

Sweet Sounds of Summer

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If music is the universal language, the Worcester Chamber Music Society is on a mission to make their community fluent. In 2006, talented musicians merged to create the WCMS, recognizing that together, they could bring their genre of music to more people. While the musical group is committed to providing excellent chamber music performances to Worcester, they are equally dedicated to nurturing young musicians through educational outreach and training. “You can’t have one without the other,” explains Peter Sulski, the group’s Artistic Director.

Their focus on community outreach led the WCMS to join forces with the QX String Quartet in leading the annual Summer Festival, an intensive chamber music program for dedicated young musicians and amateur adults. Students enjoy a camp-like environment where they spend much of their day in small groups, playing together and being coached by members of WCMS and QX. “The boundaries of age and stereotypes are forgotten here because music is universal,” says Krista Buckland Reisner, Festival Director.

Language connects people—and so does music. Noah Lawes, an 18-year-old cellist, has been inspired by the community he’s found at the Festival. “One of the things that I feel is so amazing,” he says, “is just that we’re all together, actually playing...and it’s so unusual.” This sense of community motivates not only the aspiring musicians, but also the coaches. “You can’t play music with people and have just a surface relationship,” points out Amy Rawstron, a violinist for WCMS.

The members of WCMS recognize the importance of passing on an appreciation of music to new generations. In addition to providing intense coaching and support at Summer Festival, they are also working to bring music into public schools—where budgets have no room for music. During their performing season, the WCMS conducts “open rehearsals” of their concert repertoire for public school students. Rawstron explains, “Kids never hear music that’s complicated anymore. It’s important to go out into the community and teach them to understand those sounds.”

Commitment to community drives the WCMS members. It's why these diverse musicians with worldwide experience have come together—to bring Worcester the gift of quality chamber music. Sulski, a Worcester native, says, “Yes, we need to revitalize downtown—but we are the ones who are revitalizing it.” Worcester seems to be enjoying the sweet sounds of that revitalization. Since its creation, the group has been encouraged by astounding support and steadily-growing audiences.

This year's Summer Festival is wrapping up, with a record turnout under its belt. “We are so excited to see community support for these marvelous young musicians,” says Reisner. But don't worry—if you're anxious to get an earful of these inspiring sounds, you still have a chance. Members of the WCMS and QX String Quartet are performing tonight (Thursday, July 22) at 8 p.m., and the Summer Festival students will play tomorrow (Friday, July 23) at 3 p.m. You can catch both performances at Anna Maria College's Miriam Hall. Tickets for faculty concert are \$20 and can be purchased at the door; student concert is free. worcesterchambermusic.org.