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Lifetime

In a career that requires hours of isolated practice, New Yorker Sharon Roffman relies on a close circle of friends to keep her going.



sharon roffman

secret: develop a thick skin

Last year, Sharon Roffman, a 25-year-old violinist in New York City, became one of three winners of the prestigious, international Naumburg violin competition. A single concert, basically a runoff held in New York City, would decide whether she would be placed first, an honor that would help make her career as a soloist.

Sharon placed third in the competition. Naturally, she was disappointed, but she didn't let it drag her down. Though she's young, she's been through this sort of thing a lot. "I have a vision in my head of how I want the music to sound," she says. "If, on any given day, I don't achieve that vision, it's not because I'm wrong, or a bad violinist or a stupid person. It's because I wasn't, at that time and place, physically able to embody my musical ideas."

As a child, Sharon excelled on the violin, impressing teachers and winning competitions. After years of conservatory training, she was chosen to study with world-famous violinist Itzhak Perlman. She now concertizes, teaches, and plays chamber music in the summer.

Sharon's musical convictions were shaped by her mother, Dorothy Roffman, a violin teacher and music school founder, who let Sharon do things her own way. "I didn't like to practice when she was in the house," says Sharon. Like many women with strong parents, her self-esteem was strengthened by pushing off against her mom.

Sharon says she's learned a lot from listening to others. "When you're striving for a career as an artist, you know that you can always be better. I think arrogance is unfounded," Sharon says. "Confidence comes from an awareness of both what you believe in and what you know you still have to work on. Anything else I don't believe is sincere."

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a lot when she was growing or took them to New York, her parents were Bolivian h. Because they traveled arly how to meet people, herself with new places, and e of her confidence. After any times, she began to feel feel like I'm interesting and o want to get to know me," I can just move on."

two daughters, Miriam is Birmingham, Michigan. For however, she lived in the d took a job overseas. For overwhelmed her. She had it tough to get around and

me, Miriam forced herself rching band, studied voice, sorts of things she'd never

erved Miriam well when er more than three years was born in England during ad. Since she'd worked for ger for Blue Cross Blue ire how to handle being a ted figuring out a place for lved in the neighborhood and the newcomers' club. nto the world and gain a ifferent lifestyles than my ice had a second daughter, e touchstones you have—t—the more centered and ome."