

Harper School gives kids a summer full of music

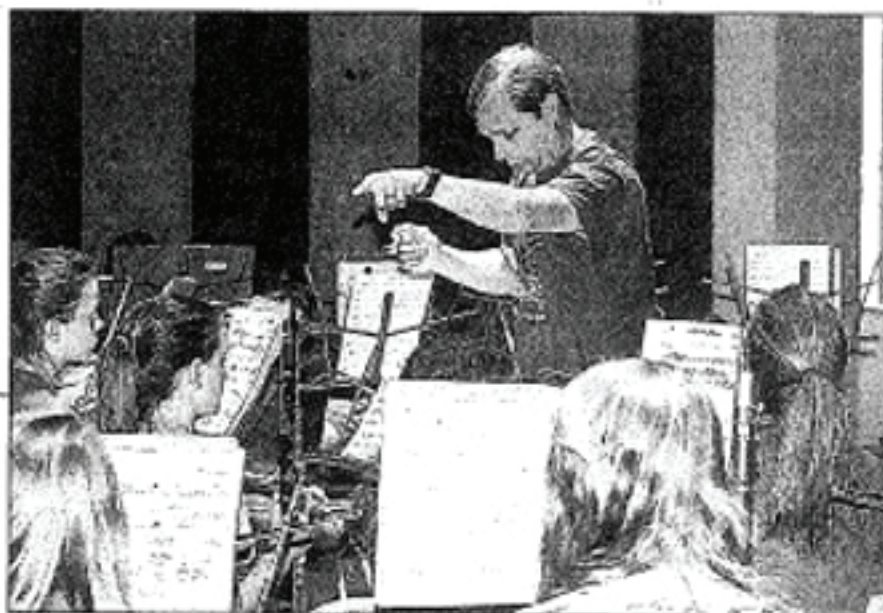
BY GINA STORY
Special to The Record

LENOIR — Parents want their children to have fun during summer break, but they also want them to be productive. The staff at the James C. Harper School of Performing Arts is giving students of their summer camps the opportunity to do that plus a chance to expand their knowledge into a new area of interest as well.

"We are trying a new format this year," said Karen Burton, executive director of the Harper School. "We're just trying to keep children engaged."

This year, there will be two weeks of summer camps in July. The camps will last between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. each and will include six 45-minute sessions. Students will spend two of those sessions each day focusing on their chosen musical specialty, while during the other sessions they will get to explore other performing arts they may not otherwise get to be a part of.

"If you are a music student, you love music in general," Burton said, adding that students sometimes can get caught in niches. "Sometimes you don't get to give band students the opportunity to experience singing



Conductor Terry Reid leads a spirited rehearsal at Harper School summer camp.

or chorus students the opportunity to play instruments."

The camps will be Monday through Thursday, July 13-16 and July 20-23. The cost for the eight days of camp will be \$180, and campers must be pre-enrolled by June 30. Campers will choose piano, guitar, band, chorus, or strings as their main focus for the duration of the camp.

During the camp, the student will spend two 45-minute sessions each day focusing on their primary musical interest. For the other four sessions they will get to choose between other musical

interests such as musical theory, drumming and rock band. There will also be other options open to students depending on their age and experience levels.

Another summer program that Burton is excited about is the Beginning Band Workshop scheduled for 5:30-7:30 p.m. Aug. 3-7. The cost of the program is \$40. The program is for rising sixth graders and will prepare them for their first days in middle school band class.

"They are taught how to take their instrument apart and how to put it together," Burton said. "And they are getting it in a



Students practice during Harper School summer camp.

smaller setting and it's not in a school environment, so I think that helps."

Burton said that in addition to learning the basics about the instruments, students also learn the basics of sheet music and notes that will give them a sense of confidence as they make their way through the first few days of their middle school band classes.

Because children tend to have more free time over the summer months, Burton said, many students who enjoy music will try to use the time to learn a new instrument, so this year the Harper School is offering a summer guitar group for children ages 9 and older. The group will meet from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesdays

and Thursdays July 7 through July 30 and will work as a group to learn guitar chords, notes and scales, basic chord changes, how to play melodies, rhythm and note reading, and picking and strumming.

For Burton and the staff at the Harper School, they just want to make sure that the children and parents of Caldwell and Catawba County know that this summer there's time to focus on more than one thing.

"We want them to have learned a little bit in their main instrument," Burton said. "We also want them to have learned a few other things and we want them to have had fun."

Contact: theharperschool.org or call 754-2297.