

Tradition with a flair

Cabrillo Music Festival
Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music returns for 42nd year on cutting edge

By CHANDLER HARRIS
FOR THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

The Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music has been bringing some of the top contemporary musicians and composers from the nation to Santa Cruz for 42 years, and this year that tradition continues with flair.

The festival had a warm-up Tuesday night at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium with a scorching performance from renowned violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg playing Clarice Assad's Violin Concerto.

The pre-festival concert began with a casual question-and-answer interview with Salerno-Sonnenberg and composer Assad, with Music Director Marin Alsop hosting, and was interspersed with solo and duet performances. Then came the performance conducted by Alsop with Salerno-Sonnenberg intensely performing solo violin over emotive orchestral works.

This year, the festival — named after Cabrillo College, where the event was originally held, but is no longer — promises to be yet another mind-expansive chapter in its 40-plus-year cutting-edge history. Renowned contemporary classical musicians and composers share the bill, while maestro Alsop conducts the award-winning Cabrillo Festival Orchestra during the two-week event.

The festival officially kicks off Friday night with a pre-concert talk by Alsop and dinner served al fresco, followed by three intriguing performances. The highlight is "Vespertine Symphonies," written by Kevin Puts, who wrote the piece after becoming inspired by watching a Bjork music video and subsequently exploring her music. Named after Bjork's album, every melodic line of "Vespertine Symphonies" is meant to reflect the contours and motives of Bjork's singing style.



Courtesy of Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music

Music Director Marin Alsop continues to keep the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music at the forefront of the modern music scene.

Grammy Award winner Kronos Quartet will make its first of two appearances on opening night with "My Beautiful Scream." Backed by the festival orchestra, the piece is described as a long and unfolding musical scream. Kronos Quartet will have an exclusive performance Sunday night.

The entire family can enjoy the festival on Sunday with Mr. Smith's Bowl of Notes. The free concert features Disney composer Gregory Smith in a performance that ex-

At a glance

WHAT: Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music.

WHEN: Friday through Aug. 15.

TICKETS: \$20 and up.

DETAILS: 420-5260;
www.cabrillomusic.org.

plores various styles of music of the past 400 years using 12 notes. Advance tickets are available at the

Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium.

Then, on Aug. 12, the annual benefit concert, "Music at the Millpond," promises to be a "sensory feast." Held at a pastoral Millpond in Soquel, the lavish event features wine, food, an auction and an outdoor concert in a redwood cathedral.

On Aug. 14, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra will perform the "Dharma at Big Sur," written by

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years ago.

And the reason that such renowned artists come to Santa Cruz County annually for this event is due in large part to the prestige of the festival, said Ellen Primack, executive director of the festival.

"It is in part because of the extraordinary contemporary music we do, the fact they can work with a talent like Marin Alsop to do new works with the composer present and to work with an orchestra who comes from all over the country, who is enthusiastic about Santa Cruz and the caliber of work we do with the artists," Primack said.