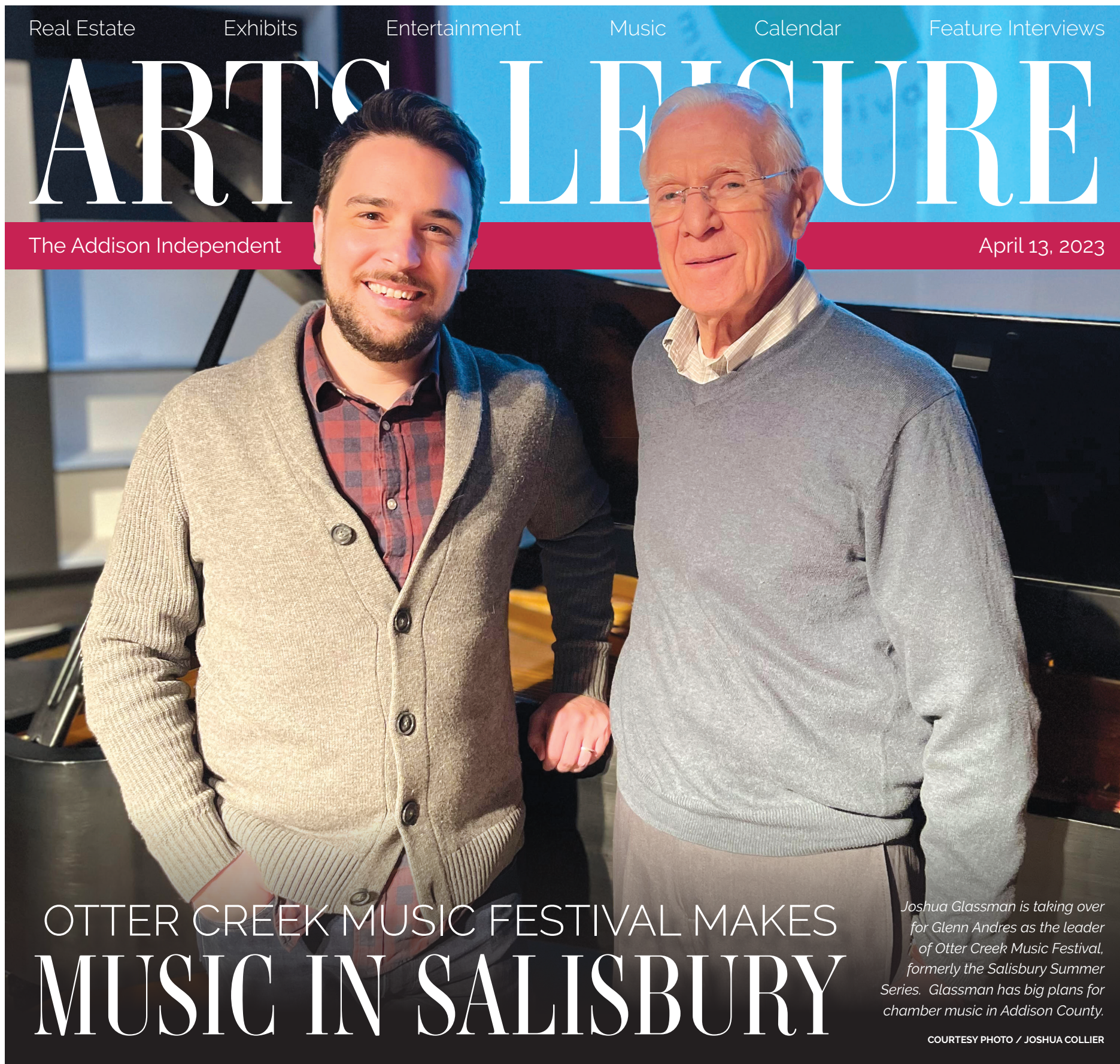


ARTS LEISURE

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OTTER CREEK MUSIC FESTIVAL MAKES MUSIC IN SALISBURY

Joshua Glassman is taking over for Glenn Andres as the leader of Otter Creek Music Festival, formerly the Salisbury Summer Series. Glassman has big plans for chamber music in Addison County.

COURTESY PHOTO / JOSHUA COLLIER

For the past four decades, summertime in Salisbury has meant music — chamber music. The music will be back at the Salisbury Congregational Church again this summer, just under a different name and run by a new leader.

Musician and arts administrator

BY **ELSIE**

LYNN PARINI

Joshua Glassman will take the reins from Glenn Andres and transform the

Salisbury Summer Series into a music festival model, while maintaining the charm and appeal the series has throughout the local community. Glassman's plan is to host five events of free music by Point CounterPoint

Camp at the church (just like in years past) from June through August. And then add in an inaugural Otter Creek Music Festival, held July 24-30 (with possibly a second week, depending on scheduling).

Glassman, though based in Boston, has his own history with Salisbury as a former Point CounterPoint camp counselor and choir instructor.

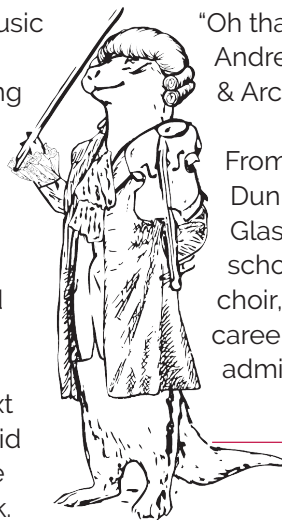
"I remember a rooster crowing next door when we were practicing," said Glassman looking across the table to Andres in an interview last week.

That next-door neighbor was Andres.

"Oh that rooster is long gone now," answered Andres, Professor Emeritus of History of Art & Architecture at Middlebury College.

From those three summers on Lake Dunmore in the early 2010s, life took Glassman on a journey through grad school, teaching high school and collegiate choir, his own professional musical career as a tenor, and eventually into arts administration. These days, he "pays his

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Meet Jaques Otter Bach, the Otter Creek Music Festival's friendly mascot.

OTTER

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rent" as the Individual Giving Officer and Assistant Conductor for the Boston Children's Chorus.

Glassman was pulled up to Vermont more regularly because his in-laws bought a property in Shoreham — where his brother-in-law founded Chertok Wines.

"My wife and I got married there on the orchard in 2021," Glassman explained. "I started to get to know Shoreham... and begin to have dreams of starting a chamber music festival up here."

Glassman reached out to Jenny Beck, the executive director at Point CounterPoint Camp, and she connected Glassman to Andres. The two hit it off and began talking succession plans.

"To me it was a no brainer," Glassman said when Andres suggested he take over the leadership of the summer concert series in Salisbury. "He basically said to me, 'You have carte blanche, but do not remove music from the Salisbury church.'"

"That's about right," Andres said. "What we're trying to assure is the continuity of the building."

The building is an incredible structure filled with history, if you didn't already know.

"The church was actually established in 1804, and the building constructed in 1838,"

Andres explained. So back in 1979 when Point CounterPoint, the Salisbury Congregational Church and Andres founded the Salisbury Summer Series, it was the 175th anniversary for the church (and more or less the 140th anniversary of the building.)

"We operated for 42 years on a breakeven basis," Andres said. "We couldn't offer a large honorarium to musicians who came to play... but there's something about the space — the acoustics are miraculous and musicians love to come and play here."

The former Salisbury Summer Series hosted free chamber music once a week. That's not feasible for Glassman, so he's condensing the schedule into a festival week or two, with a sprinkling of Point CounterPoint concerts throughout the season.

Glassman quickly established a website for the Otter Creek Music Festival (ottercreekmusicfestival.com) and locked in Barn Opera as the official fiscal sponsor with the support of Barn Opera Artistic Director Joshua Collier.

Get this: Both are named Joshua. Both are tenors. And both are from Boston. The only notable difference is one is into chamber music and the other opera.

"I've gotten the nick-name 'Otter Josh,'" Glassman said laughing. "No, but seriously, there is a market for chamber music in Addison County... The timing feels right."

So in his "spare time," Glassman is professionalizing what's been a grassroots operation until now.

"This is the community's festival though," Glassman reiterated, adding that the operating budget will be raised through community donations. "We're hoping to raise \$15,000 this first year."

Glassman has aspirations of the Otter Creek Music Festival raising \$100,000 and being a destination festival for acclaimed chamber music.

To be clear, Glassman doesn't want to lose the grassroots touch. "Vermont exhibits excellence without pretension," he said. "I don't want this to become too elite, but I also want to produce the best festival possible."

By keeping some concerts free and open to the public, the hope is for everyone to come and enjoy chamber music throughout the summer. "It's a way of democratizing culture," Andres added.

Glassman has his door wide open to anyone interested in supporting the Otter Creek Music Festival — from corporate sponsors to community members with beds to share when musicians are in town.

"There's no such thing as a bad idea," he said. "There are lots of different ways to support us."

Including a benefit concert coming up on Saturday, May 6, 7 p.m., at the Salisbury Congregational Church. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased online at OtterCreekMusicFestival.com. Performers will include the Heliand Consort, Claire Black and Atlantic Crossing's Rick Klein and Peter Macfarlane.

Editor's note: To support the Otter Creek Music festival visit ottercreekmusicfestival.com to see instructions for both online and check payments.

"THIS IS THE COMMUNITY'S FESTIVAL."

— Joshua Glassman



Lindy Bortney directs Maiden Vermont on the front steps of the Salisbury Congregational Church during one of the Salisbury Summer Series performances. COURTESY PHOTO

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