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Buzzards Bay Music Festival melds classic and contemporary

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Conductor Antony Walker leads a previous concert at Buzzards Bay Musicfest. He returns as guest conductor for this year's event. Courtesy of Buzzards Bay Musicfest

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The box office

What: Buzzards Bay Music Festival

When: July 13 through 16, 8 p.m. July 17, 2 p.m.

Where: Fireman Performing Arts Center, Tabor Academy,...

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better.

For 20 years, the Buzzards Bay Music Festival has always been both. While most music organizations have struggled to raise funds through any means possible, BBMF has never resorted to ticket sales. Free to the public, the annual festival of orchestral and chamber music, which opens July 13 in the Fireman Performing Arts Center at Tabor Academy, "has relied on our very active board and the longtime generosity of the community," says artistic director Charles Stegeman.

"We stick closely to our budget," he says. "This year, when preparing for our 20th anniversary, I wanted to include a harpist. So I reduced our orchestra by one violinist."

The music has never suffered from the tight budget. Stegeman, who took over from the festival's founder, the late Russell Patterson, four summers ago, serves during the regular season as concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Opera. He also directs the Sunflower Festival in Topeka, Kansas, which immediately precedes Buzzards Bay during the month of June.

With those professional contacts, and others gained during four decades as a performer, Stegeman assembles a top-flight orchestra and brings in multiple soloists. Guest conductor Antony Walker returns this summer to lead the orchestral programs.

Concerts begin Wednesday, July 13 with two concertos — a Hummel bassoon concerto (Mark Romatz, soloist), along with two works by Beethoven: his first piano concerto, with David Allen Wehr, and his Eighth Symphony. Thursday's chamber concert features Shostakovich's G minor piano quintet and the Beethoven wind octet, as well as a contemporary work by Marjan Mozetich. Chamber music continues Friday, highlighted by Tchaikovsky's Souvenir de Florence.

On Saturday, jazz takes over, with the Orrin Evans Quartet and Joanna Pascale. Sunday's orchestral finale closes the festival with works by Rossini, Mozart — his brilliant Sinfonia Concertante, with Stegeman and violist Michael Strauss as soloists — and Haydn.

"We're making the 20th anniversary a quiet celebration," Stegeman says. "Bringing in a harpist for the first time, and programming the Mozetich piece. I'm a stickler for contemporary music — if I don't like it the first time I hear it, then I won't program it. This Mozetich piece is gorgeous. It sounds a bit like Philip Glass, or Corigliano, with beautiful melodies and textures.

"Mozetich is a Canadian composer, and we've added a Canadian harpist as well, Rita Costanzi. She's spectacular — she has a very different technique, more rich and warm, more melodic I think than harpists trained in the states.

"Last year we started an educational program too, the International Performance Institute, a pilot program, and I want to develop it more robustly in coming years," he says. "We had seven violinists and one pianist, and the kids stay at Tabor. We tortured them in the mornings with scales and technique, and in the afternoon we gave masterclasses. It added a lot of value to the festival."

An open rehearsal is slated for children on July 13 at 2:30 p.m. — also free — complements the educational programs.

The Buzzards Bay MusicFest runs July 13 through 17 in the Fireman Performing Arts Center at Tabor Academy. Tickets are free. For more information visit www.buzzardsbaymusicfest.com.

By Keith Powers
Contributing Writer

Posted Jul. 7, 2016 at 2:01 AM

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Lobster Bake - Farm to Table
Dartmouth YMCA
Sat Jul 23, 6:00 pm

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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Monday, July 11, 2016



Summer Exhibit of Local Artists
Judith Klein Art Gallery

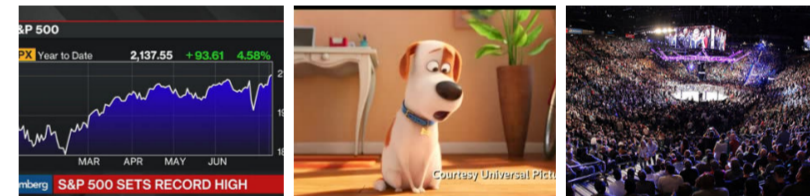
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Rainforest Reptiles Show
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7:00 pm

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Lobster Bake - Farm to Table Dartmouth YMCA

Sat Jul 23, 6:00 pm

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
Monday, July 11, 2016

- Summer Exhibit of Local Artists** 5:00 pm

Judith Klein Art Gallery
- Rainforest Reptiles Show** 7:00 pm

Westport Library

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