

## Eastside High vocalists named to national honor choir

When 281 of the nation's top high school vocalists gather in Orlando at the end of November, two Eastside High School students will be among them.

Junior Shreya Pathak and senior Rena Cohen have been selected for the 2017 All-National Honor Ensemble Mixed Choir, which is organized annually by the National Association for Music Education. They will spend several days rehearsing under the direction of noted composer and conductor Dr. Z. Randall Stroope before performing at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort.

To be eligible for the Honor Ensemble, Pathak and Cohen, both sopranos, had to qualify at the state level. They then submitted audition videos, competing against students nationwide for a spot in the choir. According to the Association's website, students chosen to participate are "the nation's most elite high school musicians."

"I was pretty shocked," said Cohen. "I really didn't think I had much of a chance, and certainly my video wasn't perfect, but it was a lot of fun."

"I was surprised," said Pathak. "I didn't really think I would get in because it's such a big honor, but I'm really happy about it."

This is the second straight year that an Eastside choral student has been selected for this honor. In 2016 then-senior Patrick Rao performed with the All-National Honor Ensemble Mixed Choir. Eastside choral director Diana Rollo says she's thrilled to have students who have both the talent and the willingness to perform at such a high level.

"I can't ask for more than that as a teacher," said Rollo. "I know they love music, that it's a huge part of their lives and that it will stay a part of their lives."

In fact, Cohen and Pathak have been making music for most of their lives. Besides singing, they both play an instrument—Cohen the violin and Pathak the piano. Back in elementary school, they actually performed together during a summer musical program. Both girls say they are looking forward to making music together as part of the National Honor Ensemble.

"It's going to be great," said Pathak. "I'm excited, because Rena is super-talented and it's an honor to work with her."

"I'm looking forward to meeting people from other schools, but it's so good to have someone there I know, and Shreya is so much fun to be around," said Cohen.

"It makes me happy to see that not only do they love to sing together, but they like being around each other too," said Rollo.



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