

Entertainment

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Cabrillo season offers a mix

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Composer and conductor John Adams unveiled the details of July's Cabrillo Music Festival season Thursday — an unusual mix that includes an evening of French Romantic music and an afternoon of Persian dance, a retrospective of 20th Century British conductor-composer Benjamin Britten and a performance by a black gospel choir from Oakland, a theater-music soprano "showcase" titled "Urban Diva," along with a co-production with Tandy Beal's dance company... and even a bit of Mozart.

Above all, the season includes a generous sampling of music written by John Adams himself, including recent works such as "Eros Piano."

Adams modestly put little emphasis on his own works in Thursday's press conference, but he is clearly the Cabrillo Festival's primary draw this year. Adams' second opera, "The Death of Klinghoffer," premiered just weeks ago in Brussels to largely favorable notices and tremendous notoriety due to its political implications. "Klinghoffer" will play shortly in five more opera houses in major cities of Europe and America.

A selection from "Klinghoffer" ("Aria for the Falling Body") will be featured on the festival's opening program July 25. Klinghoffer was a wheelchair-bound American tourist aboard a Mediterranean cruise ship that was seized by Palestinian gunmen; he was shot and his body dumped overboard.

Also to be heard will be Adams' setting of a Walt Whitman poem about a Civil War hospital, "The Wound Dresser." It will be sung by Sanford Sylvan, who also sang in last year's Grammy-nominated recording of the piece.

Britten will be represented by his "Phantasy Quartet," written in 1932 when Britten was 19, in part as an homage to his teacher, English conductor and composer Frank Bridge; "Songs and Proverbs of William Blake," from 1965, based on the English poet and en-



John Adams will conduct for the festival this season.

graver's works from the late 1700s and early 1800s; the "*Sinfonia da requiem*," from war-torn 1940; and a selection from the posthumous orchestral suite drawn from Britten's only ballet, "The Prince of the Pagodas," written in 1956.

With dancer Tandy Beal, the Cabrillo Festival is also honoring the memory of French composer Darius Milhaud, who taught for many years at Mills College in Oakland. The centennial of Milhaud's birth occurs next year, although Cabrillo Festival management was apparently unaware of the anniversary.

Adams denied that the presence of Mozart's Symphony No. 39 and the Piano Concerto No. 25 in C Major (K. 503) had anything to do with the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death this year. "This is Mozart-as-usual," Adams suggested.

Also to be played will be works by two other men known as both composers and conductors, presently "an endangered species" according to Adams: Gustav Mahler, whose "Kindertotenlieder" will be heard Aug. 4, and the "Serenade" for violin, strings, harp and percussion, by the late Leonard Bernstein.

Guest artists will include conductor JoAnn Falletta, violinist Stephanie Chase, soprano Dora Ohrenstein, and pianist Mack McCray, a native of Watsonville, according to Adams.

Adams praised the Cabrillo Festival's tradition of presenting works by living composers, noting that summer music festivals have become something of "an industry... stamping out (performances of) the Beethoven Fifth Symphony as if they were making ashtrays for motel rooms. We will not be doing the 100,000th performance of Vivaldi's 'The Seasons.'"

At the same time, Adams admitted "I basically hate most contemporary music," the majority of which he finds "psuedo-scientific" and bereft of emotion. In part, this is why the festival will be placing emotionally-oriented orchestral works alongside performances by the Elements of Praise gospel group and the Ballet Afsaneh, which performs Persian and Turkish music and dance.

The festival will be held from July 25 through Aug. 4. With the exception of two concerts at Mission San Juan Bautista July 28, all other concerts will be at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium.