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# Violin virtuoso brings legendary instrument to island students

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Dennis Fujimoto - The Garden Island | Posted: Saturday, May 12, 2012 11:30 pm | (0) Comments

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Island School student Kim McDonough was thrilled at being able to interact with Elizabeth Pitcairn during a visit by the violinist.

McDonough, a student of the violin for six years, has been accepted to the Luzerne Music Center, an international summer camp in the Adirondacks for strings, winds, brass, percussion and piano students between the ages of 11 to 18 years old and founded by Pitcairn, who serves as president and artistic director.

"The tuition for the camp alone is \$4,000," McDonough said. "This doesn't include the cost of transportation."

McDonough's family is in the midst of fundraising to get her to camp. Those efforts were sparked when Pitcairn spent a morning at Island School Wednesday morning as part of a four-school tour by the violin

virtuoso, who has earned a reputation as one of America's beloved soloists.

During her visit, Pitcairn played the 'Red Violin,' described by Tewa Holloway in an email as one of the world's most legendary instruments — the Red Mendelssohn Stradivarius of 1720 was an inspiration for the Academy award-winning film "The Red Violin."

"The violin is on a journey around the world," Pitcairn said, opening her presentation to Island School's morning assembly with two pieces. "I got the violin from my grandfather and it's been with me ever since."

Holloway said while on Kaua'i, Pitcairn, who is passionate about youth and education, visited a few schools, meeting, performing for and working with students to support their passion for music.

"I have never heard a Stradivarius sound that good," said Island School principal Robert Springer, who said he was a music major.

She expanded the invitation to other musicians who are interested in furthering their talents by inviting them to submit audition DVDs.

"I started at the age of 3, playing with my mother who played the cello," Pitcairn told the students. "I started practicing a little at a time and by the time I was 14 years old, I was practicing three hours a day. By the time I was in college, I was practicing five hours a day. It's important to practice a little every day."

Pitcairn made her New York debut at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in 2000 with the New York String Orchestra and has appeared as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Academy of Music, her biography states.

Born in 1973, Pitcairn comes from a musical family; her mother is a Juilliard-trained cellist and her father is a student of opera. Her cousin is associate principal viola of the Colorado Symphony, a violinist in the Calder Quartet, and plays violin and viola in the band Airborne Toxic Event.

At 14, Pitcairn made her debut performing the Saint-Saens Concerto No. 3 with orchestra, starting a path that took her to Los Angeles to study with preeminent violin professor Robert Lipsett at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, where she is a former adjunct professor.

Her discography includes recordings of Tchaikovsky and Mozart A-Major Concerti with the Slovenia Radio Television Orchestra, the Bruch Scottish Fantasy and the Bizet/Sarasate Carmen Fantasy with the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra of Bulgaria and the "Hymns to the Night" concerto with the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra for the Swedish record label Phono Suecia.

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