



AMANDA THOMPSON

1. Asher Kasper on piano. 2. Ezra Rosen on bass. 3. Stella Rosen on guitar.



ROCK STAR DREAMS

Young campers practice skills at Temple Israel's Shul of Rock

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Many kids dream of becoming a rock star. The lure of the lights, the roar of adoring crowds and the exhilarating beats are almost irresistible for some. While the fantasy might feel unattainable, the musicians at Temple Israel's Shul of Rock summer camp are discovering their inner rocker and living that dream. Their band is called Pentagon, and 7-year-old Stella Rosen explains the genesis for the name. "There are five sides on a pentagon and there are five people in the band." During the school year, these band mates play together in Temple Israel's after-school music program, which welcomes participants of all ages and skill

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NEIL COKER AND MARK HINSON
DEMOCRAT WRITER AND SENIOR WRITER

MOVIES

THERE MIGHT BE GIANTS: An easygoing giant (Mark Rylance) befriends a precocious 10-year-old girl (Ruby Barnhill) but the other ill-tempered Goliaths in his neighborhood don't like it much and London is soon put into peril in director Steven Spielberg's live-action animated adventure "BFG." It's rated PG and opens Friday at Governor's Square and AMC 20.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE JUNGLE: The English aristocrat Lord Greystoke (Alexander Skarsgård), who once lived wild in the jungles of Africa, is invited back to the Congo by businessmen under dubious circumstances and falls back into his vine-swinging ways in "The Legend of Tarzan." It's rated PG-13 and opens Friday at Governor's Square and AMC 20.

DRESSED TO KILL: It's survival of the fittest — and the most aggressively well-armed — when a security chief (Frank Grillo) fights to protect his boss (Elizabeth Mitchell), a U.S. senator, when they are stranded on the streets of Washington, D.C., during a night when murder is legal in the bloody thriller "The Purge: Election Year." It's rated R and opens Friday at Governor's Square and AMC 20.



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levels. As an extension, the summer camp was created so young musicians could continue to hone their skills and expand their repertoire.

These campers are playing all the instruments you might expect, including drums and electric guitar, but unexpectedly, they're composing their own music. On the piano, Stella and a friend wrote the main idea for the song "Before the Storm," which was further developed by the band. Stella's 12-year-old brother, Ezra Rosen, said, "We added in different things like drums and such and we have what we have now."

Asher Kasper, 9, said that "the first time that we perfected it, it was on a stormy day."

Camp leader Alex Molina offers gentle guidance and helps campers learn the ins and outs of being in a band, including caring for and setting up the instruments and equipment. "We put the strings on the guitar. Asher takes apart the drum set and puts it back together. Ezra set the settings on his pedal. We all set up the microphone for the piano because we felt it wasn't loud enough on its own."

Though Molina refrains from the rigidity of more traditional music lessons, the instruction he provides is no less valuable. Asher's brother, 12-year-old Zachary Kasper, said that one of his favorite things that Molina taught him was "how to do a fill-in, which is a bunch of strikes on a snare drum in a certain pattern."

There's a pervasive spirit of unity within Pentagon, but individuality is also celebrated. Molina encourages the band members to improvise solos and to come up with their own ideas for unique rhythms and compositions. As a friendly teasing about one band member's breath, the group came up with a new song titled "Old Milk." Though the song's inspiration was playfully immature, the way the band members interact is anything but.

Though soft-spoken, Molina's voice filled with pride as he addressed the campers. "You guys are excellent, you work together, play together, you talk without even using words." It is clear that Molina is as engaged in the creative process as the young musicians he is nurturing. "I just like hanging out with these guys and making music. It's the best part of my day."

Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Education and Exhibitions director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture (www.tallahasseearts.org).



PHOTOS BY AMANDA THOMPSON

TOP: Pentagon practices at Shul of Rock camp at Temple Israel.
BOTTOM: Teacher Alex Molina on the drums.