

Local Music Schools Emphasize the Importance of Summer Lessons

By Dennis Bova | June 14, 2024

Summer traditionally is a time for relaxation, recreation and even procrastination – so it can be tough to continue to fit in music lessons. Local music schools remind parents that it is not only wise to keep their children engaged with their instruments over summer, but it also is the best time of year to learn.

“Summer music lessons allow continuous learning and progress and better retention of what’s learned throughout the school year,” said Sarah Schaefer, education coordinator of the Toledo Symphony School of Music. “If you take three months off, there’s a learning curve when you return, and it takes time to get back to where you were. Summer lessons prevent that from happening.”



Ellie Lee, the symphony school’s community engagement coordinator, cited an American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry report that said teens can spend up to nine hours a day on their electronic devices, and that “too much screen time can result in sleep deprivation, less time with family and friends, and developing poor self-image.”

Lee continued, saying that according to the American Suzuki Institute “a way to combat that is picking up an instrument. Through playing an instrument, you build confidence, self-discipline, develop higher IQ levels, reduce stress and spend time with community members. Music is definitely beneficial in summer.”

Virgil Lupu, director of Forte Music School and a violinist, also espoused the benefits of summer lessons.

“Most important is consistency,” he said. “Playing an instrument is not as much based on knowledge but more so on muscle memory and repetition. We don’t take breaks or the summer off for that reason.”

Using a term referring to the loss of knowledge gained over the school year, he said, “We’re preventing the ‘summer slide’ where you can go into regress, then you have to relearn and catch up.”

To stop the slide, Forte Music School and TSSM offer summer classes – in the case of Forte, for the first time; for the symphony school, it’ll be during a relocation.

Forte offers: Beginner Piano, June 10-14; Intro to Percussion, June 17-21; Songwriting, June 24-28; Music Fun Time, July 15-19, and Beginner Violin, July 22-26. All classes are from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Mondays through Fridays.

More information is available at:
<https://www.fortemusicandarts.com/summer-camps.html>

TSSM offers private lessons throughout the summer at its offices in the Professional Building, across from the Toledo Museum of Art on Monroe Street. But this summer the Toledo Alliance for the Performing Arts, of which TSSM is a part, will relocate to the former Masonic Temple adjacent to the Stranahan Theater.

“We anticipate a smooth transition from the Professional Building into the new facility,” Lee said. “Our summer sessions will continue at the Professional Building.”

TSSM’s offerings are: Lecture Series: First Nights, from 7-8 p.m. June 3, 5, 6, 11 and 13; Chamber Music, 7-8 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday, June 10-28; Music Theory Classes, Tuesdays, Thursdays, June 11-27, 5-6 p.m. for students, 6-7 p.m. for adults; Adult Flute Choir, 7-9 p.m. June 12, July 17, Aug. 14 (three separate classes); Student Recorder Classes, Monday through Friday, June 17-28, (three levels); Adult Recorder Classes, Monday through Friday, June 17-28 (two levels); Glass City Summer Strings, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. July 8-13 (two levels); Violin Boot Camp, 4:30-5:30 p.m. July 15-19; Beginning Guitar, 5:35-6:35 p.m. July 15-19, and Strings Fantasy Camp, 6:40-7:40 p.m. July 15-19.

Information, dates, times, fees, and more are at artstoledo.com/tssm-summer.

Schaefer added that in a strong sense, summer is better for learning music than during the school year. “Summer is a great time to focus on practice because there’s more time and fewer distractions,” she said.



Lupu offered a different aspect. “It’s a perfect time to start something new,” he said, “because there’s time to focus.” He added that summer lessons provide students “a booster going into the school year. If they’re starting band or orchestra, they’ll have a head start.”

The overall benefit, Lupu said, “is confidence and self-esteem that gets shaped by these activities.” He said by continuing music lessons over the summer, “the compound effect is that little by little it will create tremendous results.”

