

ARTS+LEISURE

The Addison Independent

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Music students met and took lessons on Zoom at Leicester's Camp Point CounterPoint this summer, and many hope to attend the camp on the shores of Lake Dunmore in person next summer.

Local summer music camp succeeds online

A

BY **ROSE
EVANS**

nyone who's used to spending time on Lake Dunmore during past summers may have noticed that the lake sounds a little quieter this year. The classical music typically emanating from the Camp Point CounterPoint (PCP) music school, a staple of

the lake since 1963, is no longer being played — at least not in-person. But Jenny Beck, PCP co-owner

and director since 2008, and her faculty and staff are still finding ways to deliver an online music camp experience that's just as committed to being musically rigorous and socially gratifying.

The idea for an online music camp was

floated in May, when it became clear that an in-person experience wasn't going to be safe or musically viable. "Because we do chamber music, we're constantly sitting really close together," explained Beck. "So, it just wasn't possible to do that six feet apart. We don't even have the space."

While most other music camps have had to cancel outright, Beck saw an opportunity to move camp operations online, especially following in the footsteps of some other creative adjustments to the pandemic. "Just as school had gone remote, we thought that maybe we could do music remotely," she said. "We had also started to see videos from national orchestras finding ways to still perform."

At first, Beck and other faculty members were worried that PCP campers, ranging in age from seven to 18 years old, would be too fatigued from finishing online school or too skeptical of the online music experience to enroll. Another concern was balancing the need to use online platforms such as Zoom for music lessons and the desire to get kids off their screens and outside. Keeping this in mind, PCP sought to provide, according to Beck, "both a robust chamber music program, as well a traditional camp experience with as many of the PCP traditions as we possibly could."

And it appears that faculty and campers alike were pleasantly surprised. "We were afraid kids weren't gonna sign up, but I think the desire to be together and play chamber music

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Contest invites kids to play with their food

University of Vermont Extension 4-H is sponsoring an Edible Art Contest this summer to inspire kids, 8 to 18, to get creative with their food. There is no fee to enter and enrollment in 4-H is not required. Participants may enter all five categories, though only one entry is permitted per category.

Entries will be evaluated on artistry, individuality and creativity, with feedback provided. The winners in each category will receive special recognition. Participants must take a photo of their entry and email it to rosemarie.garritano@uvm.edu by 11:59 p.m. on Aug. 10. Each entry must be submitted in a separate email and include name, age and hometown in the body of the email. Categories include:

Food on the Vine (or Shelf): For this category, kids may take a photo of vegetables or fruits that are either still growing in a garden, field or orchard or that have been harvested but not yet prepared for serving.



Silly/Fun Food: Kids are invited to decorate a ready-to-eat food, such as a rice cake or waffle, with other foods, or alternatively, may use food to create a picture or work of art.



Cake Decorating: This category showcases the cake decorating talents and artistry of the exhibitor. Any size or type of cake may be decorated.

Main Course or Dessert Plating: Participants are asked to submit a photo of a meal or dessert that they have artistically arranged on a plate. Everything (except the plate) must be edible. The presentation should take color, texture and patterns of different foods and sauces into consideration to create a visually pleasing arrangement.

Food Prints or Tie Dye: Kids can put their artistic skills to work using fruits and vegetables to make either prints or dyes to decorate a sheet of paper, a T-shirt or other item.

For more information, head online to go.uvm.edu/edible-art. To request a disability-related accommodation to participate, contact Rose Garritano at rosemarie.garritano@uvm.edu or (802) 651-834, ext. 505, by July 31.

MUSIC

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and do the campy stuff that we always do was just too great, and they had to join!" Beck said.

Usually, PCP has between 40 and 45 campers at a time, in one-week and two-week sessions at the Leicester facility. This summer they've had almost 120 campers sign up online, including campers from across the country and world — another perk of the online program. The group is comprised of around half returning students, some of which have been attending PCP for five years or more, and half new campers, which was particularly surprising to Beck, who was impressed at kids' risk-taking to join a new camp program online.

Musically, the camp was able to offer chamber coaching, private music lessons, elective music courses, and even a virtual final performance mirroring the final performance that is the pinnacle of the in-person camp experience.

Each day, after their classes and lessons online, students would record the individual pieces they were assigned, with a metronome to keep rhythm, and then send it to a PCP tech employee, who would then stitch the various parts together and send the complete performance to the music coaches. This was a challenge for the campers, who would have to get through the recording without messing up, or start again from the beginning. However, the result was a final concert streamed via Facebook Events or over Zoom.

SEE CAMP ON PAGE 3

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CAMP

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Another benefit of the online program was that the final event was less centralized, and as a

result, explained Beck, "We had the time to be able to focus on some things that we wouldn't normally focus on." For example, PCP offered a variety of elective courses "outside the typical range of what we do." These included a movement class to show musicians how to hold their bodies, a music and math class, and a history of Black composers class. This resulted in about three hours a day online doing music.

In addition to PCP's music component, the camp is also focused on providing a social outlet for kids as it normally would. Each day, there were multiple social activities, which were optional in case campers needed down time in order to avoid burning out from the screen time. But what Beck found was that the activities were heavily attended and anticipated by the campers.

"We were shocked by how engaged the campers were, from start to finish."

These social activities included a lunchtime gathering, which usually had a question or theme of the day, an outdoor challenge at 2 p.m., and an 8 p.m. evening activity. The nightly activities were particularly beloved. They ranged from old traditions — for example, the PCP Cabaret/Talent Show and the PCP Olympics — to new ones, such as silent discos and virtual escape rooms. For one virtual campfire, PCP mailed care packages to each camper including a tea candle and mini marshmallows.

This level of innovation was, of course, a great deal of work for the music directors, faculty and counselors, who Beck remained committed to employing throughout the summer, despite the fact that her revenue from the online program was less than 10% what it is in person. "Everything was new, everything had a learning curve, everything was something we had never done before," she said.



The music of violins and other classical instruments that normally emanates from Jenny Beck's Camp Point CounterPoint on Lake Dunmore each summer has been silenced by coronavirus. But Beck and friends devised an online summer music camp that is offering some new activities that a traditional summer camp can't.

INDEPENDENT PHOTO/ALEXA LAPINER

Fortunately, most of the more than 50 musicians working at PCP had had some experience with working online since the pandemic, and most of the counselors, who were employed before the pandemic and most of whom were able to stay with PCP for the

summer, are college students who were familiar with the online platforms.

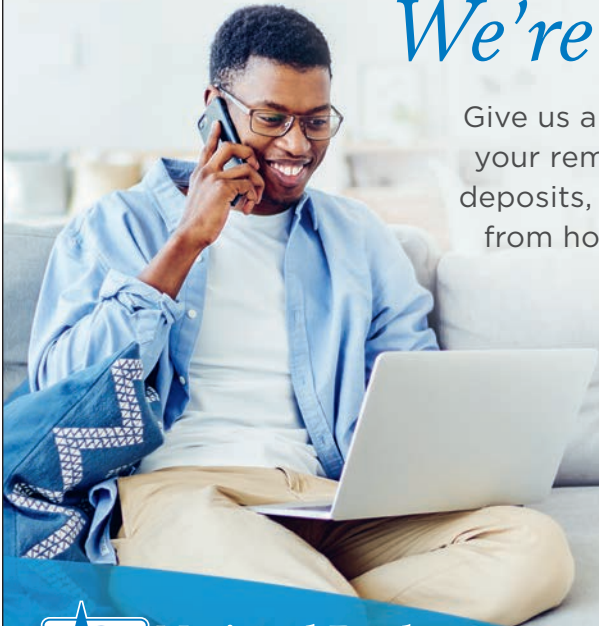
The result was a unique camp experience cherished by the campers. Beck recalled that many campers cried at the final ceremony of each session, stating that they didn't want camp to end. One international camper who had never attended PCP before really enjoyed this unusual summer camp: "I am so thankful for the opportunity to study with such an amazing faculty during these two weeks. I loved everything! The classes, the games, the conversations . . . everything!"

Another new camper emphasized that "PCP is less about the place and more about the people."

Beck is proud of the sessions PCP has completed so far and looks forward to the rest of the sessions this summer, including an adult program in August. She also looks forward to next summer. "I'm on Lake Dunmore right now, and we've given virtual campus tours to students in hopes that next summer, they'll be able to say, 'Oh, that's what that looks like!'" she said. "Our goal is to have kids walking around barefoot with their violins over their arms and sitting in the bunks together, having a wonderful time."

Hopefully, next summer, the lake will be alive with music again.

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