

In the name of peace, Apple Hill wel

This weekend, thousands of students are arriving at Keene State College for the start of the new academic year.

Among them are Tania Twal of Jordan and Marina Galstyan of Armenia, surprised recipients of the 2007-08 Playing for Peace scholarships.

The one-year residency program, established four years ago, offers young musicians the opportunity to further their education in a peaceful environment, removed from the conflict of their homelands. It's a collaboration by the college and the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music in Nelson, the nonprofit that for more than 35 years has promoted peace through music.

The center was founded in 1971 by a small group of people who believed that chamber music, performed without a conductor, is a viable tool in developing harmonious communication in discordant relationships. Funded primarily by

individual contributions, foundation grants and tuition, the Apple Hill Chamber Players, since 1988, have toured American inner cities and embattled areas of the world, including the Middle East, Ireland and Asia. In 2005, they received a two-year U.S. Department of State grant to travel to Turkey, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Republic of Georgia, Russia,

Cyprus, Malaysia, Vietnam and Burma.

At each destination, besides performing, they hold workshops and classes; they also award scholarships to young musicians to the annual International Summer Music Festival in Sullivan. There worldwide participants of all ages and skill levels, from amateur to professional, live, study and perform in public concerts side by side. In 2006, 327 individuals representing the United States and 24 countries attended the five-session event.

Galstyan and Twal have attended several summer festivals. Both took part in 2007, expecting to return home at summer's end. Instead, they received letters from the nonprofit's staff, announcing they'd been selected for the year-long college scholarships, underwritten by area residents John and Jean Hoffman.

"We brainstorm all year, thinking of people who'd be great for the program," said Rupert Thompson, Apple Hill Chamber Players cellist. "We choose people based on their playing ability, but also for the types of people they are. We think of people who'd fit really well and who'd enjoy the opportunity."

While in Keene, Galstyan, 25, a pianist with an Armenian music conservatory, will study piano with Eric Stumacher, Apple Hill co-founder and chamber player who is leaving Apple Hill but has agreed to teach Galstyan

Making a
Difference
Nonprofits and people in the Monadnock Region

The agency

Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music

410 Apple Hill Road, P.O. Box 217, Sullivan 03445; 847-3371
www.applehill.org

The particulars

Interim executive director: Chuck Bingaman; **board president:** Dita Englund

Founded: 1971

Service area: Entire Monadnock Region, United States, Middle East, Asia, Europe

Staff: six full-time, 2 part-time, 20-25 volunteers

Annual budget: \$778,000

Mission

Playing for Peace. To create intensely expressive music in concerts, workshops, and festivals to inspire and promote friendship, community, peace, and understanding between and among peoples of diverse backgrounds and conflicting cultures — at Apple Hill, throughout the United States, and throughout the world.

comes two KSC students



STEVE HOPER / Sentinel Staff

From left: Apple Hill staff member and cellist Rupert Thompson, Marina Galstyan and Tania Twal.

through the academic year.

Twal, 27, second French horn player for Jordan's only symphony orchestra, also teaches guitar at the National Music Conservatory in Amman. She will continue her studies with Keene State faculty member and classical guitarist Jose Lezcano.

"But, they'll be experiencing not just the music side of things," Thompson said. "They'll experience a regular campus and a full program of studies."

On Tuesday, August 28, the International Summer Music Festival holds its final public concert. Details available at www.applehill.org.

Meanwhile, with full support of their families, the two young musicians eagerly anticipate the upcoming academic year and their first Monadnock winter.

"We're going shopping," said Twal, who plans to learn to ski this season.

Soon to depart for tours to the Middle East, Ireland and England, the Apple Hill Chamber Players heartily congratulate their young protégées.

"It's a great opportunity," Thompson said. "We're used to seeing them in their own countries and at Apple Hill. Now, we're happy that they'll be in Keene all year."

— Joan Geary

"Making a Difference," a weekly feature, is a collaborative project of The Keene Sentinel and Giving Monadnock, which seeks to raise public awareness of the role of nonprofit agencies in the Monadnock Region. For more information, e-mail info@givingmonadnock.org or call 357-7171.