

# Students in Floyd, Rocky Mount to attend White House concert

**The roughly 20 young musicians will get to see Brad Paisley and Alison Krauss perform.**

By [Tad Dickens](#) – Roanoke Times – July 16, 2009

About 20 children from Floyd and Rocky Mount will join kids from around the country at the White House next week to hear a concert from country music superstars Brad Paisley and Alison Krauss and Union Station.

The Tuesday event will be the second in first lady Michelle Obama's music series, which began in June with jazz musicians including Wynton, Branford and Ellis Marsalis. A classical music-themed show is scheduled for fall.

According to the White House, 120 middle- and high-school children were invited. Fifteen of them are from Floyd Music School, in Floyd. Four are students at Downtown Music, in Rocky Mount.

Paisley and Krauss, who combined on the hit single "Whiskey Lullaby" a few years back, will participate in an hour-long educational workshop focused on songwriting and country music traditions. They will perform at 7:30 p.m. President Obama will address the children at the performance.

Floyd Music School owner Mike Mitchell said he was surprised and humbled at the White House's invitation, which he received a couple of weeks ago. His school has only been around for three years.

"I hope that the kids will be inspired to work hard at their studies ... and to feel that a career in the music industry, even at the very upper level, is possible with a lot of hard work," said Mitchell, a classically trained violinist who also performs bluegrass with several regional acts. "I also hope that Floyd Music School kids will be instilled with some pride in our school, our town and our efforts."

Mitchell said he was told that the school's "heritage music" studies inspired the invitation.

"We don't just teach classical music," Mitchell said. "We have violin players in the Roanoke Symphony, and they play [the Old Fiddlers Convention] at Galax, too."

Fifteen students from Mountain Music School, a summer program at Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, are attending, said the college's Sue Ella Boatright-Wells.

Downtown Music owner Gabe Stalnaker said that the office of U.S. Rep. Tom Perriello, D-Va., gave his school four tickets for students. Perriello's press secretary, Jessica Barba, said the congressman's office also distributed 12 tickets for music students in Southside and central Virginia.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/212008>