



## Music Groups Stirring Up a Summer of Sound

Elaine Strauss | June 3, 2015

The summer months of 2015 are blooming, and concerts, festivals, institutes, and individuals are competing for attention. While Princeton is prominent, the offerings reflect a region ripe with artistry. And simultaneously scheduled programs will challenge concertgoers to choose between appealing happenings.

To keep the bounty orderly, this survey looks first at single events, in chronological order, and then moves on to organizations with multiple events.

La Fiocco, "Love, Passion, and Music." St. Paul's Catholic Church, 214 Nassau Street, Princeton. Saturday, June 6, 7:30 p.m. \$10 to \$25. [www.lafiocco.org](http://www.lafiocco.org).

On Saturday, June 6, La Fiocco, a baroque ensemble using period instruments, makes its first Princeton performance with "Love, Passion, and Magic" at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Princeton. (A second performance takes place in Solebury, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, June 7.) Based in Bucks County, Fiocco's Princeton roots are deep. Artistic director Lewis R. Baratz is the creator of WWFM's show "Well-Tempered Baroque." Soprano Laura Heimes, known for presenting music by 17th-century composer Isabella Leonarda, is a member of Le Triomphe de l'Amour, the baroque quintet that performs regularly in Princeton. And Pennington resident John Orluk Lacombe, a Princeton University office coordinator, plays lute and baroque guitar with the group.

New Brunswick Chamber Orchestra, Christ Church, 5 Paterson Street, New Brunswick, Sunday, June 7, 4 p.m. \$10 to \$20. [www.newbrunswickchamberorchestra.org](http://www.newbrunswickchamberorchestra.org).

Coinciding with Fiocco's Solebury performance is a concert by the New Brunswick Chamber Orchestra on Sunday, June 7 in New Brunswick's Christ Church. Mark Hyczko, NBCO artistic director, conducts. John Sheridan, director of music at Christ Church, solos in a concerto by the late New Jersey-born composer Steven Paulus. He plays the church's two-manual, 24-stop organ, an instrument that attracts solo performers from the United States and abroad.

The program includes "Skin," a newly commissioned work for soprano, strings, and percussion by Rutgers composition student Liza Sobel.

Akiko Tanaka, violin and Ena Bronstein Barton, piano, Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, Princeton University. Saturday, June 20, 3 p.m. \$10 to \$15. 609-921-7104 or [www.rider.edu/arts](http://www.rider.edu/arts).

On Saturday, June 20, Japanese violinist Akiko Tanaka, veteran international prizewinner, and pianist Ena Bronstein Barton, head of the piano department at Westminster Conservatory, join forces for a program that benefits the conservatory, the community arm of Rider University's Westminster College of the Arts. Assembled primarily from romantic repertoire, the program includes the Cesar Franck Sonata for Violin and Piano in A Major. The piece is notorious for the difficulty of the piano part. The performance takes place Saturday, June 20, in Taplin Auditorium. The duo repeats the program on Monday, June 22, at 8 p.m. in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.

Edward T. Cone Composition Institute/New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, compositions by participants performed at Richardson Auditorium, Princeton University. Thursday, July 16, 8 p.m. \$15. 800-255-3476 or [www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/four-new-orchestral-works](http://www.njsymphony.org/events/detail/four-new-orchestral-works).

The innovative Edward T. Cone Composition Institute, which broke new ground in Princeton in 2014, returns this season on Monday, July 12. The institute collaborates with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and, as in last year's successful enterprise, four emerging composers will work with institute director, composer, and Princeton University music department chair Steven Mackey, in creating new works.

Then NJSO members will guide the composers to making sure the scores are playable prior to an NJSO concert of the works on Thursday, July 16, in Richardson Auditorium on the Princeton campus.

## **Princeton Festival**

In contrast to the above individual concerts, the Princeton Festival — with events scheduled from June 6 through 28 — is vast. Anchoring it are two fully staged music-dramas: "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" (Friday, June 12, through Sunday, June 28) and Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" (Saturday, June 13, and Sundays, June 21 and 28).

Princeton Festival audiences will again encounter the familiar features that have repeatedly filled its schedule with "don't miss" events. Returning programs in chamber music, choral music, a piano recital, and jazz, as well as the annual piano competition for young artists, are on the agenda.

To help audiences sort it all out, a festival preview is set for Thursday, June 4, at Princeton Public Library. In addition to presenting scenes from the featured music dramas "Figaro" and "Spelling Bee," the program includes a discussion with the productions' directors, and information about the festival's performances, free demonstrations, workshops, and lectures.

Nevertheless, the Princeton Festival is big enough to spawn its own internal scheduling conflicts. For example, the Saturday, June 6, evening of a cappella vocal jazz featuring the Tribunes and West Side 5 at Taplin Hall, is just one of four events that day. And the June 20 concert by the Concordia Chamber Players in Princeton's All Saints' Church overlaps with a scheduled performance of "Spelling Bee."

Country music makes its first appearance at the festival with guitarists Sarah Zimmerman and Justin Davis, who make up the duo “Striking Matches.” They perform on Sunday, June 21, in Princeton Day School’s McAneny Theater.

Also new is the Festival Baroque Orchestra, playing on period instruments on Wednesday, June 24, in Princeton Theological Seminary’s Miller Chapel. And the festival is also realizing its long-term wish to include dance, with the traditional north Indian music and dance group “Pradhanica” performing Saturday, June 27, in McCarter’s Berlind Theater.

Princeton Festival, Saturday, June 6, through Sunday, June 28, \$15 to \$140. See the complete program at [www.princetonfestival.org](http://www.princetonfestival.org). Purchase tickets by phone 609-258-2787.

### **Summer Chamber**

The Princeton University Summer Chamber Concerts marks its 48th season with a four-part series in June and July. Founded in 1968 by Barbara Sand, music journalist, pianist, and cellist, the free series has brought to Princeton fledgling groups that have gone on to earn places as international stars in the chamber music world; among them are the Emerson and Tokyo string quartets.

For a sizable number of Princeton children, the Summer Chamber Concerts are an early introduction to classical music. Marna Seltzer, the present director of Princeton University’s concert office, attended the series as a child and now arranges the concerts for the full year (including next’s season’s performance by the famous Emerson Quartet).

The summer’s four-concert series includes the Aeolus String Quartet, on Thursday, June 18; Vienna Piano Trio, Thursday, July 2; and Ariel Quartet, Tuesday, July 7. Of particular interest is the performance of the Trio Valtorna on Wednesday, July 22. It includes two pieces for horn, an often neglected instrument in the chamber music world: contemporary American composer John Harbison’s “Twilight Music for Horn, Piano, and Violin” and Johannes Brahms’ Horn Trio in E flat Major, Op. 40.

Participating in the Summer Chamber series is Princeton University professor of music history Scott Burnham, who will comment on pieces to be performed by the Vienna Trio on Thursday, July 2. A relaxed and playful lecturer, Burnham has assimilated his academic accomplishments with a compelling absence of pretension.

Princeton University Summer Chamber Concerts, Richardson Auditorium, Princeton University, June 18, July 2, July 7, July 22. Free tickets available at 6 p.m. on performance date. Concerts at 7:30 p.m. [www.princetonsummerchamberconcerts.org](http://www.princetonsummerchamberconcerts.org).

### **Golandsky Institute**

The Golandsky Institute Summer Symposium and its music festival add more music to Princeton when it returns for its 12th year. The project was founded by Edna Golandsky to advance the pioneering work of Dorothy Taubman in safeguarding the physical well-being of pianists while liberating their technical and expressive potential. It has two facets: an

educational daytime aspect aimed at performing musicians and open to the public and an evening festival consisting of six public performances.

The piano festival concerts open on Sunday, July 12, with a performance by Russian-born Ilya Itin of little-known works by Alexander Scriabin and Sergei Rachmaninoff. Itin's annual performances at this festival have developed an ardent following of Princetonians eager to hear the magic of his sound world.

On Tuesday, July 16, is a performance by Sean Duggan, exceptional for his sharing his experiences in preparing Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata with the listening audience. Veteran performer Duggan learned this most difficult of Beethoven's piano sonatas for the first time two years ago and performed it in Princeton while he was still in the process of deciphering the piece. The 2015 performance brings listeners up-to-date on Duggan's adventures with the sonata's challenges.

The previously mentioned Burnham, the author of the Princeton University Press book "Beethoven Hero," returns to set the scene for Duggan's masterwork concert on Tuesday, July 14, in McCormick Hall, adjacent to the Princeton University Art Museum.

Additional Golandsky festival programs include performances in Taplin Auditorium that reach beyond classical piano literature. Pianist Thomas Bagwell, tenor Alex Richardson, and cellist Sophie Shao perform Scandinavian chamber music on Monday, July 13. Dick Hyman plays jazz solos on Friday, July 17. Wei Luo, performs on Thursday, July 16. And concluding the festival, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and pianist Yehudi Wyner and clarinetist Richard Stoltzman present a program that includes a piece Wyner wrote for Stoltzman.

Golandsky Institute and Festival, Sunday, July 12, through Saturday, July 18. \$15 to \$20. [golandskyinstitute.org](http://golandskyinstitute.org).

## **Mason Gross**

While piano is the instrument of focus at the Golandsky Institute, the marimba comes into its own for the Zeltsman Marimba Festival, which runs from June 28 to July 11. Now in its 13th year, the festival gets its name from Nancy Zeltsman, a former Princeton resident, who teaches marimba at the Boston Conservatory and Boston's Berklee School of Music.

The Marimba Festival, an annual traveling event, takes place in 2015 with the co-sponsorship of Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts, at various locations on the Douglass College campus. The festival has been held in the Netherlands, Japan, and China, as well as in the United States. The 10 concerts in 2015 culminate with a marathon event featuring more than 40 marimba performers — performing as soloists and ensembles — on Saturday, July 11, in the Nicholas Music Center from 1 to 5 p.m.

Zeltsman Marimba Festival, Mason Gross Performing Arts Center, Douglass College Campus, New Brunswick. Sunday June 28, through Saturday, July 11. \$5 to \$15. [www.ZMF.us](http://www.ZMF.us).

The Mason Gross Performing Arts Center is also the setting for a five-event series of music and dance programs scheduled from Wednesday, July 15, through Friday, August 5. The Mason Gross summer series consists of jazz, music for brass instruments, two contemporary dance programs, and the revival of a Yiddish operetta.

The operetta revival, a rarity for central New Jersey, is Joseph Rumshinsky's Yiddish language work "Di Goldene Kale" (The Golden Bride). The action of the 1923 operetta takes place when an orphan girl comes into an inheritance and attracts several suitors. The performance is by the National Yiddish Theater — Folksbiene on Friday, July 5, in Nicholas Music Center.

Di Goldene Kale, Mason Gross Performing Arts Center, Nicholas Music Center, August 5, 7 p.m. \$5 to \$15. 848-932-7511 or [www.masongross.rutgers.edu/summer-series-2015](http://www.masongross.rutgers.edu/summer-series-2015).

### **NJ Symphony Orchestra**

The events listed above are all indoors. We are not without outdoor concerts, however. The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra contributes to the outdoor scene with a set of five free summer parks programs scattered throughout New Jersey. In our area the parks concert takes place Saturday, June 20, at the College of New Jersey in Ewing. Classical music makes up the first half of the evening. After intermission the orchestra plays Latin tunes, swing, and pop music. NJSO associate conductor Gemma New conducts.

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Free Summer Parks Programs, The College of New Jersey, Ewing. Saturday, June 20, 7:30 p.m. [www.njsymphony.org/summer](http://www.njsymphony.org/summer).

Other events are also in the planning process and an accompanying story (page 22) provides area music lovers with more options that provide a healthy crop of choices for this region of the Garden State.