



CLASSICAL MUSIC

Spring arts preview 2024: Our top 10 classical music picks for the season



Cellist Andrea Casarrubios will perform with the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus on May 4 and 5 in La Jolla. (Courtesy of Pablo Pazos)

By Beth Wood
Contributor

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Spring promises to be jam-packed with good classical music concerts in San Diego. And there will be more to follow, thanks to the dynamic programming of La Jolla Music Society's SummerFest (starting July 26), Mainly Mozart's All-Star Orchestra Festival (starting June 20) and the San Diego Symphony's summer season at The Shell (starting June 28).

Of the following picks, you won't find shows likely to be sold out, like Lang Lang (April 12) and Yo-Yo Ma (May 7). But these 10 concerts promise to be moving, provocative and either soothing or exhilarating.

Camarada: Vivaldi's Magic



Guitarist Fred Benedetti joins Camarada chamber ensemble for "Vivaldi's Magic" on March 23 at the Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center in La Jolla. (Courtesy of Monique Feil Photography)

This high-spirited baroque concert will find Camarada performing Bach, Couperin and Vivaldi's classic flute concerto, *La Noite*. Also on the program is *Concierto Barocco* by Tijuana-born, Mexico City-based José Enrique González-Medina. Count on Camarada's excellent ensemble to give the works a modern twist. *7:30 p.m. Saturday. Baker-Baum Concert Hall, The Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center, 7600 Fay Ave., La Jolla. \$38-\$98. (619) 231-3702. camarada.org*

Art of Elan: 'Songs of Hope'

This eclectic concert will feature the Art of Elan-commissioned "Songs of Hope" for solo harp by Michi Wiancko and the West Coast premiere of Sarah Kirkland Snider's "O Sweet and Beloved Mother." Artistic Director Kate Hatmaker will play a new solo violin piece by acclaimed San Diego composer Lei Liang, who wrote "Journey" to honor La Jolla's Joani Nelson, a longtime arts supporter who died in October. *7 p.m. April 25. Mingei International Museum, 1439 El Prado, Balboa Park. \$15-\$35. (619) 678-1709, artofelan.com*

San Diego Early Music Society: Twelfth Night Ensemble



San Diego Early Music Society will present the Twelfth Night ensemble on April 27 in La Jolla. (Courtesy of Mei Stone)

SDEMS welcomes seven young musicians from the flexibly sized Twelfth Night ensemble. The zestful group, founded by David Belkovski and Rachell Ellen Wong, will play works by Handel and Purcell. If Wong looks familiar, she performed at St. James in a March 2022 SDEMS concert with Ensemble Jupiter. *7:30 p.m. April 27. St James by-the-Sea, 743 Prospect St., La Jolla. \$10-\$50. (619) 291-8246, sdems.org*

La Jolla Symphony and Chorus: To the Stars

Spanish-born cellist Andrea Casarrubios will play “Azul” by Argentine composer Osvaldo Golijov with LJSC Music Director Sameer Patel conducting. The program includes works by Webern and Brahms. The concert reunites the prize-winning Casarrubios and Patel, who last year conducted when she performed a different Golijov piece for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s MusicNow. *7:30 p.m. May 4; 2 p.m. May 5. Mandeville Auditorium, 9500 Gilman Drive, UC San Diego, La Jolla. (858) 434-4637. ljsc.org.*

La Jolla Music Society: Junction Trio



La Jolla Music Society presents the Junction Trio in concert May 5 in La Jolla. (Courtesy of Shervin Lainez)

Pianist Conrad Tao, violinist Stefan Jackiw and cellist Jay Campbell all have successful solo careers. Each has earned high praise for their past SummerFest performances. The trio will play “Philosophical Investigations” by John Zorn, Ives’ piano trio and Beethoven’s “Archduke” piano trio. *3 p.m. May 5. Baker-Baum Concert Hall, Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center, 7600 Fay Ave., La Jolla. \$46-\$83. (858) 459-3728, theconrad.org.*

Poway Symphony Orchestra: 'Classical Gems'

The orchestra, led by conductor John LoPiccolo, will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a concert next Sunday. Then, on May 26, they will welcome noted pianist Ching-Ming Cheng to perform Schumann's piano concerto. An award-winning music professor at California State University San Marcos, Cheng has performed in Taiwan, Japan, China and the U.S. *4 p.m. May 26. Poway Center for the Performing Arts, 15498 Espola Road, Poway. \$15-\$40. (858) 748-0505, powaysymphonyorchestra.org.*

Project BLANK: 'The Robots'



Composer Carolyn Chen's chamber opera "The Robots" will be presented by Project BLANK on May 31 and June 1 in Logan Heights. (Courtesy of Annette Hornischer)

Always stretching boundaries, Project BLANK commissioned Los Angeles-based composer Carolyn Chen for this world premiere. The genre-bending chamber opera about a robot rebellion was inspired by a 1920s sci-fi play by Karel Čapek. Music director Kyle Adam Blair leads a strong cast of singers, including Leslie Ann Leytham, Jonathan Nussman, Mariana Flores Bucio and Miguel Zazueta, who all received plaudits for last year's "No Exit." *7:30 p.m. May 31 and June 1; 3 p.m. June 2. Bread & Salt Gallery, 1955 Julian Ave., Logan Heights. \$15-\$25. projectblanksd.org.*

Sacra/Profana: 'A Space to Belong'

This innovative and captivating chorus will present the world premiere of native San Diego composer Cory Hibbs' "Queer Spaces." The multi-movement choral work draws from personal narratives of the composer, choir members and members of the queer community exploring the significance of safe spaces to the survival of any marginalized community. The other works also explore themes of identity and belonging. *7 p.m. June 1. St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, 2728 Sixth Ave., Bankers Hill. \$10-\$35. (619) 432-2920, sacraprofana.org.*

Le Salon de Musiques: Season Finale



The Darshan Trio will perform for Le Salon de Musiques' season finale on June 2 in La Jolla. (Courtesy of Dominic Chelli)

The L.A.-based Darshan Trio — violinist Vijay Gupta, cellist Yoshika Masuda and pianist Dominic Chelli — will perform three works at Le Salon on June 2. Curated by Le Salon founder Francois Chouchan, the soiree-like concert includes works by Chopin and Dvořák. It also features one of Chouchan's "hidden gems" — a piano trio by Arthur Foote. This U.S. premiere spotlights the often-overlooked American composer from the romantic era. *4 p.m. June 2. The La Jolla Woman's Club, 7791 Draper Ave., La Jolla. \$45-\$95. (310) 498-0257, lesalondemusiques.com*

San Diego Symphony: Summer 2024 Opening Night



Pianist Olga Kern joins the San Diego Symphony for its season-opening concert at the Rady Shell on June. 28.
(Courtesy of Chris Lee)

The Rady Shell will host several concerts in the spring, but the orchestra officially kicks off its summer season there on June 28. Gemma New will conduct and pianist Olga Kern will play Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30. Addition works by John Adams, Copland and Rimsky-Korsakov will be featured. *7:30 p.m. June 28. The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, 222 Marina Park Way, downtown. \$24-\$104. (619) 235-0804, theshell.org.*

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