

Newport Mansions Brings Live Music to Historic Halls

Sessions series turns iconic properties into intimate performance spaces



Laden Valley – Dave Sarazen, left, and Evan St. Martin – record a song in the Dining Room of The Elms in Newport, R.I.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEWPORT MANSIONS

By Jenna Kaplan

Live music is finding a new kind of stage in Newport, where 19th-century wallpaper and century-old chandeliers set the scene. Beginning in January, Newport Mansions will launch *Sessions*, a new video series featuring stripped-down acoustic performances filmed inside some of the most historic homes in the country.

Each set is recorded live in a single, continuous take using one condenser microphone. The approach allows the character of each room to shape the sound naturally, with no audience and no retakes.

“These recordings are unique opportunities to create something beautiful and lasting,” said Ashley Bard, content marketing and studio manager for Newport Mansions. “They’re moments where the setting becomes part of the performance.”

The series premieres January 8 with an indie-folk performance by The Ballroom Thieves, filmed last summer at Marble House, the former home of Gilded Age socialite and women’s rights activist Alva Vanderbilt. All videos will be released in full on the Newport Mansions YouTube channel, @Newport.Mansions.

New performances will follow monthly. On February 12, Americana trio The Wood Brothers will appear in a session filmed at The Breakers’ Stables and Carriage House. On March 12, local roots-folk band Laden Valley will be featured in a set filmed at The Elms, a summer estate known for its appearance in HBO’s *The Gilded Age*.

Through *Sessions*, Newport Mansions aims to introduce its historic properties to a broader audience while offering a fresh way to experience them.

“Music has the ability to reframe how people experience a space,” said Kevin O’Leary, marketing director for Newport Mansions. “Nothing like these sessions has ever taken place inside our properties, and we hope they inspire new interest in these remarkable places.” For updates, follow @Newport.Mansions on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, or sign up for the newsletter at NewportMansions.org.