

# MENDOCINO MUSIC FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION

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## **The Mendocino Music Festival: Entering a Third Decade of Musical Excellence – the Classical Concerts**

Mendocino Music Festival Artistic Director and Conductor Allan Pollack has announced the program for the 2007 season, scheduled for Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>. The festival continues to reach for the stars with an eclectic and wide ranging program, striving to entice a diverse audience to what Pollack describes as a "...phenomenal array of talent and artistry."

The classical concerts promise a dazzling display of orchestral prowess, operatic invention and eclectic chamber music offerings. On Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 8 PM the opening night orchestra concert will begin with Mikhail Glinka's Overture to *Ruslan and Ludmila*; a celebratory burst of sheer musical joy. Though influenced by the Russian folk tunes of his youth, Glinka's overture exudes an almost 4<sup>th</sup> of July level of parade-like pageantry. The overture will be followed by Sergei Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5, which, though written under the cruel reign of Stalin, manages to be fanciful and uplifting. This is tonal, melodic music, masterfully and creatively orchestrated. The concert will conclude with Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, featuring award-winning violinist Daniel Austrich as the soloist. Tchaikovsky created this lush music, as imaginative for the orchestra as it is for the solo instrument, just after he experienced a period of broken health and a failed marriage.

The second orchestra concert, on Friday, July 13, marks the return of Company C Contemporary Ballet; the troupe that brought Igor Stravinsky's *Fire Bird Suite* to vivid life last season. The concert will begin with the dancers and orchestra performing the wildly elated buzz of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee". The orchestra will perform Zoltan Kodaly's *Dances of Galanta*, which were commissioned by the Budapest Philharmonic Society in 1933, and inspired by Hungarian folk dances and rhythms and gypsy melodies. Next on the program the orchestra will perform *Le Boeuf sur*

*le Toit* (Ox on the Roof), a witty, satirical ballet written by French composer Darius Milhaud and inspired by Brazilian music. The dancers rejoin this exotic world tour of music with American composer Aaron Copland's foot stompin' "Hoe Down" from *Rodeo*. The remarkable pianist Helene Wickett, who performed Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 in the 2005 season, will join the orchestra and dancers in George Gershwin's brilliant tribute to the "Roaring Twenties", *Rhapsody in Blue*. The concert will end with the orchestra and dancers performing Maurice Ravel's *Bolero*, with its relentless, sensuous crescendo that slowly weaves its way toward the stunning climax.

The third orchestra concert on Wednesday, July 18 will begin with Johannes Brahms' Symphony No. 2. Brahms' early works were mostly for piano and he did not begin writing symphonies until age 43, when he had matured as a composer. The music ranges from serene introspection to playful to ebullient good cheer. In fact, two of the four movements are in waltz time. The concert will conclude with Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 4 in G Major for Soprano and Orchestra featuring the crystal clear voice and riveting stage presence of Nicolle Foland, who performed to great acclaim in Ravel's *Shéhérazade* during the 2005 festival season. Like Ludwig van Beethoven before him, Mahler could lead the listener from darkness into a sublime sweetness that would seem saccharine if not contrasted with the pain it had transcended. Symphony No.4 gradually moves the listener, ever more outward, until finally the soprano sings of a glorious heavenly realm, pastoral and calm, full of earthly joys of various kinds, even a vegetable garden.

On closing night, Saturday, July 21, the Festival Orchestra and opera cast will present a concert version of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's masterpiece *Così fan tutte*. This is pure *opera buffa*, comic opera; a style that arose in 17th century Italy, continued through the 19th century to include *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss, and inspired the clever silliness of Gilbert and Sullivan. The story told in *Così fan tutte* is sublimely hilarious, involving wagers, infidelity, disguises, and magnetic cures and, of course, a grand reconciliation. The music is inventive and joyful, filled with buoyant arias and sparkling ensembles, making it a fitting finale to the Music Festival. The cast includes the two sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella performed by soprano Nicolle Foland and mezzo soprano Zheng Cao; the two suitors to the sister, Guglielmo and Ferrando, performed by bass/baritone Matthew Treviño and tenor Kalil Wilson; Despina, the chambermaid to the sisters, performed by soprano Sarah Viola and the old philosopher Don Alfonso, performed by bass Bojan Knezevic.

The 2007 festival features a fine diversity of chamber music concerts. The Janaki String Trio, performing on Sunday, July 15 at 4 PM (a departure from the usual evening hour), is among the swiftest rising young chamber ensembles performing today. The trio, Serena McKinney on violin, Katie Kadarauich on viola, and Arnold Choi on cello, takes its name from the Sanskrit word Janaki (YAHN-uh-kī), which symbolizes self-realization – the underpinning artistic and spiritual ideal entwining composer, musician and listener. The musicians have a fresh, energetic yet sensitive approach to music, not only with the standard works of the repertory, but also with rarely heard masterworks, such as Penderecki’s gripping String Trio, which will be featured in this performance.

Time For Three (Tf3), a group that defies categorization but is intent on exploring repertoire that stretches beyond the limits of convention, performs on Tuesday, July 17 at 8 PM. In concert, a bluegrass standard like “Orange Blossom Special” may be followed by a gypsy tinged *Csardas*. Tf3 is equally comfortable offering its own arrangements of shorter classical works and popular hits, whether Brahms or the Beatles. The classically trained members of the trio met while studying at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. The trio, double bassist Ranaan Meyer and violinists Zach DePue and Nick Kendall, has entertained audiences at the Philly Pops, 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in New York, Stern Grove in San Francisco and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

Susan Waterfall will be your guide on Thursday, July 19 at 8 PM for a geographical, historical, and musical tour of the life and times of Leos Janacek, with performances of some of the Czechoslovakian composer's great music by Waterfall on piano, Concertmaster Roy Malan, Principal Cellist Jill Rachuy Brindel and soprano Paula Goodman Wilder, amongst others. When Janacek died in 1928 he was scarcely known beyond the borders of his native Moravia. Eighty years later more new productions of his operas are mounted each year than those of any 20th century composer and his *Sinfonietta* and *Glagolitic Mass* are highlights of any orchestral season. The colorful music on this evening will include movements from the string quartets, the violin sonata, “Fairy Tale” for Cello and Piano, “Youth” for Wind Sextet, and the Concertino for Piano and Chamber Orchestra. Period photographs, posters, paintings, and maps will be projected in a multi-media presentation to transport you to the fascinating world of Leos Janacek.

This season’s Piano Series will feature three distinctly different lecture/recitals, all at 3 PM at Preston Hall, Main Street, in Mendocino. Gloria Cheng, recognized as one of today’s foremost interpreters of contemporary music, performs works by Takemitsu, Stucky, Messiaen and Adams on Saturday, July

14. Award-winning Concert Guild Artist Tanya Bannister will perform on Tuesday, July 17. Her program, *Hidden Voices*, explores works by women composers through the ages, including Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, Lili Boulanger, and Ruth Crawford Seeger, amongst others. On Wednesday, July 18, perennial favorite Paul Hersh will discuss and perform works by Brahms that were not originally composed for piano but were later transcribed by Brahms for piano.

Participants in the Young Musicians Scholarship Program will perform two concerts of chamber music, the first a free recital on Sunday, July 15 at 7 PM in Preston Hall. The second performance is a concert on Saturday, July 21 at 2 PM at the Festival Performance Tent. The Young Musicians, between the ages of 16 and 24, rehearse and perform with the Festival Orchestra and attend coaching sessions and rehearsals for their chamber music performances. Skilled, passionate and committed, these young players perform with an intensity and concentration that would be deemed admirable in seasoned professionals.

On Sunday, July 15 at 11 AM (another new time for this concert), Maestro Allan Pollack will lead the Festival Orchestra in the Children's Concert. Pollack will introduce the instrument sections of the orchestra to the audience and talk about how all the musicians work together to perform symphonic music. After playing several selections from the season repertoire, Pollack will invite youngsters (of all ages) to come up on the stage, meet the musicians, and try their hand at playing the instruments. This "Instrument Petting Zoo" is a delightful event for children, their parents and grandparents, and the musicians.

Tickets for these (and an array of contemporary concerts) go on sale April 30. For more information or to buy tickets, call 707-937-4041, or visit the festival website at [mendocinomusic.com](http://mendocinomusic.com).