



Fiddlin' Around

Hometown Concert Series

World-traveled jazz violinist to join Fiddlers stage

By Will Warner

The 10th Annual Hometown Concert Series begins with shows on Friday and Saturday, November 14th and 15th. The guest artist is jazz violinist Christian Howes. The Fiddlers shared a stage with Christian this spring at the American String Teachers Association National Conference at Ohio State University. That meeting led to an invitation to headline November's concerts.

Legendary guitarist Les Paul said this about Christian Howes: "Nowadays there are four or five really good [jazz violinists], but there is nobody better than this guy." Howes, a native of Columbus, Ohio, began classical training on the violin at age 5. At age 16 he performed the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with the Columbus Symphony, then became the youngest member of the acclaimed chamber orchestra *ProMusica*.

Soon after, Christian began the move to performing and composing jazz, pop, blues, and rock. Today he maintains five working ensembles, including the Christian Howes Group, the Christian Howes European Acoustic Project, and the Christian Howes Electric Funk Project. He has appeared in such prestigious venues as the Newport, Toronto, and Ottawa jazz festivals and the world-renowned Birdland.

In addition to touring North America, the Far East and across Europe, Christian conducts master classes for all ages. While in Saline he will lead a private clinic for the Fiddlers.

Christian will take the second half of two performances at Saline High School. As usual, Saline's own fiddle clubs and the Fiddlers Philharmonic will open the shows. Last year's seniors have warbled their swan

**"...there is nobody better than this guy."
- Les Paul**



The many faces of Christian Howes.

These photos reveal only a portion of Christian's personality. You can tell this jazz violinist has a good time on stage. The audience is sure to have a good time, too. Come see Christian Howes team up with the Saline fiddling squads November 14th and 15th at the Saline High School.

songs and are now alumni. Younger musicians have stepped up to the microphones, armed with an expanded repertoire. New tunes include the melodious "Lexi's Dance," an original composition by Artistic Director Ben Culver, and the poignantly lyrical "Some Day Soon," made famous by Judy Collins.

Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at Saline High School, 7190 N. Maple Road, in Saline. Ticket prices are \$12 for adults and \$5 for students up to grade 12. All seating is reserved. To book tickets, call 1-877-538-FIDDLE.

A Donation Story

Gifts to the Fiddlers are usually monetary in nature, and very much appreciated! This time a gift took on a different form.

By Shelly Banet, Business Manager

On most days my phone rings continuously. Although some are personal calls for my family, most are related to Saline Fiddler business. On August 25th, I received a surprising phone call from a local woman by the name of Kerry Halseth. She was interested in making a donation to the group. Her donation came with a story worth sharing:

In November of 2002, Kerry attended her first Saline Fiddlers Hometown Concert. She was truly excited by the performance, and with the recent passing of her father, who was a musician, Kerry was inspired to learn to play the banjo like her dad. Shortly thereafter she purchased a banjo and a "How To" videotape for some self-instruction. After a few weeks of strumming, the banjo found a resting place next to the piano in the Halseth living room. There it sat for months, serving more as a memory of Kerry's father than an instrument for music making.

With the start of the new school year, Kerry decided that perhaps her banjo deserved another home; one where it would be played and performed on regularly. As a result, she wished to donate her banjo to the Saline Fiddlers, in honor of the inspiration she received from the group last fall and of the heartfelt memories of her banjo-playing father.

We greatly appreciate your generosity and accept your donation wholeheartedly, Kerry! When the Saline



Kerry Halseth shows the banjo she donated to the Fiddlers.

Fiddlers take the stage for their Fall Hometown Concert this November, keep your eye out for this special banjo. We know your father would be proud of your contribution that helps keep the American tradition of bluegrass music alive!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- ♪ September 20: **Western Michigan Bluegrass Festival**. Lowell 4-H Fairgrounds, Lowell, MI. Open to the public - charge at the gate. The Fiddlers will be performing at 4:00 pm and 7:30 pm. More info at <http://www.wmbma.org/wmbma/wmbmaFestival.htm>
- ♪ October 4: **Rentschler Farm** closing. Saline, MI. Afternoon performance, open to the public.
- ♪ October 18: **PIX Theater**. Lapeer, MI.
- ♪ November 14 & 15: **Fall Hometown Concerts**. Guest artist: **Christian Howes**, jazz violinist. Tickets now on sale at: Saline Community Education office, or call Sherry at 1-877-538-FIDDLE
- ♪ November 21: **Clarkston Optimist Club** Fundraiser. 7:30 p.m. Clarkston High School. Open to the public.

Fiddlin' Around is the official newsletter of the **Saline Fiddlers**.

We publish four times yearly, or as needed.

Editor: Jen Lahnala

Photos from Christian Howes' website, Shelly Banet,

Karen Frank, Jim Roth

Ben Culver, Artistic Director

Shelly Banet, Business Manager

www.salinefiddlers.com

Fiddlers work on the old, new at annual Fiddle Camp

When you think that something's good, there's always a lot more to be done to make it even better. -- Fiddler alumna Kristin

By Terry Ocampo

Bows hit the strings. Feet start to tap. The bass players plug into their amps. Players try to avoid looking at their music in attempts at memorization. During mealtime new and old songs are whistled as they get stuck in students' heads. Rosin and extra strings are broken out. Concentrated brows pour over their music – “are we counting right?” Fingers adjust to be in tune – and hands leap into odd positions. A new season for the Saline Fiddlers has begun!

Camp Phil is the time after our talented and cherished graduates move on to pursue their dreams and goals, when the excited, and perhaps a bit nervous, new Fiddlers join the enthusiastic and somewhat curious personalities of the returning members for some dynamic fiddle rehearsal and fun! Camp Phil is all about music, all about what these talented students enjoy and excel at.

This summer's music camp took the Fiddlers to Tau Beta Camp in Columbiaville, Michigan. New and old Fiddlers had a chance to gel, getting to know each other through team building sessions, free time activities, and of course, working very hard on their fiddlin'. The group spent four days of intensive rehearsal polishing old tunes and learning new ones. “Red Haired Boy” and “Eastern 8” are a couple of great new songs come to life by the awesome composing skills of Director Ben Culver and Assistant Director Jesse Mason.

The group found a nicely trimmed central camp surrounded by woodlands, including a screened-in practice shelter, lodge, recreational area, mess hall and kitchen. A short hike over a bridge, past a small boating lake and up the hill (or was that over the river and through the woods?) brought you to the rustic, but clean, bunkhouses and shower buildings. And the fun began...

Many of the Fiddlers tried theirs hands at canoeing and row boating, and had fun toasting marshmallows at the campfire circle. At one seemingly peaceful moment, with most of the group gathered together, water balloons

came sailing from the back of the camp caretaker's truck. The “men in black” bombarded the rest of the group with water balloons, resulting in a huge water fight. Kudos to sound crewmembers Dave and Pat for a job well executed! It was “violins against the world” in the annual Fiddler “Capture the Flag” game, with a spectacular victory by the “not violins” team. The real competition, however, would last the whole camp: The Battle of Sexes. The boys competed against the girls to win the trophy (a.k.a. the idol). After more than three rounds of competition, hiding the idol in the woods – and in one instance pulling the idol out of the trunk of a car in a classic “hit and run” – the girls were declared the winners. When asked what their favorite part of camp was, however, more than one fiddler would promptly respond, “The music!”

The Fiddlers approached their work sessions with great focus and enthusiasm and their efforts shone brightly in their final concert Sunday evening, enjoyed

by the camp staff, friends and parents. Many thanks to those directors, administrators, interns, music coaches, cooks and drivers who made this year's camp a great success. Special thanks to Karen Frank, our head chef, for coordinating the excellent food and



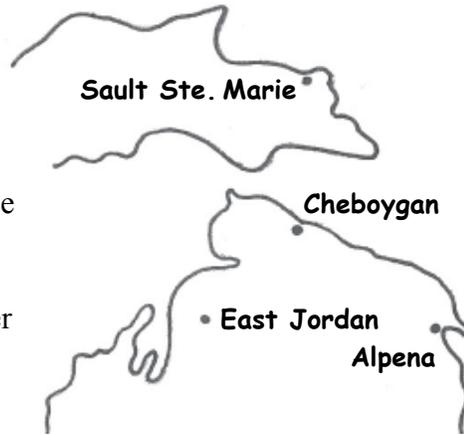
Kelly Mason, musical assistant, works with guitarist Mike (right) during Camp Phil.

shopping, and to Eric Kung for preparing the fabulous Chinese buffet before the Pease Auditorium gig. All enjoyed your fabulous efforts! And last, but not least... thanks especially to each of our Fiddlers for your individual spirit and style, countless hours of dedicated work, musicianship, and creative energy that collectively accomplish so much. You are all wonderful!

The Fiddlers' Northern Michigan Summer Tour 2003

Performances

- June 28 Cheboygan
Cheboygan Opera House
- June 29 East Jordan
East Jordan Civic Center
- June 30 Sault Ste. Marie
Soo Locks Festival
- July 2 Alpena
Bay View Park Fine Arts Shell



Fun Along the Way

- * Soo Locks tour
- * Boyne Valley Lodge
- * Petoskey
- * Miniature golf in Boyne City
- * Indian River rafting
- * Young Americans Dinner Theater at Boyne Highlands Lodge
- * Mackinac Island - biking and fudge
- * Mackinaw City fireworks

A blown bus tire didn't stop the Fiddlers from getting to their first gig on time – but it did mean two more hours on the bus.



Two thousand people, more or less, attended the Fiddlers' concert at the Bay View Park Fine Arts Shell in Alpena – the largest crowd at that venue in more than ten years.



Warming up for the gig at the Soo Locks Festival in Sault Ste. Marie.

See related tour story, "Young Americans," on page 6.

... A Pictorial Review

- Story by Jeff Banet. Photos by Jeff Banet, Shelly Banet and Jim Roth.



The Fiddlers gave an impromptu performance for the Young Americans after enjoying that group's dinner theater show at Boyne Highlands Lodge. The Young Americans' super-enthusiastic response made the evening a high point of the tour.

Beach volleyball and swimming at Burt Lake State Park were enjoyable diversions.



The Fiddlers gathered on a bridge after their performance in the East Jordan Civic Center. The organizer of the gig was thrilled that for the first time ever they had to open up the balcony.



After singing many times about a "Big Brown Trout" the Fiddlers found one in the town of Indian River.



Somehow the chaperones got drenched while rafting on the Indian River in Burt Lake State Park. Could splashes from the Fiddlers' paddles have had anything to do with it?

Young Americans

Impromptu show leaves Fiddlers with some of their best summer tour memories

By Will Warner

Most of life's great experiences are unplanned. Because they are unexpected, they unfold without the burden of expectations, leaving us free to appreciate them for what they are, as they happen. On their tour of northern Michigan this past summer, the Fiddlers stumbled into a truly wonderful, unanticipated event...

All last summer, an ensemble of about 20 young women and men called *The Young Americans* performed dinner theater at the Boyne Highlands Resort. Their show is a musical review of pop songs, dancing, and snippets of classic and current Broadway musicals. They range in age from 17 to a matronly 24.

The Fiddlers attended one of the performances. It was very good—great singing, dancing, and showmanship. These young artists had the habit of all stage professionals: in the spotlight or out, they performed with discipline and energy.

Somehow the Young Americans learned that they had the traveling Fiddlers in their audience. They roped several into participating in skits in the show; one cast

member sang a little scat jazz with senior Fiddler Claire.

As good as the show was, the amazing thing happened after it. The cast invited the Fiddlers to stay and play for them. Our kids fetched their instruments and took the stage.

Well. The Fiddlers were still revved up from their hosts' performance and played with exceptional vitality and enthusiasm. Their clogging thundered on the wooden stage. They were having fun! And the Young Americans were the most appreciative audience of all time. They shouted encouragement and leapt to their feet, cheering, at the end of every tune. They went wild for "Blue Moon of Kentucky" and Scott's bass solo in "The Orange Blossom Special."

Afterward, the Young Americans had many questions for the Fiddlers, and vice-versa, as the two groups mingled on stage. Ben Culver gave a "Hometown Live" CD to their director while the two of them chatted. Everyone left excited and revitalized after an evening that exceeded expectations.



Applause came from both sides when the Young Americans (in the audience here) traded the stage with the Saline Fiddlers.

Attention Fiddler Alumni

We would like to know what is happening in your lives. Please email us at tlahnala@peoplepc.com and tell us what you have been doing. We will add your story to a future *Fiddlin' Around*.

Meet the new Fiddlers

We would like to introduce you to four of our newest Fiddlers. Look for the remaining five Fiddlers in the Winter 2004 issue.

By Erica Wood



David

David, the newest sound technician, demonstrated his affinity for electronics early when he began making home and car stereos when he was only eight. From his prime seat at the soundboard, Dave gets to appreciate the talented musicianship of the Fiddlers and especially likes "Lexi's Dance." In addition to getting his hands on the cool audio equipment, Dave is most looking forward to hanging out with the other Fiddlers and hopefully getting to do a lot of traveling. To relax, David plays football, lifts weights and, to really get away from it all, picks up a cane pole for some fishing. In the future he hopes to go to U of M and study engineering, where he can create some really awesome audio software.



Sarah

Sarah is a home-schooler who was first inspired to take up the violin after seeing the Fiddlers perform when she was about six years old. At that point she was already enjoying her piano lessons and felt ready to tackle another instrument, so she began lessons with Sarah Phillips. She's especially enjoying the excitement of playing with a big group, and she loves performing. Having the built-in social group is definitely a plus, and she has been surprised by how well everyone works together. Sarah enjoys traveling, swimming and just being social, and plans to go to Yale or U of M, aiming for a career in either medicine or law.

Jordan

Jordan is a cellist who, like a lot of her fellow Fiddlers, started out on another instrument. For Jordan it was the bass, and she switched at the end of sixth grade. While mastering the cello and keeping up with her bass, she has also taken up the guitar and her favorite Fiddler tunes are "Tobin" and "Gettin' Jiggy Wit It". Like many new Fiddlers, Jordan was surprised by the number of gigs and how well the musicians eat. Music and reading are hobbies, and Jordan is a cross-country veteran and planning to run track in the spring. As for her future, she says, "If not having a plan is a plan then I do have a plan." She likes keeping her options open, but will probably stay in the mitten for college.



Alex

Alex, a new addition to the cello section, is a musical jack of all trades. After starting on the violin at age eight, he switched to the cello and also plays guitar, harmonica and banjo for a little variety. Despite the crack of dawn practices, a friend convinced him to join the Middle School Fiddle Club where he discovered he really liked the music and knew he wanted to join the Fiddlers. Since becoming a part of the group he has enjoyed the traveling, playing for many varied audiences and "the elaborate food system." To work off all that food, Alex runs cross-country, track, and also participates in Boy Scouts and camping. He'd like to go to college somewhere in Michigan and do something with his interests in science, math, and technology.



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