

Newport Music Festival explores Beethoven

By Keith Powers / Special to The Journal

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NEWPORT, R.I. — A fortnight of Beethoven, an exploration of sight and sound, fusion, tango, glamour and even comedy — 56 concerts in all, with 81 musicians — will mark artistic director Mark P. Malkovich IV's final season when the Newport Music Festival opens on Friday, July 7.

Since 1975, the festival has been run by the Malkovich family — including 35 years under Mark Malkovich III, who was succeeded by his son after a fatal car accident in 2010. The festival will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year with a new director, the recently named Pamela A. Pantos, who has a two-decade career in arts, finance, festival and nonprofit management.

But before that, much music will be made.

Focusing on the 32 piano sonatas of Beethoven, Newport hosts seven pianists who will explore the far-reaching solo works, including Terezie Fialová, Inna Faliks, Roberto Plano and John Ferguson. The sonata series is capped off by a Beethoven Marathon at The Elms the morning of July 16, when half a dozen pianists will perform seven of Beethoven's set in one concert, including the famed "Waldstein," "Pathétique" and "Tempest" sonatas.

Those programs are sprinkled throughout the festival, which opens at The Breakers with pianist Krzysztof Jablonski and runs through July 23 at various Newport locations.

Known for introducing new artists, the festival will present debuts by 29 musicians this summer, including first appearances by Jablonski, Ferguson and Faliks. "People come here for adventure," says communications director Dayla Arabella Santurri. "The concerts that sell out the quickest are the ones with new artists."

It's not all new artists though. The Boston-based string ensemble A Far Cry returns to The Breakers on July 8, with a program that includes selections from Soghomon Komitas' "Armenian Miniatures." Other returning favorites include violinist Irina Muresanu and cellist Sergey Antonov, both making multiple appearances this summer.

Faliks' piano recital on July 8 will not just be music. She will present the story told in her recent CD "Polonaise-Fantasia: Story of a Pianist" — part narration, part music, detailing her own personal journey from a childhood in Odessa, Ukraine, through her immigration to the United States and her emergence as an artist.

The curious and fascinating cross-sensual experience of synesthesia — the ability some artists have to associate specific sounds with specific colors — gets explored in a collaborative venture featuring artist Ima Montoya's paintings and cellist Asier Polo's interpretations of the Bach cello suites.

"It's common to merge music and dance," Montoya says about her project, "but not so common to link music with painting. I have tried to fuse my memories and longings with Asier's interpretations of Bach's music."

Montoya's musically inspired work will be on view at the Newport Art Museum during the festival; Polo joins Montoya at the museum on July 19 for a musical/visual presentation.

Humor finds its way to the festival with "Beethoven's Wig," raconteur Richard Perlmutter's family-oriented comedy presentation July 14. The world/folk fusion ensemble DanzaNova, led by Ronn Yedidia, also joins the roster July 22. The festival's popular gala, themed "Capricho Español" this season, takes place July 13 at Rosecliff.

The festival concludes with a piano extravaganza — a three-piano, six-hands concert on July 23 featuring the prize winner from the Waring International Piano Competition.

"During Mark's final season we're continuing the festival concept of introducing new artists," Santurri says, "along with bringing back lots of performers — many of them from Europe — that our audience already knows. It's a balancing act — new things and new concepts, with artists our audiences look forward to all year long."

— *Keith Powers covers music and the arts for the GateHouse papers and WBUR's The ARTery. On Twitter at [@PowersKeith](https://twitter.com/PowersKeith).*

Opening weekend

July 7

Pre-Concert Talk on Beethoven with WGBH radio classical host Larry King, The Elms, 367 Bellevue Ave., 10:25 a.m., free with 11 a.m. concert ticket. "**Beethoven Series 1**," piano and chamber music, 11 a.m., The Elms, \$23. **Opening Night Concert** featuring pianist **Krzysztof Jablonski** performing works by Chopin and others, The Breakers, 44 Ochre Point Ave., 8 p.m., \$50.

July 8

"**Rachmaninoff Morning**," Chateau-sur-Mer Tent, 474 Bellevue Ave., 11 a.m., with optional box lunch on the veranda after the concert at 1 p.m.; \$32 concert, \$48 with lunch. "**Adventures of a Young Pianist**," **Inna Faliks** tells of her life through musical selections, Chateau-sur-Mer tent, 2 p.m., with optional box lunch at 1

p.m. \$30, with lunch \$46. **A Far Cry**, a Boston chamber orchestra, The Breakers, 44 Ochre Point Ave., 8 p.m., \$50.

July 9

“Beethoven Series 2,” piano sonatas and chamber music performed by **Inna Faliks**, Chateau-sur-Mer Tent, 11 a.m., \$32. **“Schumann Brahms,”** chamber music from romantic-era legends, Chateau-sur-Mer tent, 4 p.m., \$25. **“Russian Romantics,”** from composers including Glinka, Shostakovich, Arensky and Tchaikovsky at The Breakers, 8 p.m., \$42.

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