

Vinland Music Camp offers opportunity to learn Newfoundland traditional music, dance and storytelling



Katherine Hudson

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LOMOND — The musical experience at this camp extends beyond the campfire sing-alongs. The strum of guitars, the lilt of tin whistles and soaring of fiddle notes filled the early afternoon air as youth and adults lounged on the lawns and on the cabin porches of Killdevil Camp this week. And this was during downtime at the Vinland Music Camp.

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It was obviously the 50 participants from Newfoundland and Labrador and other parts of the country have one thing in common, the passion for music in any shape or form.

Fifteen-year-old Rosemary Lawton has attended the weeklong camp for three years, and said hearing music throughout the day no matter where she is on the property, makes her smile.

"It's really nice to be able to walk through and to hear music everywhere," Lawton said. "Instead of other types of camp and you hear screaming and yelling and playing sports and stuff. Everywhere you go there's music here."

Lawton plays the violin and bodhran and is picking up the tin whistle and mandolin at camp this summer.

"I just really like the atmosphere for music and learning all the new stuff," she said. "Every night there's dances and we get to play along with some really great people and you make a lot of really cool friends."

Naomi Brown, 12, is attending the music camp for the first time and is trying her hand at the mandolin, an instrument she purchased last Christmas but didn't have the time to properly learn until now.

Brown said she loves being able to pick up an instrument and make music with anyone at the camp anytime.

"Everyone loves 'jamming,' is what we call it," Brown said. "It's so fun to play an instrument because you can play anything you want and no one will judge you. It brings people together."

The camp's participants range in ages from eight to adults who want to be in a musically charged environment and pick up some new skills along the way.

George Tucker and his granddaughter Hailey Colbourne are from Norris Point and came to make music at the camp together.

"I've been a bit of a musician for a little while and songwriter," Tucker explained. "My granddaughter is kind of interested in instruments so we decided to come and see what it is we could pick up on, see what instruments we would find that could be more interesting for us.

"You can't help loving it because wherever you're to around here there's music. There's music all day and evening long. There's always somebody practicing which is fantastic."

Eric West started the camp 10 years ago and has watched it grow in instruments, campers and instructors.

"The emphasis is on Newfoundland traditional music and dance and storytelling," West said. "The main thing that people get out of it is inspiration and an opportunity to try out different instruments."

With varying levels of technique and musical preference, attending the camp allows for fresh creativity and passion to thrive for the participants.

"You get people who are expert in one instrument but they want to try another so its' an opportunity to expand. Sometimes we get people that are into jazz but they come and try traditional Newfoundland music to round out their musical experience," he said.

Music workshops include storytelling, songwriting, dancing along with lessons in a variety of instruments.

The camp's grand finale will include a musical fundraiser concert taking place Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at the Woody Point Heritage Theatre.

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