



dateline: UVI

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UVI Summer Music Camp Grows Every Year

It is Wednesday morning and UVI's St. Thomas campus Music Building is bustling with activity. Everyone in the building is dressed in green tops – students in green t-shirts and counselor and directors in green polo shirts. Downstairs, the participants in the UVI Summer Music Camp are doing their final rehearsal before they leave the campus and head to Emancipation Garden, where they will perform one of their free weekly concerts. Upstairs, UVI Professor and Camp Director Austin A. Venzen ensures that the camp counselors make final preparations before they leave.

"It's a very intense program," Venzen said of the annual camp, which has seen its enrollment mushroom from just nine students when it began five years ago, to 50 students now. "We enrich the kids to make them better. It's a very good program for young musicians," he said.

The camp serves students ages 12 to 17. This year's participants are from St. Thomas, St. Croix, Virgin Gorda and Antigua. The first requirement is that applicants know how to play an instrument. Often music teachers recommend students who they think will benefit from the



Niels Gooding directs performers of the UVI Music Camp as they rehearse before one of their free weekly music concerts at Emancipation Garden. Below students perform.



program. Students have a choice of joining one of the camp's three tracts – opera, jazz ensemble or concert band. A typical day involves music theory, rehearsals and lessons. Additionally, each student is given a 30-minute, one-on-one lesson per week with one of the seasoned counselors who serve as instructors.

"I hire nothing but the best," Venzen said. Many of the senior counselors are UVI graduates who came up under Venzen's leadership and are already making their mark in the community. The junior counselors must be college music majors, like Omari Williams. The Jazz Studies major at the University of Denver has been a counselor with the camp since its inception.

Venzen said the camp is the only summer music camp that provides continuous performances. In addition to performing weekly at the Emancipation Garden, the students also perform each Sunday at various churches on St. Thomas. They also perform at community events on request. Venzen said he has already seen the impact the camp has had on participants. Many of them return to their schools and sit in first chair of their schools' bands.

Discipline is as much part of the camp as the music. "Excuse me Mr.," Venzen said, addressing a student by his last name, as he does with all students. "You want to put your shirt in your pants," he asked rhetorically. The young man obliges. Venzen explained that once they leave the building, each student must be neatly dressed and have their UVI-issued ID visible. With his apparent open-door policy, students and counselors pop in and out of his office. "I knew you could do it," Venzen congratulated a student who turned in a one-page report. Scholarship recipients are required to turn in a one-page essay

Events Calendar

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|---------|-------------------------|-----|
| July 24 | Alumni Breakfast | STT |
| July 24 | Children's Opera | STT |
| July 27 | Wage Reporting Seminar | STT |
| July 28 | Music Camp Concert | STT |
| July 30 | Research Symposium | STT |
| Aug. 16 | New Student Orientation | STT |
| Aug. 17 | New Student Orientation | STX |
| Aug. 19 | Reichhold Season Launch | STT |

See Music Camp on next page

VI Writing Project Helps Teachers Find Themselves Through Writing

The 14 teachers in the Virgin Islands Writing Project (VIWP) St. Thomas campus Summer Institute are as varied as they come. They teach various grade levels and different subjects, have various backgrounds and are at different points of their career. But they all had one thing in common – the desire to learn how to improve their students' writing abilities.

The VIWP is part of the National Writing Project, a nationwide network of educators working together to improve the teaching of writing in the nation's schools. This year, for the first time, the VIWP held two Summer Institutes, one on UVI's St. Thomas campus and one on the St. Croix campus.

"We learned so much information. It would be impossible if we go back to the classroom and not use something we learned," said Dalton Carty Jr., a participant and English teacher at the Bertha Boschulte Middle School.

Music Camp Continued

and a thank you letter, he said.

Venzen hopes to get additional sponsors so that the program can continue to grow. He is thankful for support from sponsors Virgin Islands Council on the Arts, the Law Enforcement Planning Commission, the Prior family and American Legion Post No. 90. With more sponsorship all participants may be housed in the residence halls, not just those from off-island.

The UVI Summer Music Camp will hold its final



Participants of the Virgin Islands Writing Project St. Thomas campus Summer Institute pose for a group photo on the last day of class.

For computer teacher Nina Farrell, the venture was more personal. She attended the institute for "personal professional development." Farrell said that she has been on a quest to find herself, "doing things for the betterment of me, that will help me do my job and help me be a better person." Farrell said that in addition to helping her tap into her creative spirit, the institute has taught her simple ways to incorporate writing in the

classroom.

Carty said one simple way he learned to get students writing is offering writing prompts – an open ended suggestion or question – and giving them five minutes to write their thought or feelings.

Expressing his feelings is something that CAHS substitute English teacher Cadwell Turnbull learned to do at the institute. Being around other teachers, he said, gave him the courage to write his own feelings and thoughts.

Emancipation Garden performance from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. on Wednesday, July 28. The camp will mark its conclusion with a performance of the children's opera "Hansel and Gretel" at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 24, at UVI's Reichhold Center for the Arts.

dateline: UVI is a production of the UVI Public Relations Office. Contact us by telephone at 340-693-1056 or by fax at 340-693-1055.

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2 John Brewer's Bay
St. Thomas, VI 00802