

school's out but the music continues



The Aspen Music Festival
and School's Benedict Music Tent
Photo: Alex Irvin

when the spring semester comes to a close at CIM, that doesn't mean the lazy days of summer are ahead. Instead, most CIM students and faculty spend the summer months playing and performing at music festivals everywhere from the swiss alps to the colorado rockies.

An aptly named intersection
at Brevard Music Center
Photo: Pete Checchia

For some, the term "summer festival" might conjure up images of canoe rides or bunking in log cabins, but for musicians, this is anything but. In these often summer-long programs, students spend their days in intensive coaching sessions, master classes and rehearsals and their nights performing in outdoor amphitheaters or in centuries-old music halls around Europe.

The cadillac of summer music fests

Don't just take it from us. In 2014, NPR's Tom Huizenga published a list of 10 Can't-Miss Classical Music Festivals. And although this was geared more toward the festival-goer than the festival participant, it offered a glimpse of what makes these festivals so great. The first one he listed was Aspen Music Festival, calling it the "Cadillac of summer classical music fests."

This year, the lineup at Aspen includes Renée Fleming, Joshua Bell, Robert Spano, Midori, CIM alumnus Daniil Trifonov and more. But it also includes several CIM students such as composition and viola double major Andrew Stock, a senior who won a fellowship as a violist in the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble. "I applied specifically to take part in the festival's Contemporary Ensemble, which is devoted to the performance of music by 20th- and 21st-century composers," says Stock. "At the festival there will be a bit of everything—already-extant pieces by established figures, a few concertos and collaboration

with student composers. The word 'student' makes this part sound less important, but the intensive collaboration is really one of the main draws of the program!" Stock studies with both Jeffrey Irvine, head of the strings division at CIM, and Keith Fitch, head of the composition department.

A summer getaway for performers

Lynn Johnson, CIM's director of admissions who previously worked at Brevard Music Center, notes the importance of taking advantage of expanding one's professional circles at festivals. "Students have the opportunity to work with a different teacher who might lead them to a different graduate school, or to make a professional contact that might help them down the road," says Johnson. "A lot of students decide where they want to apply based on who they've worked with at summer festivals."

Another top-tier festival is Tanglewood. The summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO), Tanglewood opened as the Berkshire Music Center in the 1940s, when then-director Serge Koussevitzky gave a powerful speech about the importance of music during a time of war in Europe. Summer festivals are not a new concept; many have roots as deep as some of the country's oldest conservatories and orchestras.

A top classical music festival in the United States, Tanglewood is the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra
Photo: Steve Rosenthal



The city of Salzburg, Austria, where many CIM voice students and voice faculty attend the Frost School of Music Festival each year.
Photo: © Siemens



Because of Tanglewood's relationship with BSO, the focus is on orchestral training. CIM first-year master's student Paul Torrisi, studying with Michael Sachs, head of the trumpet department and principal trumpet of The Cleveland Orchestra, will be attending. "Tanglewood is one of the best programs out there for high-level students serious about an orchestral career," says Sachs. "You have the history and tradition of the long-time summer home of the Boston Symphony along with all of the finest conductors and solo artists who have visited over the years."

Bach and Birch Trees

Tucked away in the Adirondack Mountains in New York is the chamber music-focused Meadowmount School of Music, where CIM violin faculty Ivan Zenaty and a handful of his students will be attending. "I am looking forward to Meadowmount again," says Zenaty. "Part of my CIM studio is attending, along with other young musicians whom I will work with for seven weeks. Many of them could be the next CIM students!"



The Salle des Combins, the Verbier Festival's main concert hall

Not only is Meadowmount a top festival, significant in the classical music world, it's also an important cultural event for the community. Many summer music festivals held annually, decade after decade, have become fixtures in their communities, bringing in tourists and music buffs alike. The visitor website for the area highlights Meadowmount and its history, mentioning the iconic birch trees and the "melodies and music they've witnessed for the past 70-some years."

Festivals Across the Pond

The concept of summer music festivals is not native to the United States. Europe has a long tradition of summer festivals dating back to the 19th century. The BBC Proms, "the Proms," for short, an eight-week summer festival held in Royal Albert Hall in London, was founded in 1895 and will be celebrating its 121st year this summer.

One of the most prestigious festivals in Europe is the Verbier Festival in Switzerland. The founder, Martin T. Son Engström created the festival in 1994 in an attempt to create an intimate space for music creation away from the distractions and noise of city life. Today, it showcases some of the top artists in the world every summer. This year, Michael Harper, a second-year master's student also studying with Sachs, will be attending. "I get to spend a summer in the Swiss Alps playing in an orchestra with incredible, fun, inspiring colleagues at a ridiculously high level of musicianship with some of the best conductors in the world," says Harper, who's excited for the opportunity.

No two festivals are alike. Some focus on chamber music; others focus on honing skills for solo performing. The Utrecht Early Music Festival in the Netherlands focuses on early music. "The festival presents several prestigious international groups and also holds exhibitions made up of instrument makers and dealers, music publishers and music organizations that help keep the early music world at large supplied and informed of old and new trends," says Julie Andrijeski, violin faculty at CIM who will be attending.

In Salzburg, Austria, head of CIM's voice department Mary Schiller and voice faculty Clifford Billions, along with several CIM students, will be attending the University of Miami Frost School of Music at Salzburg. There, students get the opportunity to perform in cathedrals, palaces and historical sites throughout the European city where Mozart was born. Students also take German language classes and can participate in weekly master classes hosted by guest artists from around the world.

Many CIM faculty members are chairs and directors of their own festivals. Antonio Pompa-Baldi, piano faculty at CIM, founded his own summer festival in Todi, Italy. “Being the founder and artistic director gives me a lot of responsibility to make sure all the elements that constitute a great festival are present and come together,” says Pompa-Baldi. “I spent a lot of time thinking about the faculty, and I’m very proud of the group that I have assembled. One of the criteria was true excellence in both the performing arena as well as the pedagogical one. Another was the human quality and genuine interest in the artistic growth and general well-being of young aspiring musicians.”

Summer festivals are an incredibly valuable piece of a young musician’s educational journey. “There’s a certain level of musicianship that’s expected of the students,” says Johnson. “Six weeks immersed completely in music, spending two hours a day in a rehearsal, two to three hours a day in a practice room and then at a concert in the evening; it might be more of a musical experience than someone has ever experienced.”

Armchair Travelers Rejoice!

This is just a small portion of where our students and faculty will be this summer. If you want to follow their summer travels via social media, check out [#CIMSummer2016](#) on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to see videos, photos and updates on our students, and faculty’s experiences around the world.



Meadowmount summer festival, nestled in the Adirondack Mountains attracts string players and pianists looking to hone chamber music skills. The area is known for its scenic birch trees. Photo: Mary McGowan

Celebrating 300 Years

The Three Choirs Festival is a weeklong festival in England that, in 2015, celebrated its 300th anniversary. Founded in 1719 (the 300th meeting was celebrated in 2015 because the festival was not held during WWI and WWII), the series of concerts, recitals, talks, master classes and exhibitions is considered the oldest-running classical music festival in the world. The venue rotates each summer between the cities of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester.

Here’s a list of where you can find some of our students and faculty this summer!

- Aspen Music Festival
- The Baroque Performance Institute
- The Berkeley Festival and Exhibition
- Blossom Music Festival
- Bowdoin International Music Festival
- Brevard Music Center
- Chautauqua Institute
- CIM Young Composers Program
- ENCORE Chamber Music Festival
- fresh, inc. festival
- Grafenegg Music Festival
- Heifetz International Music Institute
- Hudson Valley Chamber Music Circle
- Interlochen Viola Workshop
- Meadowmount School of Music
- Montecito Music Festival
- National Repertory Orchestra
- National Symphony Orchestra’s Summer Music Institute
- Pacific Music Festival
- Prague Spring Festival
- Prague Summer Academy
- Rocky Ridge Music Center
- Strings Music Festival
- Tanglewood
- Tannery Pond
- Todi International Music Masters Festival
- Utrecht Early Music Festival
- Verbier Festival