

North America



In with the new:
Julia Bullock helms
her first season as
artistic director at the
Cincinnati May Festival

Long Play

New York, NY, 30 April – 3 May
bangonacan.org

How to squeeze over 70 concerts into four days? Best ask the experts. Bang on a Can has been curating its Brooklyn-wide festival for five years now and the latest edition fires off a centenary salute to Morton Feldman. In Fort Greene Park, winds, brass and 40 percussionists convene for John Luther Adams's *Crossing Open Ground*, Stockhausen's *Kontakte* is performed by Steven Schick and Cory Smythe, and Bang on a Can All-Stars, meanwhile, premiere a new arrangement of Philip Glass's *Glassworks*.

May Festival

Cincinnati, OH, 15–23 May
mayfestival.com

Cincinnati must have a thing about sopranos. Renée Fleming was last year's artistic director, and she passes the torch to Julia Bullock, who's contemplating the Harlem Renaissance. The poetry of Langston

Hughes suffuses an opening night that climaxes in an 'Eclectic Mass' uniting Palestrina, JS Bach, Handel, Margaret Bonds and Carols Simon. Stravinsky's *Les noces* is danced; and under the watchful gaze of Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus', an all-American finale glows.

Spoletto Festival USA

Charleston, SC, 22 May – 7 June
spoletousa.org

Founded by Gian Carlo Menotti, and limbering up to its half-century next year, Spoleto is pondering freedom of expression as well as celebrating America 250. And with over 110 multi-genre performances, there's an abundance of expression to savour! Renée Fleming and Béla Fleck delve into Appalachian folk traditions, orchestral highlights range across Copland's evocation of Appalachia, Mahler and a new work by Michael Abels; Menotti's radio opera *The Old Maid and the Thief* is reimagined; and acrobatics suffuse Circa's staging of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*.

Festival Classica

Montérégie, Quebec, 22 May – 14 June
festivalclassica.com

Dividing its favours between several locations across Montérégie, Festival Classica takes its mission to confront musical barriers seriously – where else would you find 'Supertramp Symphonique' under the same umbrella as the Schubert piano trios performed with a 19th-century Érard piano? Period instruments are also to the fore in a cycle of the complete Beethoven piano concertos, and Strauss's *Four Last Songs* together with Mahler's Symphony No. 1 are repurposed for chamber forces.

Ravinia Festival

Highland Park, IL, 3 June – 23 September
ravinia.org

Although the New York Philharmonic was the first orchestra to appear at Ravinia, the Chicago Symphony has been calling Highland Park its summer 'home' for the past 90 years. Marin

Alsop is the current chief conductor and artistic director and, with a \$75m refurbishment in hand, 'home' will be sporting its best bib and tucker. Mahler's Sixth Symphony and new works by Carlos Simon and Laura Karpman turn orchestral heads, while James Gaffigan conducts Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*. Chamber contributors include violinist Joshua Bell, pianist Jeremy Denk and the Danish String Quartet.

Ojai Festival

Ojai, CA, 11-14 June
ojaifestival.org

Talk about pedigree! Previous Ojai music directors have included Stravinsky, Boulez and John Adams. Back in 1999 and 2001 it was Esa-Pekka Salonen, and the conductor-composer returns to mastermind an 80th edition in the company of the Attacca Quartet, LA Phil New Music Group and the Colburn Orchestra, among others. 'Ojai invites us to dream,' he says, and Libbey Bowl's dreaming includes the Ligeti Violin Concerto, Messiaen's *Quartet for the end of Time*, and new works by John Luther Adams and Salonen himself.

Caramoor Festival

Katonah, NY, 20 June - 2 August
caramoor.org

From October to May, Caramoor's musical delights bask in the opulence of Rosen House, but as summer beckons, the famous music room competes with the estate's Spanish Courtyard, Venetian Theater, Friends Field and Sunken Garden, all serving a season that stretches from Les Arts Florissants' Charpentier double-bill to Yuja Wang's deep dive into Afro-Latin and Caribbean music. Premieres include works by Christopher Cerrone and Jeff Scott; pianist Hélène Grimaud bestrides Bach, Beethoven and Brahms; and in the Venetian Theater, Handel's *Tolomeo* ascends the Egyptian throne.

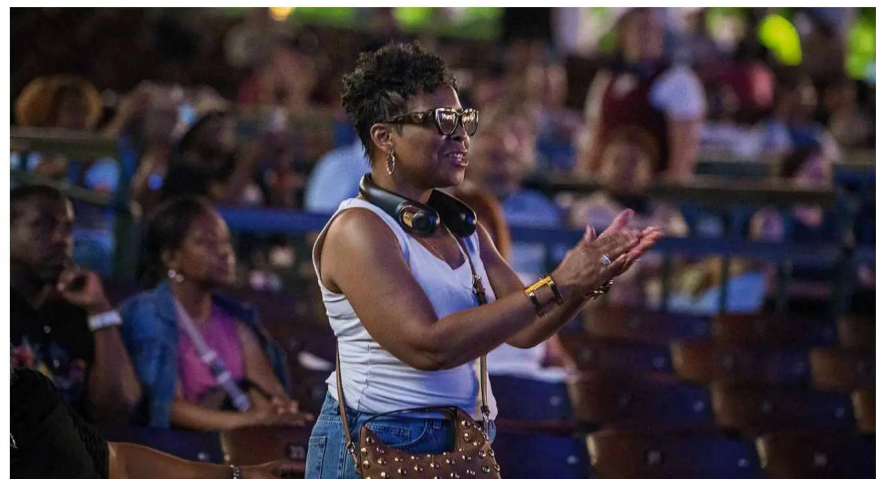
Tanglewood

Lenox, MA, 21 June - 2 September
tanglewood.org

For well over 80 years, Tanglewood has positioned itself as an incomparable incubator of musical talent, and including the Koussevitzky Shed and more intimate Seiji Ozawa Hall, its story is unfolded in the names of Tanglewood's cherished meeting places. The Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer festival is writ large - from opera to chamber music,



Music for our time: Esa-Pekka Salonen curates the Festival of Contemporary Music at Tanglewood; (below) an audience member at last year's Ravinia Festival



a John Williams Film Night to the Martha Graham Dance Company. Esa-Pekka Salonen curates the Festival of Contemporary Music; Yo-Yo Ma muses on identity; and Beethoven's Ninth crowns the BSO's August adieu.

Bard Summerscape and Music Festival

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 25 June - 16 August
fishercenter.bard.edu

With a glorious Frank Gehry-designed arts center, Bard is already on the front foot before Summerscape heralds the onset of a Hudson Valley summer. 'Mozart and his World' informs August's Bard Music Festival which advances through ten programmes and two panel discussions to *The Abduction*

from the *Seraglio*. The glittering *Spiegel* returns for a 19th season and, including the world premiere of Courtney Bryan's Tennessee Williams-indebted opera *Suddenly Last Summer*, 'Summerscape' opens with a rarity: Richard's Strauss's *The Egyptian Helen*.

Maverick Concerts

Hurley, Woodstock, NY, 28 June - 13 September
maverickconcerts.org

It styles itself as America's oldest summer chamber music festival, and since 1916 home has been a rustically atmospheric woodland 'chapel'. In Declaration of Independence year, American music is front and center. Music by Walter Piston and Amy Beach rubs shoulders with more recent

works by John Adams, Missy Mazzoli and Philip Glass; émigrés include Stravinsky, Korngold and Zemlinsky; and among a strong line-up of visitors are the Danish, Escher and Pacifica quartets, plus the chamber music societies of Chicago and Fort Worth.

Bravo! Vail

Vail, CO, 25 June – 6 August

bravovail.org

After 15 years as artistic director, Anne-Marie McDermott is stepping down. But she's not going quietly, and plays all five Beethoven piano concertos in a festival that also presents Beethoven's complete piano sonatas across eight free concerts. In residence are the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic and Dallas Symphony. Alisa Weilerstein proposes an immersive journey through Bach's Cello Suites; festival and world premieres include works by John Adams and Aaron Jay Kernis; 'Classically Uncorked', meanwhile, ventures eight hands at two pianos.

Aspen Music Festival and School

Aspen, CO, 1 July – 23 August

aspenmusicfestival.com

Aspen's ambitions are as lofty as its Rockies location, and a quick spot of number-crunching tells its own story. Over 500 young musicians throng no fewer than nine programmes served by a faculty of over 100 principal players from America's top orchestras. Renée Fleming and Thomas Hampton unite for operatic John Adams; and after two decades away, Yuja Wang returns, as does fellow pianist Daniil Trifonov.

Grand Teton Music Festival

Jackson Hole, WY, 2 July – 15 August

gtmf.org

There will be rejoicing twice-over in Jackson Hole this summer. The festival racks up its 65th edition, and music director Donald Runnicles celebrates 20 years at the helm. Walk Festival Hall is submitting to a \$35m spruce-up, so Grand Teton camps out at various locations. Chamber music invades private houses, 'Music of the American West' acknowledges the national anniversary, and the old country is remembered in MacMillan's *Britannia*.

Newport Classical

Newport, RI, 2-19 July

newportclassical.org

Statement domestic architecture

Good to be back:
Yuja Wang returns
to Aspen after two
decades away



and music collide in a festival that has long taken pride in its talent-spotting acuity. For the intrepid, 5.15am 'Sunrise Meditations' invoke Biber and Golijov, while Norman Bird Sanctuary includes Britten and Haydn in its eclectic pecking order. Apollo's Fire undertakes 'Duelling Double Concertos'; Sandbox Percussion champions the new; and pianists Pavel Kolesnikov and Samson Tsoy savour Stravinsky and Ravel.

Santa Fe Opera

Santa Fe, NM, 3 July – 29 August

santafeopera.org

In his centenary year, Puccini gets first and last word during Santa Fe's 2026 operatic rendezvous. Karen Chia-Ling Ho takes the title role in *Madam Butterfly*, and debuting on an unusually auspicious 4th July, Mozart's thumbs-up to Enlightenment values, *The Magic Flute*, is conducted by Harry Bicket (who also takes charge of Handel's *Rodelinda*). Pivoting into the 21st century, there's a US premiere for Tobias Picker's award-winning *Lili Elbe*.

Festival Napa Valley

Napa Valley, CA, 4-19 July

festivalnapavalley.org

There's no escaping the vineyards in

Napa Valley (as if you'd want to!). But 2026 looks set to be a special vintage, as the festival decants its 20th edition. To celebrate, Kent Nagano conducts the world premiere of Jake Heggie's new opera *The Judgement of Paris* (a festival commission); Renée Fleming revisits her 'Voice of Nature' project; and a 'Symphonic Finale' undertakes a semi-quincentennial pilgrimage through American musical history.

Colorado Music Festival

Boulder, CO, 9 July – 9 August

coloradomusicfestival.org

The stars are aligning, insists Colorado, as its half-century edition coincides with the Center for the Musical Arts' 30th anniversary. It's time to be forwards-looking, though, and music director Peter Oundjian showcases two orchestral world premieres in a line-up including pianist Yuja Wang and an all-American programme conducted by Leonard Slatkin. Fast becoming a festival tradition, Mahler wraps things up, this year with the monumental Symphony No. 3.

Toronto Summer Music

Toronto, ON, 9 July – 1 August

torontosummertime.com



North America



Shining musicianship: Gil Shaham performs at Sun Valley; (below) the Balourdet Quartet heads to Toronto

With 20 editions under its belt, Toronto Summer Music has the measure of combining a lively Academy with an envelope-pushing concert series. As well as Charpentier from Les Arts Florissants and the Canadian premiere of Nicky Sohn's *Galaxy Back to You* performed by the Balourdet Quartet, Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto sings as well as displays his skills on harmonium and electronica, while artistic director William Fedkenheuer splices classical violin and Canadian folk fiddle.

Glimmerglass Festival

Cooperstown, NY, 10 July – 17 August
glimmerglass.org

One way or another, America itself is woven through upstate New York's summertime tryst with the musical stage – whether in the frontier dreaming of *Oklahoma!*, newly directed by Francesca Zambello; Gregory Spears's tale of forbidden love, *Fellow Travellers*; a song cycle inspired by Ellis Island; or, more tangentially, Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*. 2026 artist-in-residence is 'the Robin Williams of Opera', Kevin Burdette, who pulls the manipulative strings in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.

Carmel Bach Festival

Carmel, CA, 11–25 July
bachfestival.org
Coastal Carmel is one year off amassing 90 years of Bachian



evangelising. But Bach isn't the only topic in town. 'The nature of sound' is on artistic director Grete Pedersen's thematic radar, and the Thomaskantor is just the starting point for a Baroque bonanza in which Bach encounters Bluegrass and Brazil; shares an evening with Rautavaara and Frank Martin; and welcomes Puerto Rican-born Angélica Negrón as composer-in-residence.

Music@Menlo

Menlo, CA, 17 July – 8 August
musicatmenlo.org
As Menlo unwraps its trademark Café Conversations, Multimedia Encounter Lectures, Carte Blanche Recitals and

themed concerts, there'll be mixed feelings. After nigh on a quarter of a century, founders David Finckel and Wu Han present their final season as artistic directors – a season that, under the title 'Redux', revisits past themes in the company of artists such as pianist Stephen Hough (wearing his composer's hat) and the Viano Quartet. To be completed at Menlo '27, Gilles Vonsattel embarks on a journey through Beethoven's complete piano sonatas.

Sun Valley Music Festival

Sun Valley, ID, 27 July – 20 August
svmusicfestival.org

What's not to like about a festival that promises four weeks of elevated music-making free of charge? And there's nothing 'cut price' about a Festival Orchestra drawing on some of North America's finest, including the Minnesota Orchestra and Toronto Symphony. Soloists include violinist Gil Shaham and baritone Benjamin Appl; and music director Alasdair Neale's programming features a new work by Anna Clyne as well as music by Thomas Adès and Tan Dun. There's chamber music too, plus the choral splendours of Brahms's *German Requiem*.

Saratoga Performing Arts Center

Saratoga Springs, NY, 5–20 August
spac.org

Hunkering down in verdant Saratoga Spa State Park, the Performing Arts Center's amphitheatre provides the Philadelphia Orchestra with a custom-built summer home. Literally. It was designed by Eugene Ormandy, who conducted the opening concert exactly 60 years ago. Marin Alsop picks up the baton for three of this summer's offerings in a series that, from Copland to Joan Tower, maintains a weather eye on America 250.

Tippet Rise

Fishtail, MT, 14 Aug – 13 September
tippetrise.org

Saddle up! The Arts Center-cum-working ranch arrives at its 11th season champing at the bit. Aside from hiking, biking and sculpture tours, composers from Haydn and Chopin to Dobrinka Tabakova and Sigur Rós jostle for attention in a line-up that includes a specially commissioned work by Jessica Meyer. Making Tippet Rise debuts are the Takács Quartet as well as pianist Yekwon Sunwoo.