

WKSA Summer Newsletter

July 25, 2006

Alternative Strings Camp a Great Success!

Congratulations to all the students and staff who participated in WKSA's first Alternative Strings Camp. Thirty-two students signed up, ranging in age from 6 to 17 years old and hailing from Hays, Dodge City, Rexford, Monument, Salina, Lindsborg, and Plainville. Students learned fiddling, jazz, and Mariachi music, experimented with electric instruments, learned to play by ear, improvised solos, played games, broke piñatas, listened to a jazz combo, and performed three concerts (including an opening act at the Wild West Festival). Students continue to work through the summer, preparing for a performance at the Hays Gallery Walk in late August. Special thanks to all our sponsors for helping make it happen: The Mockingbird Foundation, Knilling Violins, Yamaha Strings, Midwest Energy Community Fund, Shar Music, Midwest Music Inc, Wal-Mart, and Dillons. Plans are afoot to repeat camp next summer, possibly expanding it to a daylong or overnight event!

Summer String Orchestra To Perform July 31st

The WKSA Summer String Orchestra, under the direction of Shelly Wolf, has been having fun the month of July playing such pieces as "Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space," "The Toreador Song," "Shades of Blue," and other light music. You are invited to come hear their ending concert on Monday, July 31st, 7pm in Room 115 of Malloy Hall (Palmer Auditorium).

You're Never Too Old!

This July eight students participated in WKSA's adult beginner violin class, taught by Lianne Zwenger. A mixture of group classes and private lessons, the students have been learning the basics of holding the instrument, playing simple tunes, and having a lot of fun!

Hays Gallery Walk Performers Needed

WKSA has arranged to perform at two locations—Emprise Bank and Union-Pacific Park—during the Hays Gallery Walk on Friday, August 25th, starting around 6:30pm. Like last year's performance, we're inviting all WKSA students who want to play a solo, duet with a friend, etc to come and play in this casual, laid-back atmosphere. (Various students from the Alternative Strings camp will also be playing.) If you've taken it easy this summer, this is a great excuse to get back into the swing of regular practice, maybe even contact your private teacher for help selecting a song. If you have a piece you'd like to share (any style music), please let Cathy Drabkin (623-4187; cadrabkin@fhsu.edu) know by August 20th.

Lianne Zwenger Receives Additional Suzuki Certification

Congratulations to WKSA staff member Lianne Zwenger who became certified in Book II of Suzuki this summer. Last year Lianne was sponsored by WKSA to become certified in Book I. This year Lianne received a \$750 scholarship from the National Music Teachers Association to attend the week-long Suzuki Institute in Ottawa, KS. Suzuki is an international teaching method/program that focuses on teaching string students from a very young age using the "mother-tongue approach". The ideas of parent involvement, listening to and singing music, frequent repetition, encouragement of all progress, group learning, a graded repertoire, and delayed reading to develop technical competence are all components of the approach. The method has a strong focus on learning through play, and Lianne is sure to use much of what she's learned in her Pre-Orchestra class this year.

Goodbye Luke!

As many of you know, Luke Johnson moved from Hays to accept a job in Kansas City this summer. Luke is a talented teacher, and we are all are sorry to see him leave! We wish him the best in his new endeavors!

New Guitar Teacher(s)

We are pleased to announce that WKSA staff member Jordan Bollig will be serving as our new Group Guitar Instructor and private guitar teacher for this year. Jordan, who served as our string bass instructor and rehearsal assistant last year, has played guitar and performed with various bands over the years, and is looking forward to this new project. Depending on student demand this fall, we may be offering Guitar I and Guitar II

(basically beginner and advanced beginner levels) from 10 to 11 am on Saturday mornings. Students who participated in WKSA's spring guitar classes will have priority enrollment over new students. All students wishing to move into Guitar II will need to audition with a short solo for our instructors on the first day, September 16th.

New Classes, Ensembles, and Times for this YEAR!

You asked – so here it is! In response to student/parent surveys, to keep our program exciting, and to take advantage of staff skills and interests, we're making the following program and schedule changes for this year.

1. All orchestra rehearsals and group guitar classes will begin at 10am on Saturday mornings. Rehearsal lengths will stay the same.
2. From 9-10am every Saturday morning, we're offering a smorgasbord of half-hour "exploratory" classes and ensembles for students to sign up for. The Fall line-up will include the following: Fiddling I, Fiddling II, Jazz I, Jazz II, Basic Music Skills, Computer Composing, Movies and Music, Dramatic Sound-Stories, and Famous Composers. Students can choose to sign up for one or two classes, depending on interests and desired time commitment. (Some classes will require a basic skill level to participate.) Descriptions of all the classes will be included in the fall enrollment packet. Chamber Ensembles will continue to be offered, as a one-hour option, during the same time frame.
3. Juries for the fall will be run in a recital format, with students performing for their peers, family, and friends. These will most likely be divided up on an orchestra/group basis, and will include staff solos. More details will follow as we get it all scheduled.

These changes are all an experiment—we'll try it for a year, see how it goes, solicit your feedback, and adjust as necessary!

First Day of WKSA—Saturday, September 16th

Mark your calendars for the start of the WKSA Fall season—Saturday, September 16th. Registration packets will be sent out during the first part of August, with a requested return date of September 4th. If you know of someone we should invite to join WKSA, give me a call and I'll send them a packet too!

First Day's Schedule:

8:30am Auditions (to be scheduled)

10:00am Mandatory parent and student meeting, Malloy Hall, Room 115

10:30am All groups rehearse

11:30am Welcome Back Picnic

Welcome New WKSA Staff

We're pleased to be welcoming the following new WKSA faculty/artists to our staff this fall!

Ben Morris-Cline, FHSU's Instructor of Cello and Bass, will be helping us every Saturday morning, leading the Beginner orchestra in the fall, coaching chamber ensembles, advising staff on instructional issues, and co-teaching the staff Pedagogy Class with Matt Means.

Cody Custer, incoming freshman music major and violist from Hays will be working with the Pre-Orchestra and other classes.

Alex Heisler, incoming freshman music major and cellist from Hutchison will be working with the Beginner Orchestra and other classes.

Trevor Duell, senior music major and trumpet player from Salina will be teaching some of our new Exploratory Hour classes.

Opening Day Picnic—Volunteers Needed

To kick off the fall WKSA season, we'd like to host a Welcome Back picnic for all students, their families, and staff. Volunteers are needed to help plan and organize this event. The picnic could be a combination of potluck, donated food, and purchased items (we have a small budget to help cover the main costs), either on

the FHSU grounds or at a nearby park. Lots of ideas and options, but we need some help pulling it all together. If you can help, please contact Cathy Drabkin (623-4187; cadrabkin@fhsu.edu)

WKSA Director Assignments for this Fall

Advanced Orchestra—Matt Means
Intermediate Orchestra—Shelly Wolf
Beginner Orchestra—Ben Morris-Cline, Shawn Demuth, and Alex Heisler
Pre-Orchestra—Lianne Zwenger and Cody Custer
Guitar Classes--Jordan Bollig

Fall Solo Contest Dates Set

We are again hosting the WKSA Solo Competition this fall, when students are encouraged to play a solo before our judge for a chance to perform (the same piece) as a soloist with the Advanced Orchestra in the spring. Like last year, all students who participate in the first level of the competition will receive a prize, and will be entered into a drawing for a \$25 Hastings gift certificate. Four students, one each from the Beginner, the Intermediate, the Advanced orchestras and from the Guitar II class, will be selected to perform with the Advanced Orchestra in the spring.

November 4th First Level of Competition—Solo may be played with or without music
March 3rd Performance with Advanced Orchestra—Solo must be played by memory

Last year's winners may participate in the first level of the competition, but may not win a performance with the Advanced Orchestra two years in a row. All participating students must be WKSA members in good standing. All Solo winners must be able to commit to the date of the Advanced Orchestra performance in March! Registration forms will be given out in September. In the meantime, start thinking about (and practicing!) the solo you'd like to play!

WKSA Receives Another D'Addario Grant

We're pleased to announce that the D'Addario Foundation for the Performing Arts has awarded WKSA a \$1,000 grant for general support of our 2006-07 activities. This is the second year for WKSA to receive the award. In addition to the grant, D'Addario has given WKSA a \$500 credit to be used for D'Addario products! (D'Addario is the maker of fretted and bowed instruments strings and various musical instrument accessories.) The D'Addario grant represents one of several sources of outside income that WKSA will seek this year to support our Saturday morning programs.

Parent Committees for Fall

WKSA staff is doing a lot, but we've discovered we can't do it all! We need your help with some of the non-teaching activities of WKSA. We'll be sending around a sign-up sheet in the fall, but if you know you have an interest in any of the following, please let me know now!

Snack Shack Coordinator—Purchase snack items for the WKSA Snack Shack, sign-up parent workers, restock supplies as necessary.

Socials Committee—Help plan and organize various WKSA socials, including picnics, holiday parties, etc.

Program Ads Sales Coordinator—Help coordinate ad sales for our Winter/Spring Concert programs

Spring Tour Committee—Help plan the big tour...concert options, recreation/entertainment activities, lodging and food options, etc.

Hope everyone is finding a way to stay cool for the rest of the summer! Please let me know if you have any questions/concerns about any of the above. We're looking forward to a great season!

Cathy Drabkin
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**Watch your mailbox in early
August for Fall WKSA
Enrollment Forms!**
Please return at your earliest