

The Hour

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A2 | The Hour

NEWS

Music mentoring through library website

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Local residents now have a small army of world-class musicians at the ready to serve as their personal music mentors through a new program offered by the Norwalk Public Library.

ArtistWorks for Libraries is a free, online resource that has just been made available to anyone with a Norwalk Public Library card. The self-teaching programs deliver instruction in music, voice and even fine arts, with topics ranging from bluegrass banjo lessons from Grammy-winner Tony Trischka to deejay scratching lessons from DJ Qbert.

There are 30 music courses in total, with one fine arts lesson also in the series, and they are all part of a special ArtistWorks group available through the Norwalk Public Library website in partnership with RBdigital from Recorded Books Inc.

"We offer other RB Digital Database offerings," said Cynde Bloom Lahey, director of library information services at the Norwalk Public Library. "When we became aware of ArtistWorks, we thought it would be a unique resource for the community. We have many people looking for an independent method of learning to play an instrument or to create art, but are either too shy or can't afford to take lessons from an instructor. We, as a public library, can provide the access to our community for these kinds of opportunities via a free and convenient method that they can connect to from their homes."

ArtistWorks is accessible through the library's website (norwalklib.org) by going first to the "research" tab, located on the buttons across the top of the homepage, then going to "databases and internet resources." The databases are alphabetical, and ArtistsWorks pops up in this list.

The Norwalk Public Library's other RB Digital database offerings include

digital magazines through Zinio, more than 500 online continuing education courses through Universal Class, Bestselling eAudio and eBook titles through OneClickdigital and many bestselling books on CD.

The ArtistWorks for Libraries program is a modified version of the paid-subscription series available at ArtistWorks.com, as it does not include a video exchange component or a few other courses. However, if they want to upgrade, Norwalk Public Library cardholders are eligible for a discount, according to Mike Daecher, chief marketing officer at ArtistWorks.

"They just use the promo code LIBRARY20, and they automatically get 20 percent reduced from any price they pay at ArtistWorks.com," he said, adding that the library's free series will be including more instruments in the weeks ahead.

"Ukulele and classical mandolin will become available to the libraries in September," said Daecher, followed by jazz drums and country vocals in November.

"We wanted to offer the



Contributed photos

From left, Missy Raines teaches bluegrass bass, Darol Anger teaches bluegrass fiddle and Tony Trischka teaches bluegrass banjo as part of the ArtistWorks program offered by the Norwalk Public Library.

full breadth of the instruments we offer, but more importantly, we hand-selected lessons that would cater to the needs of library members," he said. "Recorded Books helped us to understand their library patrons' needs so that we could make the most appropriate and helpful selections of music lessons for them."

Other online lessons in the free library series include jazz bass with John Patitucci, bluegrass mandolin with Mike Marshall, fiddle with Darol Anger, fingerstyle guitar with Martin Taylor, jazz huitar with Chuck Loeb, harmonica with Howard Levy and

voice with Jeannie Dava. "I absolutely believe that this will benefit families who can't afford music lessons," said Cynde Lahey. "It will help children develop a passion to learn an instrument or art form."

Lahey also noted that offering ArtistWorks for Libraries aligns with the organization's mission statement which states: "The Norwalk Public Library System, with our open access to diverse resources, is the information and cultural center for Norwalk citizens and businesses."

And the timing for obtaining a Norwalk Public

Library card couldn't be better. "September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month, and we want people to know that their library card opens up a world of information, culture, entertainment and education to families," said Lahey. Cards are also available for people who work full-time or part-time in Norwalk.

Those who obtain a card in September will also get a free pen. For guidelines, visit the library's website.

Mike Horyczun's Sound Surfing column appears every Saturday in The Hour. He can be reached at news2mb@gmail.com.