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The Collective Sound at St. Mary's Rocks

By Jean Follmer



Vocalist and guitarist, Barrett Buscher of Denver, Colorado, rehearses with The Collective Sound at St. Mary's College Photo provided

In week two, the kids learn to record music and shoot a video at Ex'pression College for the Digital Arts in Emeryville.

"Technology is another missing link to the education system," said Smith, who explained how they introduce the kids to writing software and show them how to use it.

The idea is to show kids that they can produce their own music and make a living doing it. In the past, musicians had to rely on a big recording studio and sell one million records to be successful. Smith says that has changed: If a band records and produces their albums themselves, they only need to sell about 60,000 records to be able to make a living.

"I think, conceptually, when you look at the progression of music and creativity, we're in an interesting time since we have access to millions of pieces of music now," he said. Smith added that online sites like Pandora offer new bands more accessibility to listeners because the music is categorized and so easily downloaded.

The final week of camp is tour week. This year, TCS will head to San Francisco, Redding, Chico and the famous Radio Star Studios in Weed.

In just the first two days of camp, the kids had been split into bands based on talent, instrument and interest, with each band having an experienced musician as a counselor. Some campers had already written songs.

"We really do get some pretty talented kids," said Smith. Young musicians from all over the world and throughout the United States attend the academy - some from as far as France, Korea and Denmark. Smith said about half of the attendees are in bands at home.

For more information about TCS, visit www.thecollectivesound.com.

The Collective Sound (TCS) - the world's first touring music camp - made its temporary summer home at Saint Mary's College this year. Young musicians ages 12 to 18 refine and expand their musical creativity, learn to record and produce music using the latest technology, and go on tour during the three weeks of the non-profit summer Rock & Roll music academy, which started last week at SMC. During week one, the kids are grouped into bands based on talent, instrument and interest. They write and rehearse an original song to be performed at the end of the week. In the afternoons, they go to classes to learn about music technology and to listen to guest speakers from the music industry.

While TCS Director Zac Smith believes the band and orchestra programs in schools are great experiences, he also feels they lack many essential creative components of music, including writing it. "There is art and photography in schools, but not a lot of creativity in music," he said. "I play a lot and I write a lot and I did get a music degree. I believe in writing and that is what I really enjoy about music."



Guitarist William Lucy of Korea rehearses with The Collective Sound at St. Mary's College Photo provided

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