

South Charlotte WEEKLY

About the Community, For the Community

Serving Dilworth, Myers Park, SouthPark, Ballantyne, Uptown, Pineville, Matthews and surrounding areas.

Culinary Corner

Corabelle relies on Old South roots

Page 25



Living

Are tangled webs taking over your household?

Page 10

Faith

Families leave Midwest for new jobs in Charlotte

Page 12

Development

Meeting set for Rea Road widening project

Page 28

Arts

Newton-John coming regardless of strike status

Page 29

Sports

Soccer times two for twins at South Meck

Page 37



Sister Act

Talented trio, plus their instruments, fill their home with the sound of music
page 5

From left, Kaylin, Mallory and Hannah Davison, the daughters of Meredith and Denise Davison of Weddington, are talented harpists. The sisters made their debut with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra last year, performing in "Magic of Christmas." This year they have 15 performances scheduled for the holidays. SCW photo by Sean Busher.

Bissell & Hayes
WELL SHOW YOU THE WAY HOME.SM
Real Estate Listings
page 20

Insider



Kaylin, left, Mallory, center, and Hannah are the Davison Trio. These talented young harpists have played a variety of music venues in Charlotte, including churches, retirement homes, weddings and private parties, and also performed last Christmas with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. SCW photos by Sean Busher.

Hannah, about the grand harp.

Practice and performance

After watching Hannah, Kaylin and Mallory developed an interest in the harp and also began lessons. Progressing in their skills rapidly, Roth recommended that Kaylin and Hannah take lessons from Jacquelyn Bartlett, a music teacher at the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem. Bartlett comes to Charlotte once a week to teach. Roth continues to teach Mallory.

Now with three harps in the house, there's hardly a moment when someone isn't playing music. "Anytime you call my house you can hear them," Denise, adding that the girls move into different rooms to rehearse.

Denise spends afternoons driving each of her daughters to two weekly music lessons. The girls spend an hour a day practicing and three to four hours when preparing for concerts at churches, retirement homes and weddings and for performances for Hospice patients.

One reason they can devote the extra time to their music is because Denise has

(more on page 6)

In harmony at home

*It's practicing and performing
for sisters who each play the harp*

By Holly Becker

Stop by the Davison home in the Greystone neighborhood in Weddington, and you'll probably hear beautiful music. But those lovely sounds are not from a musical instrument that you hear every day. The three daughters of Meredith and Denise Davison – Kaylin, 14, Hannah, 12, and Mallory, 9 – play the harp.

A musical family

For the Davisons, music is a family affair. "It's something we love, so we expose them to a lot of music," said Denise. She plays the piano and sings, and the girls say their dad "plays the stereo."

In addition to the harp, each of the girls plays another instrument. Kaylin plays the violin, Hannah plays the piano and Mallory plays the clarinet. And their older brother, Jonas, 17, who attends the North Carolina School for the Arts in Winston-Salem, plays the flute and saxophone.

Ironically, Jonas' love for the flute led the sisters to discover the harp. When the family lived in Raleigh, Jonas took music lessons at Meredith College. Denise said

a professor was playing a harp and invited them in to listen. "From then on, Hannah started asking if she could play the harp," said Denise. "When we moved back to Charlotte that summer in 1995, she was still asking."

The Davisons enrolled Hannah, then age 4, in harp lessons with Bette Roth, harpist with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra.

"At a very young age, she just showed an amazing talent, said Roth. "She was able to read music very quickly, so that enabled her to learn the pieces more quickly, she said, adding that Hannah "ate notes for breakfast."

Initially, Hannah played a smaller lever harp without foot pedals. Roth said the lever harp is easier for children to manage because they only have to use their hands.

At age 7, Hannah got a grand harp with pedals. Still, playing an instrument made for an adult has its challenges. "You're playing with your feet and your hands. (The difficulty) depends if you have to push the pedals very much and how much you have to stretch for a good reach (to pluck the strings)," said



The girls began playing on a lever harp, which is smaller and easier to manage because it does not have pedals.

In harmony

(continued from page 5)

always home-schooled her children. "It's given us a lot more time to do music and now to go to concerts," Denise said. The girls, known as the Davison Trio, already have 15 concerts scheduled for the holi-

day season and usually take off school during December.

Transporting nearly 6-foot tall and approximately 80-pound harps to concerts and practices was a challenge. To solve the problem, the Davisons bought a 15-passenger van and removed the back two seats. "We lay the harp down, slide it into a padded cover and put it the van," said Denise, adding they use a dolly to cart them into concerts.

Their symphony debut

Last year, Roth encouraged the girls to try out for the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra's holiday performance. Conductor David Tang holds auditions in the summer to select students to perform in the "Magic of Christmas" concert series. "I was very impressed with the girls' musical abilities," said Tang. "They are incredibly well managed and have extremely effective arrangements that make witty use of their differing abilities."

The trio made their debut with the symphony even though they weren't able to rehearse before their first performance. Last year's ice storm hit Charlotte the week of the dress rehearsal. "We drove them down that night for a dress rehearsal, and they didn't even have it. Everything was dark," said Denise.

WINNING THIRD PLACE AT NATIONAL COMPETITION

This summer Hannah Davison, 12, had the honor of competing in the American Harp Society competition in Salt Lake City. To be selected for participation in the competition, she sent in a taped performance.

Hannah walked away with a third-place finish in her first national competition. "I started practicing those songs about a year before I played them (at the Salt Lake City competition)," said Hannah, adding the music was selected

by the judges.

Before her performance, Hannah said she was isolated for 40 minutes in a room with her harp. The anticipation did not intimidate her or shake her confidence, even though she was able to hear her competition rehearsing in other rooms.

The next stop on her agenda is auditioning to play with the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra next spring.

Insider



The Davison girls practice at least an hour each day in their home in Weddington.

For some musicians, the thought of not having a dress rehearsal before such an important performance would be terrifying. But that did not shake their nerves.

"I don't really get nervous, because I've been on the stage before," said Kaylin. "I'm probably more nervous than they

are," added Denise.

Tang said the girls handled themselves "like true professionals." "They were truly the hit of the shows," he said.

Career aspirations

Despite their talent as musicians, only

(more on page 8)

SUZUKI METHOD HAS MORE KIDS PLAYING

First used for violin, the Suzuki method has become a popular teaching method for young harpists. "When the Suzuki method became widely used throughout the country, it opened the door for thousands of young people to take the harp," said Bette Roth, a harpist with the Charlotte Symphony who also teaches harp lessons. This teaching method involves students listening to music and then playing back what they hear. Roth said it's similar to

how a child learns a language. "They (harp students) have a CD, and they listen to it about two hours a day and imitate what they hear," she said, adding that children learn to read music later.

Still, learning to play the harp is not an inexpensive hobby. Harps range from \$2,000 to \$5,000. The Davisons rented a harp for their daughter Hannah for her first year of lessons before investing in one.

In harmony

(continued from page 7)

Hannah plans to study music in college. "I might want to be a music teacher one day, but I don't know if I want to do that all my life. I might teach one or two days a week and do something else, too," said

Hannah.

"She's very patient when she's teaching someone," said Denise, adding that whenever Kaylin or Mallory have ques-

"I'd much rather play with my siblings than other people – besides the symphony. That was fun."

tions about the harp they go to Hannah.

Kaylin, who plays second violin with the Charlotte Youth Symphony Orchestra, admits that the violin is her first love. Still, she doesn't have ambitions for a music career. "I might minor in it (music) in college, but it's not something I want to do professionally. It's fun but not something for my life all the time. I might do it as a side job though," said Kaylin.

Nine-year-old Mallory said, "I want to be a waitress – and a cook."

But for now, these talented sisters just enjoy playing music together. "I'd much rather play with my siblings than other people – besides the symphony. That was fun," said Kaylin. □

Want to know more?
Contact the Davison family
at ddavison@carolina.rr.com.