



Elise

Second Runner-Up (tied) U.S.A.

It was a family game of Rock Band on Father's Day years ago that stirred up the drumming passion in Elise. When her turn came to play the drummer, she gave it a shot — and refused to give up the throne for the rest of the day. “I was instantly hooked and harassed my parents into finding a drum teacher for me to begin the real thing,” she says.

Today, Elise rocks out, but also looks to drumming as a source of meditation and relaxation. For her HLAG entry she chose a premade track labeled as a jazz song. But she flipped it by rearranging the backbeat to the 3, and created a funkier arrangement. “A lot of what I did was improvise after playing along with the song for a while,” she says.

Elise often encounters those who hold stereotypes of girl musicians. Over the years fellow musicians assumed she was a singer rather than a drummer. “I’m constantly underestimated,” she says. “I appreciate how HLAG opens up minds to the fact that musical talent is not gender-specific. I always exceed expectations, which are often set painfully low by male musicians.”