

June 30

Backstage Access:

Jennifer Teisinger, Executive Director of Bravo! Vail

I have confessed to my Bravo! Vail colleagues that music education is like my briar patch in the arts administration business. I grew up taking piano, clarinet, saxophone, and oboe lessons. I even studied the electric bass when I was in my late 20's when I was in my (very short) rock band phase. My first arts administration job was managing the San Jose Symphony Youth Orchestra and overseeing professional musicians performing in San Jose schools. So, you can understand why I love talking about Bravo's music education programs. I also have two daughters and a husband, so naturally, have my eye on recommendations for concerts for kids and families.

Here you go: Jennifer's Bravo picks for kids and families this summer!

Gershwin's Magic Key - Free Family Concerts (July 12): This should be at the top of your list for families with children. If you live down valley, take note! New this year, this concert will be presented a second time at the Lundgren Amphitheater in Gypsum at 6pm, in addition to earlier that day at 11am at the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater in Vail. What I like about these concerts for families is the program has been specifically designed for children. That means, each orchestral piece is short, the entire concert is only 50 minutes, and the music is supported by actors who tell a story which helps keep the kids engaged. In these concerts, the story is about a newspaper boy (remember those?) who meets the iconic American composer, George Gershwin, and together they explore the boy's musical interests.

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial (July 8 at 7:30pm): Orchestral performances with a feature film have become a core component of how orchestras program their year-round seasons. Why? Because hearing an orchestra play an entire film-score live while watching the movie is a captivating experience. When a studio orchestra records the music for a film, it is played in sections with many stops and starts often over a period of many days. For the Philadelphia Orchestra to play the fantastic John Williams award-winning film-score live while you watch E.T., the conductor is using a special monitor which helps him know how to line up the music with the film and the dialogue. It's a fascinating technical operation which turns into a highly unique experience for the rest of us!

Little Listeners at the Library: These events are a delightful way to introduce your little one to classical music -- short, engaging mini-recitals by professional orchestral musicians in an inviting setting of your local library. What makes these events memorable for the kids is the chance to hold and play an instrument after the concert. I am particularly excited about this aspect of these concerts because my daughter plays the violin today due to trying a violin at an event just like this when we lived in Idaho. Look for these events throughout July from Vail to Gypsum, at local public libraries.

I believe it is important to introduce children to classical music in the right way. You know your child the best and can judge when he or she is ready for the experience, and there are things you can do to help make the experience enjoyable for everyone. Choose a family-friendly concert if it is your child's first time. Then, graduate to the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater lawn for a full classical performance. It's ok if you need to leave early if the experience doesn't go as planned. You can always come back in the future! You can also prepare your child for the concert by listening to the music in advance, watching videos of

orchestras performing, or finding coloring pages of orchestral instruments to introduce your child to the orchestra. It can be fun dressing up for the concert or having a special snack at intermission, too.

You can also check out the Bravo! Vail website, which has many tips for how to make the concert experience enjoyable for children – before, during and afterward. Most of all, know that classical music is here to stay, and learning to enjoy it as a child is the foundation for a lasting love of this art form. Everyone can be a part of it!

Jennifer Teisinger is the executive director of the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, which runs through Aug. 4. For more information about the season and to purchase tickets, visit bravovail.org or call 877.812.5700.