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## Moscow is still making art during the pandemic

### Music, art businesses have found ways to connect with clients during shutdown

By Garrett Cabeza For the Tribune 16 hrs ago



Michelle Karel-Ward teaches an online introductory guitar class for children on Tuesday from her home near Troy. Karel-Ward is the owner of Moscow Music Academy, which has temporarily suspended in-person lessons because of the coronavirus. Geoff Crimmins/Daily News



**MOSCOW** — The closure of local music and art businesses because of the COVID-19 pandemic has made the internet more important than ever.

Moscow Music Academy is offering free online music lessons, including guitar and ukulele classes, this month.

The free, 30-minute classes are twice a week for three weeks. Some of the free sessions started Tuesday, but, according to the company's website, all of the free classes are full this month. More free sessions could be added next month.

Michelle Karel-Ward, owner, director and professor of music at Moscow Music Academy, is teaching the lessons.

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"I just want to be able to give something back to my community, and I thought this would be kind of a fun way to get started with that," Karel-Ward said.

She said she is providing the free classes so people can be engaged and have fun at home during the pandemic.

"There's so many kids that are cooped up at home — even some adults that are going stir-crazy," Karel-Ward said. "Kids are driving them nuts."

The free classes, which she said cover the "core concepts," are done using the popular Zoom software application. The app allows students to see Karel-Ward and Karel-Ward to see her group of students.

While the free group online lessons are new territory, Karel-Ward said Moscow Music Academy has always provided one-on-one music lessons for its students. She said the academy switched exclusively to online Zoom lessons March 25 because of the coronavirus.

She said many parents of students are excited the academy offers online classes and did not completely shut down.

"It's just a great way to keep in touch with our students," Karel-Ward said.

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