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learn the drum kit instead and I'll be doing music lessons.' I did that until I joined band in grade school," Morrill said.

Morrill returned to piano at age 12 after being inspired by her sister Sophia, who regularly printed out chord charts to learn basic chords. At the time, Morrill didn't understand the sheets so she printed off one of her favorite songs to see if she could follow it.

"I was like, 'Wait, this is so much fun' because I do my own thing and the charts provide the foundation. I can go off and improvise," Morrill said. "I wasn't constricted by sheet music and classical music, which I both love. It's really freeing to be able to do my own thing."

From there, Morrill worked on honing her piano skills. In high school, she started transferring her skills to other instruments. She also started writing her own compositions.

"It became less about reading sheet music and more about what I could create inside my own head as opposed to what others had already created. I took songs and put my own spin on them," Morrill said. "I've grown into it."

### The writer

"As a kid, my sisters and I would



Isabella Morrill plays piano inside Bridgewater Bistro.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

always play little melodies on the piano," Morrill said. "I always thought, 'What if one day I could write a piece like Beethoven?'"

In 2019, Morrill won co-state champion in the high school division of the Oregon Music Education Association state

music composition contest. She is the first Warrenton High School student to win the award, which is the association's highest individual honor for students.

In December, the Columbia River Symphony performed Morrill's composition, "Hymn to the Rain," in the Liberty The-

atre. The piece honors Morrill's classmate, the late Timothy Pior, who died in March 2019 from flu complications.

"Hearing my music be transferred to other people and how they're able to express it the way I want them to was humbling and amazing," Morrill said.

Since "Hymn to the Rain" was performed, Morrill has worked with the symphony's director, Cory Pederson, and her music teacher, Michael McClure, on other pieces. Other topics explored by her compositions include a piece in honor of her Jewish background and another for those affected by 9/11.

"I'm hoping to bring all of these things into college with me and implement them into my career. My main love is composing," Morrill said. "One of my goals in the far future is to make film scores."

Morrill plans on attending Western Oregon University in the fall to follow her dream and study music composition.

"I've learned to never give up on music. You might think that it's something that's not for you but music touches everybody in so many different ways," Morrill said. "I've always worried that my music wasn't good enough to be out in the world, then I realized it's healing for people to hear music. If you have that gift, to write or make music in any sort of way, don't hide it."



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