

Midwest Summer Camp Hopes to Foster Leadership

In the woods of Lake Forest, Illinois rests a 140-acre, tree-sheltered campus that offers a summer alternative for young people. But you won't find any Boy Scouts or peppy camp counselors here. Instead, you'll find the home of the Midwest Young Artists (MYA) Chamber Music Camp, now going into its third year.

"It's a summer camp that stresses chamber music," says John Bruce Yeh, wind chamber music coach at MYA, assistant principal clarinet with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and a member of Local 10-208 (Chicago, IL). "But we also have jazz and orchestra instruction, and we cover music theory."

The camp places emphasis on chamber music, says Yeh, not only because there are so few chamber schools in the country, but also because the MYA strongly believes chamber music is important to the education of students. They feel that chamber musicians often have a greater ability to be flexible, due to the changeable nature of the musical work involved and their roles in performing it. Chamber musicians can be leaders if called upon, or they can also respond easily to other leaders. The MYA also believes that musicians with a grounding in chamber playing can go on to become better orchestral musicians and soloists.



Cleveland Orchestra Concertmaster William Preucil of Local 4 (Cleveland, OH) talks MYA students through the finer points of a chamber piece.

The Chamber Music Camp at Lake Forest Academy is becoming one of the premiere chamber music camps in the country for musicians aged 13 to 20. Students are placed into string, brass, woodwind, piano, or percussion ensembles, which are determined by age and ability levels. Students at the camp perform twice during each session with their chamber groups, as well as with the concert or festival orchestra. They perform at Chicago's Ravinia Festival, the Lake Forest Academy Cressy Center for the Arts, and at the annual MYA Concert on the Lawn.

The MYA says the camp aims to provide a place where talented musicians can come to experience music at its finest, participate in the creation of great music, take sonata or baroque classes, and, perhaps most importantly, make life-long friendships. In that vein, music isn't the only pursuit for young camp attendees at Lake Forest Academy. Other recreational activities include ultimate Frisbee, swimming, soccer, basketball, and even an open mic night. The instructors at the Lake Forest Academy, like Yeh, are nationally-known musicians, professional performers, and chamber music experts. They work with every student to help them develop and hone their chamber and solo techniques.

While the MYA Chamber Music Camp doesn't specifically involve the AFM yet, the program aims to change that. "Many of our faculty members are active in the AFM," says Yeh. "This is a fairly young summer program. We hope to be able to involve the union in our program as we increase our visibility." Yeh adds that the program increases in turn the AFM's exposure to younger musicians.

Along with Yeh, some union members slated to be on the 2005 faculty include percussionist Michael Kozakis and trumpeter Bruce Daugherty, both members of Local 10-208. Prominent musicians from around the nation will also be teaching master classes to the students in the 2005 session, including Local 4 (Cleveland, OH) member Concertmaster William Preucil of the Cleveland Orchestra, and cellist Thomas Rosenberg of the Artaria String Quartet, a member of Local 30-73 (St. Paul-Minneapolis, MN).

The goal of everyone involved is to foster a program that accommodates future dedicated amateurs, as well as students who want to create a future for themselves in the highly competitive field of music. Values such as collegial camaraderie, demanding the best of yourself in any task, and mutual respect in a teaching relationship will also be picked up along the way.

—the two-session summer program of Midwest Young Artists runs June 19 to July 16, 2005. Other programs are available. Visit www.mya.org/summer for more information.