

https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wku-summer-strings-camp-back-after-covid-break/article_447d3754-2298-5399-b5b0-11cffa96f341.html

WKU summer strings camp back after COVID break

By MARIIA NOVOSELIA mnovoselia@bgdailynews.com

Jul 22, 2022



A group of students in the Western Kentucky University Summer Strings Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center recital hall on Thursday, July 21, 2022. The students are ranging in ages 4 to 18, and will conclude with a final concert in Van Meter Hall. (Photo by Grace Ramey/photo@bgdailynews.com)

Grace Ramey

Rhythmic applause can be heard this week down the hallway at the Ivan Wilson Center For Fine Arts at Western Kentucky University as 4-year-old children take their first steps in learning how to play the violin as part of the WKU Summer String Institute weeklong program.

The strings program is for those who want to discover or delve deeper into the art of playing the violin, viola, cello and bass. Students range in age from 4 to 18.

Depending on how old they are and how much experience they have, students are divided into two groups: Twinklers for beginners and Young Musicians for elementary through high school students.



“What is amazing about this program is that it can open parents’ eyes to the possibilities of their children’s involvement in music,” said Ching-Yi Lin, one of the institute instructors who is also director of WKU’s Pre-College Strings Program and an associate professor of music at WKU.

Parents do not always know their children can play the violin at such a young age and at a high level until they take part in the program, according to Lin.

One of the special things about the program is that Twinklers are taught using the Suzuki method, which pays a lot of attention to camaraderie, Lin said.

Older students get to learn through master classes from guest instructors from around the United States as well as other countries, said Andrew Braddock, director of the Summer String Institute.

“I feel like we are a little crazy because we put on a whole concert in five days, but everybody always steps up to it,” he said.



The program is a great way for children to experience what it is like to play in an orchestra or just make music for the first time, according to Braddock. For those children who have already been playing musical

instruments, it is an opportunity to “flex those muscles again and meet new friends, conductors and instructors,” he said.

Abby Hill, who is 17 and plays the cello, said she was feeling a bit nervous at first because she had never participated in the program.

“They put me in a great group, and now I am playing in a quartet, and it is very exciting,” Hill said.

Vera Fritz, a 9-year-old who was practicing “El Toro” on her violin, said her favorite part about the program is learning with her friends.

The Summer String Institute has been held annually for more than 10 years, according to Braddock. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the institute was organized as a virtual program in 2020 and was canceled in 2021.

“You can feel it in the air – the excitement of finally being together,” Lin said.

Lin said the program is great for preparing students to enroll in a yearlong string program, which is “more rigorous.” Registration for the yearlong program can be done through the website of WKU’s String Academy at wku.edu/strings.

Mariia Novoselia

