



OFF THE TOPIC

Garth Newel Music Center

Garth Newel Music Center is one of the best-kept secrets in Virginia. Nestled in the Warm Springs Mountains of the Virginia highlands, this 114-acre historic estate has been bringing world-class chamber music to this part of the country since the mid-1970s.

Garth Newel is a Welsh phrase meaning “new hearth” or “new home.” William Sergeant Kendall, chairman of the School of Fine Arts at Yale University, retired in 1924 and built the estate so that he and his wife, Christine, could train Arabian horses, ride, paint and play music. Kendall is a well known artist whose work is in several important museum collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Christine Kendall studied violin as a child but went on to study painting in Paris and

then at Yale. There were many musical evenings in their home with friends, and chamber music has been part of Garth Newel from the start.

Kendall died from injuries sustained in a riding accident in 1938 at the age of 69. In 1972, Christine Kendall met Luca and Arlene DiCecco of the Rowe String Quartet. Luca plays the cello and Arlene the violin. The DiCeccos began a chamber music study program for their students at Garth Newel and started to give concerts on the property. In 1973, Mrs. Kendall and the DiCeccos founded the Garth Newel Music Center. After Mrs. Kendall died in 1981, the DiCeccos devoted themselves to the development of Garth Newel. Under their efforts, the program grew from a handful of concerts each season in the '70s to now



The Garth Newel resident quartet: (L-R) Teresa Ling, Tobias Werner, Misuzu Tanaka and Evelyn Grau. (Photo courtesy of Garth Newel)

Story and Photos
by
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Arlene and Luca DiCecco



Students rehearsing at Garth Newel. (Photo courtesy of Garth Newel)

Every concert is accompanied by an optional gourmet dinner.



more than 50 concerts each year.

Garth Newel boasts its own resident quartet with world-class musicians who, individually or as a group, have performed all over the world. Violinist Teresa Ling joined the quartet in 1998. Ling has served on the faculties of several universities. Her awards included a Rotary Fellowship resulting in an advanced diploma from London's Royal Academy of Music. Tobias Werner joined the quartet in 1999 as the cellist. Werner is also a member of VERGE Ensemble, formerly known as the Contemporary Music Forum, ensemble-in-residence at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. Werner has appeared as soloist with orchestras in the U.S., France, Germany and Romania. Evelyn Grau first came to Garth Newel as a visiting artist and has been violist with the center since 1983. Grau has also performed all over the world. Pianist Misuzu Tanaka was raised in England and Japan. She moved to the United States in 1999 and studied at the Juilliard School. She won first prize in the Poland Music Festival Competition in 2007.

The group is known for its high-energy performance and fresh interpretation of its repertoire. The quartet, aside from providing Garth Newel with top-level musical experiences throughout the year, also offers educational programs for students



Garth Newel provides an inspirational environment for musicians.

from the area and all over the world.

The Summer Chamber Music Fellowship Program is a four-week, intensive chamber music program for string players and pianists ages 18-26. Each participant receives a fellowship award of \$2,500, which covers the cost of tuition, room, and board for four weeks at Garth Newel Music Center. Students are chosen based on their performance and goals. During the program, participants receive individual lessons and coaching at the highest level. They also have opportunities to perform at Garth Newel and surrounding communities.

In 2011, 12 students from six institutions including Boston University, Indiana University, Ithaca College, Peabody Conservatory, Longy School of Music and Northwestern University participated. Jamie Chimchirian is a violinist who is studying for a master degree at Boston University. "I loved being able to play chamber music all day long with other people who enjoyed playing chamber music in a beautiful environment," said Chimchirian. At their final concert on August 7, works of Mendelssohn, Bartok, and Brahms were performed.

Another project involving young people is the Allegheny Mountain String Project (AMSP). Led by Jaime Letourneau and Gretta Sandberg, it brings comprehensive string instrument education to the Allegheny Highlands. Letourneau was a former student of the Summer Fellowship program and Sandberg has been an elementary and high school orchestra director for 42 years. AMSP offers violin, viola and cello lessons as well as the Allegheny Mountain String Orchestra, the first area youth orchestra. An important component of the AMSP is the inclusion of American music such as folk songs and fiddle tunes for early instruction.

Today, Garth Newel offers a complete aesthetic experience. The indoor riding ring has been transformed into a concert hall with excellent acoustics. Each concert is accompanied by an optional gourmet meal prepared by guest chefs who create menus to complement the music of the evening. Chef Ed McArdle, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, works with Chef Alice Westfall to prepare meals that include local produce. For travelers, accommodations are available in the manor house, a three-story building reminiscent of

a European hunting lodge. The home is eligible for Virginia and National Historic Register status.

For information on Garth Newel, visit www.garthnewel.org.

2012 Season

Jan. 28, March 10: Pub Series Concerts

An eclectic mixture of music featuring the Garth Newel Piano Quartet in an informal pub-like atmosphere. Finger food and cash bar available. Tickets: Pay what you wish!

March 15-18: Amateur Workshop

Adult amateur musicians study chamber music and receive coachings from the Garth Newel Piano Quartet.

April 14-15: House Party

An elegant weekend at the Homestead Hotel involving dinner, dancing, auction, and concert to benefit Garth Newel.

May 4-6: Archduke Weekend

Concerts each day followed by optional dinner Friday and Saturday, and brunch buffet on Sunday.

May 25-27: Memorial Day Weekend

Concerts each day followed by optional dinner Friday and Saturday or brunch buffet on Sunday.

June 8-10: Virginia Blues and Jazz Festival

Blues and Jazz artists from across the country perform in this three-day festival.

June 30-Sept. 2: Summer Chamber Music Festival

Concerts every Saturday and Sunday followed by an optional dinner on Saturdays.

Oct. 12-28: Fall Foliage Weekends

Concerts every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday with optional dinner on Fridays and Saturdays.

Nov. 22-24: Thanksgiving Music Holiday

Concerts each day followed by optional Thanksgiving feast on Thursday, dinner on Friday, or brunch buffet on Saturday.

Dec. 31-Jan. 1: New Year's Celebration

Concerts each day followed by optional dinner, dancing, and champagne on Monday or brunch buffet on Tuesday.