

# Chicago Tribune

## A selective guide to U.S. summer classical music festivals

By John von Rhein  
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Leonard Bernstein is the man of the moment as orchestras and summer festivals celebrate the 100th anniversary of his birth.  
(Ravinia Festival)

Within a few weeks, hundreds of U.S. summer festivals of every description will begin to set out their most tempting wares to attract classical-music-loving travelers. Following is a selective guide to some of the more important and noteworthy of them, presented by region and in alphabetical order. Programs, artists and dates are subject to change and should be verified ahead of time.

### Midwest

**Des Moines Metro Opera:** June 22-July 15; Simpson College, Indianola, Iowa: The 46th festival summer includes company premieres of Dvorak's "Rusalka," Copland's "The Tender Land" and Jonathan Dove's "Flight," along with a new production of Strauss' "Die Fledermaus." 515-961-6221; [www.desmoinesmetroopera.org](http://www.desmoinesmetroopera.org)

**Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival:** June 9-24; Southfield, Mich.: Pianist and artistic director James Tocco is joined by artists including cellist Paul Watkins, pianist Alessio Bax, violinist Leila Josefowicz and the Callisto Quartet. Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time" is one highlight of the 25th anniversary season. 248-559-2097; [www.greatlakeschambermusic.org](http://www.greatlakeschambermusic.org)

**Minnesota Orchestra Sommerfest:** July 13-Aug. 1; Minneapolis: The orchestra under music director Osmo Vanska celebrates the Nelson Mandela centennial with a full slate of related events, including Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with South African vocal soloists. Other concerts will explore musical expressions of peace, freedom and reconciliation. 612-371-5656; [www.minnesotaorchestra.org](http://www.minnesotaorchestra.org)

**North Shore Chamber Music Festival:** June 13-16; Village Presbyterian Church, 1300 Shermer Road, Northbrook: Directors Vadim Gluzman, violin, and Angela Yoffe, piano, welcome pianist William Wolfram, clarinetist Ilya Shterenberg, the Ariel Quartet and young musicians of the Betty Haag Academy of Music. The eighth annual festival includes the U.S. premiere of Estonian composer Peteris Vasks' "Musica Serena." 847-370-3984; [www.nscmf.org](http://www.nscmf.org)

**Opera Theater of St. Louis:** May 19-June 24; Loretto-Hilton Center, Webster University, Webster Groves, Mo.: The 43rd festival season includes the company's 27th world premiere, composer Huang Ruo and librettist David Henry Hwang's "An American Soldier." Mezzo-soprano Susan Graham will assume the title role in Marc Blitzstein's "Regina," and soprano Patricia Racette will make her directorial debut with Verdi's "La Traviata." Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice" rounds out the season. 314-961-0644; [www.opera-stl.org](http://www.opera-stl.org)

**Peninsula Music Festival:** Aug. 7-25; Door Community Auditorium, Fish Creek, Wis.: Music director Victor Yampolsky will share baton duties with Alastair Willis and Chris Wild for symphonic concerts built around the musical centers of Vienna, Prague, New York and St. Petersburg, Russia. Artists include pianists Inna Faliks, Andrew Armstrong and Spencer Myer, violinist Tessa Lark and cellists Anna Burden and Riana Anthony. 920-854-4060; [www.musicfestival.com](http://www.musicfestival.com)

East

**Bard SummerScape:** June 28-Aug. 19; Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The focus of the final two weeks is music by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and his Russian contemporaries, with semistaged performances of "The Tsar's Bride" and "Mozart and Salieri" and programs tracing the legacy of Pushkin. Opening the festival will be Leonard Bernstein's seldom-heard musical "Peter Pan." 845-758-7900; [www.fishercenter.bard.edu/summerscape](http://www.fishercenter.bard.edu/summerscape)

**Blossom Music Festival:** July 3-Sept. 2; Blossom Music Center, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio: The Cleveland Orchestra's summer home marks its 50th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus with concerts under Franz Welsler-Most, Jahja Ling and others. Chamber music includes Yo-Yo Ma playing the complete Bach solo cello suites. 216-231-1111; [www.clevelandorchestra.com/tickets/2018-blossom-schedule](http://www.clevelandorchestra.com/tickets/2018-blossom-schedule)

**Caramoor:** June 16-July 29; Katonah, N.Y.: The seven-week festival, located on a 90-acre estate framed by lush gardens and Italianate architecture, focuses on new music: Works by 22 living composers will be played by the resident Orchestra of St. Luke's, Kronos Quartet and other ensembles. Old music will figure in the mix as well, with Handel's "Atalanta" performed by the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. 914-232-1252; [www.caramoor.org](http://www.caramoor.org)

**Cincinnati May Festival:** May 18-26; Cincinnati. The festival celebrates its first season in the renovated Music Hall, a National Historic Landmark built for the festival in 1878. Conductors Juanjo Mena and Eun

Sun Kim will preside over choral offerings ranging from the Verdi Requiem and Handel's "Messiah" to Bernstein's "Mass" and "Chichester Psalms." 513-381-3300; [www.mayfestival.com](http://www.mayfestival.com)

**Glimmerglass Festival:** July 7-Aug. 25; Cooperstown, N.Y.: The scenic campus on the shore of Otsego Lake is nestled between the Adirondack and Catskill mountains. The season's mainstage productions are Bernstein's "West Side Story," Janacek's "The Cunning Little Vixen," Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" and Kevin Puts' "Silent Night." 607-547-2255; [www.glimmerglass.org](http://www.glimmerglass.org)

**Mostly Mozart Festival:** July 12-Aug. 12; New York City: An expanded slate of music, theater and dance events will spill over from the Lincoln Center campus to Central Park and Brooklyn. Highlights include Haydn's "Creation" as staged by the Spanish theater troupe La Fura dels Baus; Ashley Fure's "The Force of Things: An Opera for Objects"; and world premieres from choreographer Mark Morris and composer John Luther Adams. Adams' "In the Name of the Earth," which calls for roughly 800 voices, will be presented in Central Park's Harlem Meer. 212-721-6500; [www.mostlymozart.org](http://www.mostlymozart.org)

**Spoletto Festival USA:** May 25-June 10; Charleston, S.C.: Two U.S. premieres highlight the operatic portion of this year's multi-arts fest: Donizetti's "Pia de' Tolomei," conducted by Lidiya Yankovskaya, and Liza Lim's "Tree of Codes," led by John Kennedy. Chamber concerts feature countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo and the JACK and St. Lawrence string quartets. 843-579-3100, [www.spoletousa.org](http://www.spoletousa.org)

**Tanglewood Festival:** June 15-Sept. 2; Lenox, Mass.: The summer residence of the Boston Symphony Orchestra will pay homage to the life and legacy of Leonard Bernstein and his singular contribution to the festival, from 1940 to 1990. A packed musical agenda will culminate in a Bernstein centennial gala replete with international figures, including conductors Andris Nelsons, Michael Tilson Thomas and Christoph Eschenbach; cellist Yo-Yo Ma; violinist Midori; and singers Nadine Sierra and Thomas Hampson. Also taking part will be musicians from Bernstein's other orchestras — the New York, Vienna and Israel philharmonics. 888-266-1200; [www.bso.org](http://www.bso.org)

West

**Aspen Music Festival and School:** June 28-Aug. 19; Aspen, Colo.: Among the more than 400 performances, master classes and family events will be salutes to Paris, composers of the Diaghilev Ballets Russes, American students of Nadia Boulanger and that ubiquitous centenarian, Leonard Bernstein. The 25th anniversary of Harris Concert Hall also will be celebrated. Robert Spano is the music director. 970-925-9042; [www.aspenmusicfestival.com](http://www.aspenmusicfestival.com)

**Bravo! Vail Music Festival:** June 21-Aug. 2; Vail, Colo.: The magnificent Rocky Mountain setting of Vail Valley serves as the summer home of four international orchestras — London's Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra and New York Philharmonic. Chamber concerts, jazz and pops round out the attractions. 877-812-5700; [www.bravovail.org](http://www.bravovail.org)

**Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music:** July 29-Aug. 12; Santa Cruz, Calif.: The nation's longest-running festival of new orchestral music celebrates its 56th season. This year's 17 composers-in-residence are Karim Al-Zand, William Bolcom, Anna Clyne, John Corigliano, Dan Dediu, Zosha di Castri, Gabriela Lena Frank, Vivian Fung, Michael Gandolfi, Pierre Jalbert, Kristin Kuster, Missy Mazzoli, Huang

Ruo, Pande Shahov, Sean Shepherd, Peter Shin and Andrea Tarrodi. 831-426-6966; [www.cabrillomusic.org](http://www.cabrillomusic.org)

**Grand Teton Music Festival:** July 3-Aug. 18; Jackson Hole, Wyo.: This year's festival at the foothills of the Teton Mountains celebrates American music. Music director Donald Runnicles leads the orchestra, which comprises players from several top U.S. orchestras. The 2018 roster includes Daniil Trifonov, Julian Rachlin, Johannes Moser and Kirill Gerstein. Repertory includes Mahler's gigantic Third Symphony and world premieres by Kareem Roustom and Sean Shepherd. 307-733-1128; [www.gtmf.org](http://www.gtmf.org)

**Music Academy of the West Summer Festival:** June 18-Aug. 12; Santa Barbara, Calif.: This unique festival selects 140 top students from around the world to perform and study with a 70-member faculty of guest artists and principal players from leading international orchestras, including, this year, the London Symphony Orchestra. James Conlon will conduct Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro." 805-969-8787; [www.musicacademy.org](http://www.musicacademy.org)

**Music at Menlo:** July 13-Aug. 4; Atherton, Calif.: Founding artistic directors David Finckel, cello, and Wu Han, piano, have built their 16th season around "Creative Capitals" — London, Paris, Leipzig, Berlin, Budapest, Vienna and St. Petersburg. The roster of 46 artists will include established figures as well as young participants in the festival's Chamber Music Institute. 650-331-0202; [www.musicatmenlo.org](http://www.musicatmenlo.org)

**Ojai Music Festival:** June 7-10; Ojai, Calif.: The 72nd annual celebration of the new and unusual will be under the musical direction of violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja. Her collaborators will include the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, pianist Markus Hinterhauser and composer-pianist Michael Hersch. 805-646-2053; [www.ojaifestival.org](http://www.ojaifestival.org)

**Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival:** July 15-Aug. 20; Santa Fe and Albuquerque, N.M.: Alan Gilbert serves as artist-in-residence, violinist and conductor for a rich variety of offerings, including Arnold Schoenberg's chamber-orchestra arrangement of Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde," sung by Sasha Cooke and Paul Groves. 505-982-1890; [www.santafechambermusic.com](http://www.santafechambermusic.com)

**Santa Fe Opera:** June 29-Aug. 25; Santa Fe, N.M.: The festival's striking amphitheater, perched on a mesa in the Sangre de Cristo mountains, hosts 36 performances of five operas: Bernstein's "Candide," Strauss' "Ariadne auf Naxos," Puccini's "Madame Butterfly," Rossini's "The Italian Girl in Algiers" and John Adams' "Doctor Atomic." 505-986-5900, 800-280-4654; [www.santafeopera.org](http://www.santafeopera.org)

**Tippet Rise Art Center Festival:** July 6-Sept. 8; Fishtail, Mont.: Tippet Rise is based near the Beartooth Mountains and includes chamber concerts given in the 150-seat Olivier Music Barn and at the Domo, a 98-foot-long, open-air sculptural structure. Performers for the third season include pianists Ingrid Fliter and Yevgeny Sudbin; violinists Vadim Gluzman and Caroline Goulding; and the Borromeo, Calidore, Dover and Escher string quartets. 406-426-5063; [www.tippetrise.org](http://www.tippetrise.org)

Some (almost) parting words

On a personal note, I would like to announce my upcoming retirement as classical music critic of the Chicago Tribune. When I step down July 1, I will have held this position at the paper for nearly 41 years, a record for Chicago (and perhaps U.S.) musical journalism insofar as I have been able to determine. It's

been a great ride, but the time has come to move off into other ventures and give somebody else a shot at one of the best jobs in journalism.

Besides, having turned 72 in September, I wanted to see how it would feel not to have so many sword-of-Damocles deadlines hanging over me.

Serving among some of the sharpest arts writers in the nation, at one of the nation's great newspapers, in a world-class cultural center, is a privilege rarely bestowed on any journalist these days. There is never, ever, a dull moment in the hurly-burly of Chicago classical music. I have beaten innumerable deadlines, written innumerable reviews, feature stories, news stories and calendars. I have traveled the globe covering classical music for my loyal readers back home. I am proud of my work.

I have seen the worlds of music and arts journalism change dramatically over the last four decades, as the world itself has changed. Through it all, you, my readers, have remained engaged and interested. I have learned much from you and have thoroughly enjoyed our lively, sometimes contentious, dialogues. I look forward to seeing many of you at concert and opera performances in the future.

Thank you for being my audience, and for sharing with me the joy of music, in its infinite, inexhaustible variety.

Taking over classical music coverage at the Tribune will be Howard Reich, who has a strong background in music coverage of all kinds, and who will continue covering the jazz beat as well. A graduate of Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, Howard has written about classical music for the Tribune since 1978, served four times on the jury for the Pulitzer Prize in music and is the author of several books, including a biography of pianist Van Cliburn.

I wish my longtime colleague the very best in his work going forward.

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