

CABRILLO MUSIC FESTIVAL:

Offering Hot Summer Harmony

by Tamasin Middour

Originating 28 years ago in an Aptos cafe as impromptu chamber music, the Cabrillo Music Festival annually presents twelve concerts in a variety of locales during the last two weeks of July.

No ordinary series, say its supporters, its music bounces from the sizzling to the sublime, engaging the attention of both traditional classical concert-goers and popular fans.

While the Festival combines a special intimacy with a solid international reputation for orchestral excellence, it is adventurous programming that most distinguishes these concerts. Critiqued as the "hottest contemporary music festival in the country," it has received numerous awards for ingenious programming.

It is an exuberant dive into a sea of contemporary composition, taking regularly-spaced breaths in the form of pertinent selections from enduring masters.

Unlike the approach of European and other American festivals, which concentrate on either old or new music, this enlightening mix of the familiar with the fresh, continuity with change, constitutes a unique innovation. The audience participates in a fascinating opportunity to compare in juxtaposed immediacy a musical history with an energetic present and cutting-edge future.

Even more importantly, according to Festival cellist Roger Emanuels, "music which might otherwise have to remain on a piece of paper is performed and heard. Sometimes we have to wait for parts whose ink is still figuratively wet, so what the Festival does is very vital in that sense."

This emphasis on musical evolution allows Festival planners to give strong representation to cross-cultural works and may be one reason why

unabashed boosters appear throughout the community.

A desire to hear more works written by women will certainly be answered this year with the arrival of Tania Leon as composer-in-residence.

Under the baton of Music Director Dennis Russell Davies, the Festival orchestra draws its musicians from throughout the United States and beyond. Most of these artists are members of major orchestras and/or maintain heavy teaching schedules.

Nevertheless, they return year after year for the chance

Trio Basso
with viola,
cello and
bass.



to play exciting new music in a group of outstanding caliber. "It's the high quality of orchestra," says violinist Susan Brown, accounting for her fourteen-year participation.

Assistant Concertmaster Elizabeth Baker explains her motivation: "If I can give even one member of the audience something of the emotion and enthusiasm I feel about the music, it will have been worth all the work."

Davies himself contributes the incalculable benefit of his international renown as a leading conductor heavily in-

volved in current activities in Europe and New York.

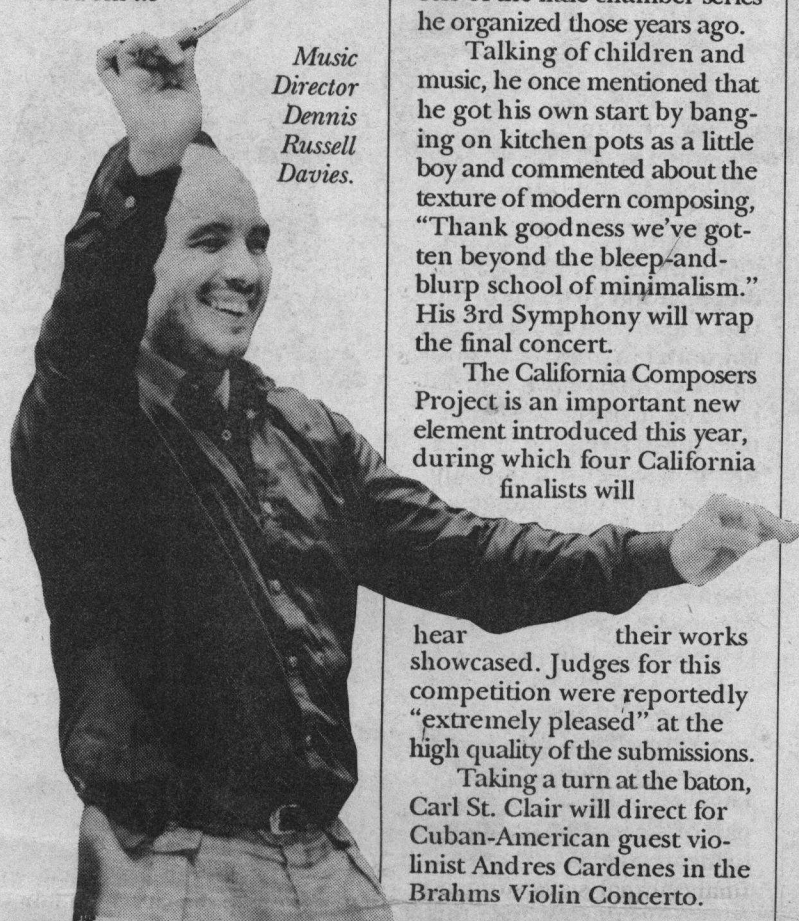
This summer's schedule, taking place from July 19-29, follows its usual format of composers-in-residence, guest conductors and featured soloists and ensembles. But even by Festival standards this season should prove particularly lively.

First composer-in-residence is the intense Leon whose work reflects influences of Afro-Cuban music and Latin Jazz. She will also share conducting.

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Next is the popular Philip Glass whose pieces are often described as hypnotic. ("They sure are," grumbled some strings a couple of years ago, groaning with boredom at



Music
Director
Dennis
Russell
Davies.

their repetitive parts. But the solemn violinist soared gorgeously above, smiling as he took his bows.

Last, but never least, is the warm, world-regarded wizardry of Aptos' Lou Harrison who must chuckle now and cress of the little chamber series he organized those years ago.

Talking of children and music, he once mentioned that he got his own start by banging on kitchen pots as a little boy and commented about the texture of modern composing, "Thank goodness we've gotten beyond the bleep-and-blurp school of minimalism." His 3rd Symphony will wrap the final concert.

The California Composers Project is an important new element introduced this year, during which four California finalists will

hear their works showcased. Judges for this competition were reportedly "extremely pleased" at the high quality of the submissions.

Taking a turn at the baton, Carl St. Clair will direct for Cuban-American guest violinist Andres Cardenes in the Brahms Violin Concerto.

Other featured artists include pianist Ursula Oppens, Cantamerica, a Costa Rican ensemble blending salsa, calypso, reggae and rhumba who plan a musical tribute to threatened rain forests, and Trio Basso, an unusual group with viola, cello and bass.

The Trio will also conduct a free master class for string ensembles in the Santa Cruz area which will be open for the public to observe.

While Brahms is the frequently featured master, selections for the series range from Schubert and Stravinsky to Bolcom and Barati. Bonus benefits abound for the alert listener in the free Pre-Concert Discussion Series, the free "Meet the Composer" question-and-answer session and free open rehearsals. (Stop for a parking pass for rehearsals held on the UCSC campus.) Or you might be able to slip yourself into the volunteer usher corps, trading time for music. 429-5053 evenings.

Held in several area churches, the old Mission at San Juan Bautista, and a winery in Saratoga, the concerts offer audiences a chance to compare architecture as well as acoustics.

Ticket prices range from \$3-\$6 (children under 12 are free) for Concert 3, \$8-\$15



Pianist Ursula Oppens.

then at the spectacular success for Concert 11, and \$15 and \$20 for the remaining.

Proceeds from "An Evening with Philip Glass" will benefit the Greater Santa Cruz County Community Foundation Relief Fund.

For programs, rehearsal schedules and ticket information call 662-2701 or drop by the administrative office in Aptos at 9053 Soquel Drive to discover the treasure of Santa Cruz County, the Cabrillo Music Festival. □