

Deanna Choi, student and violinist

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Deanna Choi, at Koerner Hall in Toronto, received the gold medal for violin performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music .

A degree in music would have been the natural choice for Deanna Choi (Artsci '14), who recently received the gold medal for performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) as the top violin student in the program in Canada. Ms Choi, however, decided to pursue a psychology major and keep violin as the activity that balances her life.

"I wanted music to be the thing that keeps me sane," she says. "Violin defined me for a while but it isn't the only thing I want to do."

A violinist since age five, Ms Choi also recently became an associate of the RCM, which is its highest recognition and requires students complete 10 grade levels in performance and several theory examinations. Leading up to these exams and major performances, Ms Choi practiced up to three hours a day.

Thoughtful and composed, Ms Choi was accepted to McGill University's music program, but decided to

stay in Kingston, her hometown. She wants to take advantage of everything Queen's offers, and this year, she's put playing the violin on the back burner as she explores other interests, such as the swing club and drama, which is her minor. She also volunteers in a neuroscience lab, helped run an after-school literacy program, and is working on a fundraiser for Prevention through Empowerment, a program run by Dr. Karen Yeates, a nephrologist at Queen's, that provides support to a women's centre in Tanzania.

Violin will remain a large part of her life, but now that the RCM exams are behind her, Ms Choi says she will play more for her own enjoyment. She has played with the Kingston Symphony since 2008 and will continue with the orchestra, playing several concerts this spring and summer.

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