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## Wintergreen Summer Music Festival dives into unifying power of music

BY JANE DUNLAP SATHE Jun 30, 2018



Violinist Rachel Barton Pine will perform not only a Mozart concerto at the Wintergreen Summer Music Festival, but also one by Chevalier de Saint-Georges, a Mozart contemporary known as a fencer, composer and violinist. Photo by Janette Beckman. #nosale

Janette Beckman

You can have your classical music served with wine, beer, cider or coffee, or paired with metal, jazz, pop or bluegrass. And instead of simply sitting and listening to Ludwig van Beethoven's "Symphony No. 9," you can sign up to rehearse with the orchestra and sing along.

This year's Wintergreen Summer Music Festival offerings give people room to be as interactive or laid back as they choose. From July 8 through Aug. 5, Nelson County's Wintergreen Resort will be filled with concerts, seminars, master classes, rehearsals and even cooking sessions with local chefs to give music fans a chance to reboot and come away refreshed.

"Hopefully, we'll help more people be inspired to find their better human selves through music," artistic director Erin Freeman said.

This year's theme is "Building Bridges: Celebrating the Connections That Only Music Can Make," and Freeman has programmed a variety of events that'll help folks find connections between and among musical genres, cultures, time periods and people.

The flagship MountainTop Masterworks series, which offers concerts on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons, starts July 14 and 15 by diving into the work of centennial birthday boy Leonard Bernstein and titan Ludwig van Beethoven and explores how both composers shook up the status quo. Victor Yampolsky will conduct, and soloists will include Peter Marshall on piano, Paul Neebe on trumpet and William Parrish on English horn.

Conductor Mei-Ann Chen returns July 21 and 22 to lead a program that includes a performance by Yoko Reikano Kimora on Japanese koto and gives listeners a chance to hear Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring" while surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Violinist Rachel Barton Pine and guest conductor Daniel Hege will lead the "Fire & Elegance" program on July 28 and 29, which juxtaposes a Mozart violin concerto with one by his contemporary Chevalier de Saint-Georges, a fencer, violinist and composer who was a descendant of slaves. And the final weekend brings a collection of spirituals and Beethoven's "Choral Fantasy, Op. 80" and "Symphony No. 9," conducted by Freeman and sung by members of the Oratorio Society of Virginia and the Richmond Symphony Chorus, plus festivalgoers who've signed up for rehearsals.

Established artists will be joined by up-and-coming colleagues. There will be plenty of opportunities to hear the festival's Academy students in rehearsals, master classes and performances.

The festival's Charlottesville Takeover Day is set for July 20, when Academy Strings students will perform at the Boys & Girls Club and on the Downtown Mall. Keep an eye on the website at [wintergreenperformingarts.org](http://wintergreenperformingarts.org) to see where the students may pop up in town that day.

Also on July 20, film buffs can see a screening of silent films with two world-premiere scores; Buster Keaton's "The Boat" will flicker to music written by Academy composition students, and Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights" will unfold to new sounds by Daron Hagen.

Cooking classes are another popular feature, and spaces disappear faster than canapés at a crowded reception. Sign up quickly if you want to learn from Brasserie Saison executive chef Mike Perry on July 10 and 12; Caleb Shriver, executive chef and owner of Dutch & Company in Richmond, on July 17 and 19; L'etoile Catering executive chef and owner Mark Gresge on July 24 and 26; and Christian Stiltner, executive chef at The Whiskey Jar, on July 31 and Aug. 2.

Not sure where to start? The festival is offering four three-day weekend packages for \$105 each that group complementary events together without guesswork: "Bluegrass + Beethoven+ Beer" from July 13 to 15; "Charlie Chaplin, Aaron Copland and Three Goats Walk Over a Bridge ..." from July 20 to 22; "Rachel Barton Pine: Worldwide Rockstar Violinist" from July 27 to 29; and "The Mother of All Symphonies: Beethoven's Ninth" from Aug. 3 to 5.

It's also possible to plan a visit in the middle of the week. The Mix, Mingle & Music series on Tuesdays and Thursdays starts with a cash bar and adds music.

The Wild Wednesdays series starts July 11 with "Live from the MountainTop — A Radio Revue," which Freeman called "Garrison Keillor meets 'Wait Wait ... Don't Tell Me!' meets Wintergreen Performing Arts meets Blue Ridge Mountains." Mike Goldberg, music host at Richmond's WCVE-FM, will be guest emcee for an evening of music and stories with The Richard Williams Trio and Wintergreen Festival Artists.

Coming up in the series on July 18 will be "Tony & The Duke" with John Winn, a salute to Tony Bennett and Duke Ellington featuring John D'earth and longtime Bennett bassist Paul Langosch; "Shredding with the Strings — Rock 'n' Roll Throughout the Ages" with violinist Pine, the Czigany Quartet — the festival's 2018 Fellowship Quartet — and other fans of metal, rock and classical on July 25; and "Motown on the Mountain with Masters of Soul," an evening of tunes by Gladys Knight & The Pips, Smokey Robinson & The Miracles and Diana Ross & The Supremes, on Aug. 1.

The popular Coffee & Kids concert series is back to fill Sunday mornings with music and children's activities. Themes include "A Soldier's Tale" on July 15, "Three Billy Goats Gruff" on July 22, "Little Red Riding Hood" on July 29 and "The Story of Beethoven" on Aug. 5, the festival's final day. The Coffee & Kids concerts are free for listeners younger than 18.

Freeman said festivalgoers who share feedback about their experiences tend to compliment the excellence of the music and "the welcoming feel." There aren't stage doors, velvet ropes or stuffy hierarchies coming between musicians and listeners, and informal opportunities to listen and learn together help establish a sense of unity and camaraderie.

"We're all walking up the same hill from the parking lot," she said. "At Wintergreen, you really realize we're all in it together."

Head to [wintergreenperformingarts.org](http://wintergreenperformingarts.org) to take a closer look at the offerings, learn more about the musical guests and purchase tickets. For tickets or details, dial (434) 361-0541.

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## If You Go

Wintergreen Summer Music Festival and Academy

July 8 through Aug. 5

Wintergreen Resort and nearby locations

[wintergreenperformingarts.org](http://wintergreenperformingarts.org)

(434) 361-0541

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