you do now?

Apple Hill is the place where I come to recharge my batteries and gather the confidence and inspiration to carry me through another year of conservatory studies. Apple Hill always reminds me that music is about giving, listening, compromising, being vulnerable, taking big risks, and giving 200 percent all the time. Apple Hill always reminds me that being humble and confident are not mutually exclusive things, and that a performance can be well-prepared and still spontaneous and exciting.

Also, Apple Hill taught me that the best way to get to know people from all corners of the world is through music. While music as the universal language is a total cliche, it’s also unwaveringly true! I have friends and mentors from all over the world thanks to Apple Hill. Apple Hill has expanded my cultural understanding just as much as it has helped my musical learning.
Can you tell us about one of your favorite Apple Hill memories?

I can’t tell you about just one, but I’ll mention a few.

- Inspirational coachings with my favorite faculty members
- Long runs to Silver Lake for an afternoon swim
- Sitting on the porch with a cup of tea, talking with friends late into the night (or the early morning!)
- Once I became a counselor, I loved watching my kids experience their first ‘Apple Hill is a special place’ moment. Apple Hill fully embraced me for the artist and person that I am and to watch other young people experience that love and acceptance for the first time is priceless.