

The Cabot goes classical

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The Cabot adds classical music to its broad repertoire

By Keith Powers / Correspondent

Major new affiliations and robust commitment at the Cabot Theatre in Beverly are bringing a new energy to the classical music possibilities on the North Shore this fall.

The Cabot (www.thecabot.org) has been revitalized over the past few seasons, but this year, with Symphony by the Sea taking residence, the Arneis Quartet and Virtuoso Soloists of New York playing chamber music, and the announcement that John H. Wallace will become composer-in-residence for the season, the Cabot joins Rockport's Shalin Liu Performance Center as another place to go for classical presentations.

Wallace's appointment is particularly notable. Both Arneis and the Virtuoso soloists have performed and recorded his works, and the Cabot season is sprinkled with past compositions and a premiere as well.

Wallace, on the music faculty at Boston University, has his first string quartet, "pale reflections...", on the program for Arneis's first concert Nov. 13. Later in the season the Virtuoso Soloists perform his trio "Triskele" and his "How Curious the Light Behaves." Symphony by the Sea gives a world premiere of a symphonic work next March as well, a fitting culmination to a residency. With multiple performances of works in various instrumental configurations, it gives audiences a chance to develop an appreciation for Wallace's work.

Symphony by the Sea, led by music director Donald Palma, opens the Cabot classical season on Oct. 16 with a program of Arias and Overtures, spotlighted by the electrifying soprano Sara Heaton. The Cabot also presents a live musical performance accompanying the film “Phantom of the Opera” on Oct. 30, with the Berklee Silent Film Orchestra. Arneis performs in May again as well, and the Virtuoso Soloists give concerts in Feb. and in April.

Meanwhile, in Rockport

Not to be outdone, Rockport Music (www.rockportmusic.org) has a robust classical schedule, with both innovative players and established ensembles. Guitarist Paul Galbraith kicked off the classical season on Sept. 8.

Galbraith not only expands the guitar’s repertory—he performs his own arrangement of a Mozart piano concerto—but also brings a new look to the instrument. He plays his own 8-string guitar—with an added upper and lower range—like a cellist, upright, with a stake. Three works of Albeniz were on his program, along with additional works from Mozart, Scriabin and Bach.

Trio con Brio Copenhagen (Oct. 16), the Takacs Quartet (Nov. 11), cellist Roberto Diaz (Nov. 19) and the Dover Quartet (Dec. 9) fill out the enhanced fall lineup in Rockport. Brooklyn Rider (Jan. 25) and violinist Christian Tetzlaff (Feb. 12) make appearances in early 2017.

Matthew Aucoin at PEM

Another composer-in-residence returns to the North Shore this fall. Matthew Aucoin’s residency at the Peabody Essex Museum (www.pem.org) is just one of his high profile associations, which have led to multiple major works of great sophistication.

The youngest-ever assistant conductor at the Met Opera, artist-in-residence at the Los Angeles Opera, and composer of works for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the American Repertory Theater and others, Aucoin joins the chamber ensemble A Far Cry at PEM for two concerts Sept. 30 and Oct. 1. Composers from the Asia/America New Music Institute join in as well.

Cape Ann Symphony

The Cape Ann Symphony Orchestra (www.capeannsymphony.org) opens its 65th season on Sept. 24, with large symphonic works including Debussy’s “La Mer” and Respighi’s compelling “Pines of Rome.” The CASO hosts the annual Holiday Pops on Thanksgiving weekend, featuring Leroy

Anderson's "Christmas Festival" and selections from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker."

Boston Artists Ensemble

The Boston Artists Ensemble (www.bostonartistsensemble.org), led by retired Boston Symphony Orchestra cellist Jonathan Miller, has given stellar chamber performances at its homes in Salem and Newton for 32 years. This season the Salem concerts, now at Hamilton Hall, kick off with a world premiere by Judith Weir, "Three Chorales," for cello (Miller) and piano (Randall Hodgkinson). A Nov. 11 concert features string quartets by Syzmanowski and Beethoven.

Newburyport Chamber Music Festival

The Newburyport Chamber Music Festival (www.newburyportchambermusic.org) has built a loyal summer audience, and has expanded its concerts into the fall and spring seasons as well. Two concerts this fall bring music to the city: on Nov. 5 Ensemble Epomeo joins percussionist Samuel Solomon for a world premiere by Adam Silverman; a Dec. 18 performance features movements from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" and concertos by Bach and Handel.

Music at Eden's Edge

Music at Eden's Edge (www.edensedge.org) brings in several notable soloists—including violinist Daniel Stepner, violist Jason Fisher and cellist Jacques Lee Wood—for a program of Ives, Mozart and Schubert on Sept. 17 in Topsfield's Congregational Church. And the North Shore Chamber Music ensemble begins its season Nov. 6 at Beverly's North Shore Community Baptist Church. Visit www.northshorechambermusic.org for further details.

Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR's ARTery. Follow @PowersKeith; email to keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com

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