

Luzerne Music Center hopes to hit right notes for summer

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The Luzerne Music Center is tuning up for its 33rd season under the direction of Elizabeth Pitcairn, president, CEO and artistic director, who took over responsibility from co-founder Toby Blumenthal a year ago.

The public is invited to a kickoff benefit luncheon and concert June 24 at the Lake George Club, hosted by the Friends of Luzerne.

“It gives people a chance to come to the beautiful club and introduces Luzerne to many people. Everyone says we’re a gem that has existed, but a lot of people don’t know about us,” Pitcairn said.

This summer’s season will include free student concerts and eight professional concerts, beginning with the afternoon performance July 1 of the Rodney Mack Philadelphia Big Brass and a barbecue at 6 p.m.

American composer John Corigliano, who received an Academy Award for best original score for “The Red Violin,” will be in residence working with students and faculty this summer. He will present a dinner concert gala in August to benefit the scholarship fund.

The music center also will hold its 5K run, “Move It For the Music,” on Aug. 11. The event, now in its third year, is another fundraiser for the scholarship fund. Student groups will perform along the route, which ends on the music center campus.

Pitcairn said she believes the vision Blumenthal and her late husband, Bert Phillips, established 33 years ago continues to work successfully today, and she sees her role as “revitalizing” the program and facilities.

“I’m able to bring in a whole new generation of teachers and musicians in my travels, such as Sarah Chang, who donated a concert for us last summer,” Pitcairn said. “I’m continuing Bert’s dream that we take the camp to the next level and make it world class.”

Pitcairn has a long history with Luzerne Music Center. She attended the camp in 1988 and 1989 as a teenager from the Philadelphia area and became close to Phillips and Blumenthal.

In 2000, when Pitcairn was in college, she was featured as one of the seven rising star alumni from the music center who performed in a special concert at Lincoln Center.

Five years later, she was invited to play at the 25th anniversary and performed the “Red Violin Chaconne” with Glens Falls Symphony conductor Charles Peltz, and she has performed in several chamber music festivals.

Pitcairn said she last saw Phillips at the close of the season in 2008 when he asked her to consider being his successor.

At the time she didn't feel she could assume complete control.

She gradually took on more responsibilities and eventually took over the artistic director's job last year.

Pitcairn said she is anticipating an exciting summer for 2012.

"We have faculty and students coming internationally, and I'd like to invite the community to be a part of our summer, too. We welcome them with open arms," she said.

Info

A kickoff concert and luncheon to benefit the Luzerne Music Center will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. June 24 at the Lake George Club. Cost is \$75 per person.

Call 696-2771 for more information or go to www.luzernemusic.org for further details. Also visit the website for a complete list of summer events.