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Announcing the 2025 Newport Classical Music Festival 29 Concerts from July 4-22, 2025



Performances by Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with Stefan Jackiw, Jessica Vosk, Leila Josefowicz, Karen Slack, Inon Barnaton, Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung, Sara Davis Buechner, Third Coast Percussion, The Westerlies, and Many More

**World Premiere of Cris Derksen's *First Light* for the Galvin Cello Quartet
Commissioned by Newport Classical**

**Soprano Karen Slack's African Queens Project
Co-Commissioned by Newport Classical**

**US Premiere of David Lang's *daisy* by Attacca Quartet
Co-Commissioned by Newport Classical**

**Opera Night at The Breakers: An American Tapestry featuring
Music by Gershwin, Previn, Copland, Barber, and More**

**Historic Venues include The Breakers, The Elms, Blithewold Mansion,
Castle Hill Inn, Rosecliff Terrace, Colony House, and More**

Tickets on Sale April 9: www.newportclassical.org/music-festival

Newport, RI – From **July 4-22, 2025**, the **Newport Classical Music Festival** offers an unparalleled experience, combining 29 intimate concerts featuring over 100 artists with the grandeur and opulence of 11 iconic venues – including the stunning interiors of **The Breakers, The Elms, Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport Art Museum, and Colony House**, as well as picturesque outdoor settings at **Rosecliff Terrace, Norman Bird Sanctuary, Blithewold Mansion, and Castle Hill Inn** – making the City by the Sea an ultimate summer destination for live music. For 56 years, Newport Classical has united artists and audiences to experience the joy of music and the connections it inspires, offering concertgoers the opportunity to discover new composers or experience timeless works offered from a fresh perspective. **Tickets will go on sale to the general public on April 9.**

Highlights of the 2025 Newport Classical Music Festival include Opening Night featuring Two Pianos with **Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung**; two evenings with Broadway star **Jessica Vosk**, best known for her lead role in *Wicked*; performances by extraordinary pianists **Inon Barnatan, Sara Davis Buechner, and Wynona Wang**; celebrated soprano **Karen Slack**'s African Queens project co-commissioned by Newport Classical with a national consortium; the US premiere of a new work by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **David Lang** co-commissioned by Newport Classical with an international consortium; performances by world-class artists including violinist **Leila Josefowicz, The Westerlies, Third Coast Percussion, harpist Emily Levin, guitarists Ziggy and Miles, Palaver Strings, Attacca Quartet, Twelfth Night, The Gesualdo Six, Tallā Rouge, Empire Wild**, and more; **Opera Night: An American Tapestry**; and Closing Night with **Orpheus Chamber Orchestra** and violinist **Stefan Jackiw**.

For the fifth year in a row, Newport Classical has commissioned a brand new work to be premiered at the Festival. This year's Composer-in-Residence is **Cris Derksen**, a Juno-nominated Indigenous cellist and composer, who is writing a new work for the **Galvin Cello Quartet**. Derksen researched the history of Aquidneck Island, and her new piece *First Light* focuses on The Wampanoag, a Native American People known as the "People of the First Light," as well as the story of John Anthony, an enslaved boy, as reimagined by the composer. Cris Derksen is internationally renowned for her genre-defying music that bridges the traditional and contemporary. Her work intricately weaves together her classical training and Indigenous heritage with modern electronic elements.

Other highlights of the 2025 Newport Classical Music Festival include the beloved **Sunrise Concerts** at 5:15am; a concert inspired by nature at **Norman Bird Sanctuary**; a **free Fourth of July concert** at King Park; and this year's young professional **Newport Classical Festival Artists** in seven performances and several free community events throughout the Festival.

Executive Director **Gillian Fox** says, "We can all agree that this festival is so much more than three weeks of concerts. It's an unforgettable celebration of artistry, community, and the thrill of live performance, set against the one-of-a-kind backdrop of Newport's iconic venues. This summer's array of programs captures the expansive range of artistic expression within classical music. We can't wait to welcome you to the 2025 Newport Classical Music Festival."

Now in its fourth year, **Newport Classical's Festival Artists Residency Program** brings together five professional musicians at the early stages of their careers for an intense period of rehearsal and music-making during the Festival. This diverse group of emerging talents live, work, and play together, becoming engaged members of the community during their extended time in Newport. Each of these exceptionally gifted musicians are selected for their experience working in fast-paced chamber music settings and comfort tackling a wide range of repertoire. This summer, Newport Classical welcomes **Risa Hokamura** (violin); **Nathan Meltzer** (violin); **Mira Williams** (viola), **Alexander Hersh** (cello), and **Wynona Wang** (piano).



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2025 Newport Classical Music Festival Concerts:

The 2025 Newport Classical Music Festival kicks off on Friday, **July 4** at 8pm with a free, outdoor **Fourth of July Patriotic Pops** concert preceding the fireworks at King Park featuring **Fenway Brass & Percussion**, one of Boston's most esteemed professional brass ensembles, in a joyous program celebrating America's birthday. This family-friendly concert, with views of the Pell Bridge, is part of the 2025 BankNewport Community Concerts Series.

Newport Classical Music Festival's **Opening Night** concert on Saturday, **July 5** at 8pm at The Breakers features **Two Pianos with Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung**. Partners on and off the stage, Bax and Chung are one of the most appealing and impressive piano duos of our time. Together they present a program of abundant artistic chemistry, passion, and stunning virtuosity in music by Busoni, Poulenc, Schubert, Debussy, and Piazzolla, showcasing the duo's seamless synchronicity and musical artistry in the stunning setting of The Breakers.

On Sunday, **July 6** at 8pm, one of the most beloved evenings of the Festival returns. This year, **Opera Night: An American Tapestry** will showcase a captivating selection of arias, duets, and ensemble numbers from American English operas including *Porgy and Bess*, *Susannah*, *Moby Dick*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and more. Narrated by acclaimed pianist **Charlie Kim**, this journey through operatic classics features performances by **Sarah Tucker**, soprano; **Melissa Joseph**, soprano; **Renée Rapier**, mezzo-soprano; **Dane Suarez**, tenor; and **Michael Colman**, bass. Complete with a red-carpet photo experience, Opera Night promises a dazzling evening of timeless music and storytelling in a setting as beautiful as the performances.

On Monday, **July 7** at 4pm, the **Festival Artists** present an evocative concert exploring the love triangle between Johannes Brahms, Robert Schumann, and Clara Schumann – one of classical music's most complex relationships – in **Musical Love Triangle: Brahms and the Schumanns**. Though their love could not be revealed during Robert's life, Johannes and Clara's bond remained steadfast even after his passing. The music of Brahms and the Schumanns offers a window into their emotional world, brought to life in an intimate concert at the Newport Art Museum. Audience members can arrive early to explore the Museum's inspiring exhibits for a truly enriching experience.

New York-based brass quartet **The Westerlies**, hailed by *The New York Times* as “an arty quartet...mixing ideas from jazz, new classical, and Appalachian folk” will present a memorable morning concert at Blithewold Mansion on Tuesday, **July 8** at 11am. Drawing from American shape-note music – a tradition designed to make singing more accessible – the ensemble presents kaleidoscopic arrangements of traditional hymns alongside new compositions. With concert hall precision and folklike approachability, The Westerlies reimagines the American musical landscape, inviting audiences on a trailblazing journey through past and present in music by Caroline Shaw, Westerlies members Chloe Rowlands and Andy Clausen, arrangements by Sam Amidon and Nico Muhly, and more.

On Tuesday, **July 8** at 7:30pm, audiences can enjoy an elevated concert experience at the picturesque Castle Hill Inn. Acclaimed for her musical command, cosmopolitan artistry, and visionary independence, **Sara Davis Buechner** is a beloved Festival favorite and one of the most distinctive concert pianists of our time. Lauded for her “intelligence, integrity, and all-encompassing technical prowess” (*New York Times*), Japan's *InTune* magazine sums it up perfectly: “Buechner has no superior.” At Castle Hill Inn, she performs a jazz-inspired program with music by John Alden Carpenter, Vernon Duke, Dana Suesse, Ravel, and Poulenc. The concert includes complimentary desserts and coffee during intermission, set against the stunning backdrop of a Newport summer sunset on the water.

The **Festival Artists** offer a captivating morning of **Piano Quartets** on Wednesday, **July 9** at 11am, set within the elegant French design of The Elms Ballroom. This program celebrates three monumental composers of the Classical and Romantic eras, tracing the evolution of the piano quartet through their works. With intricate musical architecture and dialogue between piano and strings, the concert showcases the genius of Mozart, Friedrich Kiel, and Brahms.

On Wednesday, **July 9** at 8pm, the dynamic ensemble **Twelfth Night** brings its signature blend of historical performance and dynamic energy to The Breakers. Led by virtuoso violinist Rachell Ellen Wong and harpsichordist David Belkovski, Twelfth Night believes that art thrives as a meeting place of the past, present, and future. Their program of Handel, Vivaldi, Telemann, and more will transport audiences through time, fusing the old with the new in a way only this ensemble can do. Inspired by Shakespeare's play of the same name, the ensemble strives to invoke a spirit of boundless revelry, celebration, and community in their programming.

The extraordinary pianist **Wynona Yinuo Wang** presents a morning recital at The Elms on Thursday, **July 10** at 11am. Winner of the First Prize at the 2018 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, Wynona Wang is one of Newport Classical's 2025 Festival Artists and has performed at prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House, as well as with renowned orchestras around the world. Her performance at The Elms combines music by Scarlatti, Schubert, and Rachmaninoff with new works by composer Zhang Zhao, offering the perfect blend of Wang's artistry.

On Thursday, **July 10** at 8pm at The Breakers, **Third Coast Percussion** marks 20 years of genre-defying, award-winning music. Third Coast's program features selections from five albums with four GRAMMY® nominations and one GRAMMY® Award, along with exciting new works commissioned for the ensemble's 20th anniversary, including music by Clarice Assad, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Jlin, Jessie Montgomery, and Tigran Hamasyan. Join Third Coast for a night that pushes the boundaries of percussion and showcases the innovative spirit of one of contemporary music's most celebrated ensembles. Set against the stunning backdrop of The Breakers mansion, this performance offers a unique fusion of genres, history, and sound.

On Friday, **July 11** at 5:15am audiences can start their day with a stunning, panoramic sunrise over Newport's iconic Cliff Walk and the Atlantic Ocean as the Festival Artists present a meditative and uplifting journey in this **Sunrise Meditations** concert. Set on the terrace of Rosecliff, with its breathtaking views and serene atmosphere, this year's Sunrise Meditations concert offers a unique opportunity to enjoy music in a peaceful, outdoor setting. The program features a beautiful selection of works, including Telemann's Fantasia No. 7 for solo viola, Mozart's *Ganz Kleine Nachtmusik*, Beethoven's String Trio in G Major, and more.

The Gesualdo Six, an award-winning British vocal ensemble celebrated for its impeccable blend and imaginative programming, brings its sublime choral artistry to The Breakers on Friday, **July 11** at 8pm. This ensemble of the UK's finest consort singers has captivated audiences worldwide for the past decade, and will bring to Newport a program inspired by the ancient service of Compline, ushering in the darkness of the night and evoking a contemplative atmosphere. Works include Renaissance polyphony by Palestrina, Tallis, and Gesualdo that contain startling harmonic shifts and expressive word painting. Then the light returns, birds sing, and flowers bloom once more, with music by Veljo Tormis, Schubert, and Gerda Blok-Wilson.

On Saturday, **July 12** at 9am, surrounded by the serene beauty of the Norman Bird Sanctuary, the **Festival Artists** will present a delightful outdoor morning program of chamber music in **Strings in Nature**. Set amidst the sanctuary's stunning natural surroundings, this year's concert features Haydn's playful *The Joke* Quartet, Spohr's Grand Duo for Violin and Viola, Schubert's lyrical String Trio in B-flat Major, and Strauss's whimsical Variations on a Bavarian Folk Song.

On Saturday, **July 12** at 8pm at The Breakers, GRAMMY® Award-winning singer **Karen Slack** – “one of the nation's most celebrated sopranos” (*Trilloquy*) – presents **African Queens**, an extraordinary evening of music and storytelling, featuring a powerful selection of new works by some of today's most acclaimed composers including Jessie Montgomery, Fred Onovwerosuoke, previous Newport Classical Composer-in-Residence Shawn Okpebholo, Jasmine Arielle Barnes, Will Liverman, Joel Thompson, and Damien Geter. This collaborative song cycle shines a spotlight on seven fierce African Queens, whose legacies as rulers and warriors have often been overlooked in the West, with each piece reflecting their beauty, passion, humility, and power. Slack brings her operatic virtuosity to this project, joined by pianist **Kevin J. Miller**, to celebrate living composers and elevate voices long underrepresented in classical music. *African Queens* is commissioned for Karen Slack by a national consortium of prominent presenters – the Ravinia Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival and School, Boston Symphony Orchestra for the Tanglewood Learning Institute, Denver Friends of Chamber Music, Washington Performing Arts, The 92nd Street Y, New York, and Newport Classical Music Festival.

On Sunday, **July 13** at 3pm, **Ziggy and Miles** – “Australian guitarist brothers making history” (*The Age*) – perform in the intimate and historic surroundings of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum. Ziggy and Miles' performances are known for their “deeply considered musicianship, immaculate care and superlative technique” (*5MBS*). Winners of the 2023 YCA (Young Concert Artists) Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, the brothers have become the first guitar duo and second guitarists to receive this prestigious award in the organization's 63-year history. Featuring works by French composers Franck and Debussy, this concert promises an afternoon of vibrant and innovative guitar repertoire that will captivate and inspire.

Following a sold-out performance at the Newport Classical Recital Hall in 2024, Newport Classical is thrilled to welcome the **Galvin Cello Quartet** back to Newport for an exceptional concert at The Breakers on Sunday, **July 13** at 8pm. Fresh off their Silver Medal at the 2021 Fischhoff Competition and their win at the 2022 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition, the Quartet has quickly become a force in the classical music world. Known for their innovative approach to new music, in this concert the Galvin Cello Quartet features the world premiere of a piece commissioned by Newport Classical from Canadian Indigenous cellist and composer Cris Derksen, alongside works by Beethoven, Mozart, Mussorgsky, and Tchaikovsky, blending beloved classics with exciting new compositions.

On Tuesday, **July 15** at 4pm, set amongst stunning works at the Newport Art Museum, the one-of-a-kind Cajun-Persian viola duo **Tallā Rouge** celebrates the virtuosity of the viola. Lauded as the “little viola duo that could” by *Chamber Music America*, Tallā Rouge has performed at Carnegie Hall and Dumbarton Oaks, and has won multiple competitions. This concert features works by celebrated living composers and reimagined classical favorites, showcasing the duo's ability to take audiences on a “musical journey that travels far and wide across ‘genre-defying compositions’.” (*Gramophone Magazine*).

On Tuesday, **July 15** and Wednesday, **July 16** at 8pm at The Breakers, Newport Classical presents two **Evenings with Broadway Star Jessica Vosk**. Vosk is a celebrated singer and actress known for electrifying roles in musical theater and on concert stages, including a sold-out Carnegie Hall debut in 2021. Best known for her star turn as Elphaba in *Wicked* – first on tour and then for the show's 15th anniversary on Broadway – Vosk played the iconic green witch for two years. Additional Broadway credits include The Narrator in *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* and Jersey in *Hell's Kitchen*. Vosk brings her powerhouse vocals and magnetic stage presence to The Breakers for two unforgettable evenings, with pianist **Mary-Mitchell Campbell**.

Celebrating what would be the **150th birthday of Maurice Ravel**, one of France's most influential composers, Newport Classical's resident **Festival Artists** perform on Wednesday, **July 16** at 11am at The Elms. This intimate performance will explore Ravel's unparalleled mastery of orchestration, from his elegant Sonatine for Piano to his String Quartet in F Major, dedicated to his teacher Gabriel Fauré. The program will highlight his emotional depth and distinct style, inviting listeners to experience Ravel's enduring legacy in a personal and immersive setting within the historic atmosphere of The Elms, honoring a composer whose works continue to resonate across generations.

On Thursday, **July 17** at 11am at The Elms, harpist **Emily Levin** returns to Newport for a mesmerizing concert titled **Harp and Harmony**, joined by violinist **Julia Choi** (Metropolitan Opera Orchestra) and cellist **Christine Lamprea** (Sphinx Medal of Excellence winner). This newly formed trio, Ember, will share works from their debut album *Birds of Paradise*, blending the rich sounds of violin, cello, and harp. The program will feature pieces by Reena Esmail, Angélica Negrón, Henriette Renié, and more, showcasing the ensemble's dynamic interplay of textures and emotions all set against the historic setting of The Elms.

Palaver Strings, a dynamic musician-led ensemble, brings an evening of stirring performances to The Breakers on Thursday, **July 17** at 8pm, showcasing their commitment to amplifying underrepresented voices. Praised for their ability to "command a stage on their own terms" (*The Boston Globe*), the ensemble explores folk music from around the world, addressing themes of heritage, belonging, and resilience. The program features Kareem Roustom's new work *hawwāsh* inspired by a traditional Arab line dance, alongside Palaver's arrangement of Bartók's Romanian Folk Dances, Kinan Azmeh's Syrian Dances, and more, celebrating folk music as a powerful vehicle for both strength and joy.

On Friday, **July 18** at 5:15am, audiences can experience a serene start to the day with **The Harp at Sunrise**, a tranquil concert set amongst the peaceful beauty of Rosecliff. Harpist Emily Levin brings Hans Otte's *The Book of Sounds* to life, a meditative and evocative work that pairs the delicate tones of the harp with the quiet of the early morning. The intimate performance takes place on the terrace of Rosecliff, with its sweeping, panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean, providing an enchanting backdrop to this reflective musical experience.

The Newport Classical **Festival Artists** offer a **Free Open Rehearsal** on Friday, **July 18** at 2pm at Newport Classical Recital Hall, as they finalize preparations for their performance French Quintets: Revivals taking place the following day. The program highlights the rich musical tradition of French composers, featuring works by Louis Gouvy, Reynaldo Hahn, and Jean Cras.

Acclaimed pianist **Inon Barnatan** presents an evening of exceptional music at The Breakers on Friday, **July 18** at 8pm. Described as "one of the most admired pianists of his generation" (*New York Times*), Barnatan brings his profound depth and expressive power to one of Newport's most iconic venues. Performing works by Bach, Franck, and Schubert, this evening promises to be an unforgettable musical journey, showcasing Barnatan's ability to forge intimate connections with his audience through his "refined, searching, unflinchingly communicative" style (*The Evening Standard*).

The **Festival Artists** present **French Quintets: Revivals** at the historic Emmanuel Church on Saturday, **July 19** at 3pm, featuring quintets from the 19th and 20th centuries. Paired with Emmanuel Church's stunning English Gothic Revival architecture, the ensemble brings a fresh perspective to these classic pieces in a program highlighting the rich musical tradition of French composers, featuring works by Louis Gouvy, Reynaldo Hahn, and Jean Cras.

On Saturday, **July 19** at 8pm at The Breakers, **Attacca Quartet** brings its exceptional artistry to an evening that pairs celebrated classical works with engaging contemporary compositions. Praised by *The Washington Post*, which reported that "mastery like this is scarce enough in quartets that have played together for decades," the Attacca Quartet is known for their innovative approach to chamber music, has collaborated with artists such as Caroline Shaw and Billie Eilish, and has contributed to soundtracks for films like Ken Burns' new documentary, *Leonardo da Vinci*. The Attacca Quartet's Newport debut includes the US premiere of *daisy* by Pulitzer Prize and GRAMMY® Award-winning composer David Lang, alongside Bartók's String Quartet No. 4 and Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 4. *daisy* was co-commissioned by an international group of presenters – Newport Classical, La Biennale di Venezia, Kings Place, String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam, Park Avenue Armory, and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

After an energetic and memorable Newport debut last season, **Empire Wild** returns for a performance on Sunday, **July 20** at 11am that pushes musical boundaries with its inventive fusion of genres. Set in the historic Newport Colony House, built in 1739 and rarely open to the public, the ensemble blends pop, folk, jazz, and more. The program includes original

songs, dynamic covers, and fresh takes on classical pieces, making for a truly delightful afternoon in one of Newport's oldest landmark venues.

Hailed for her "technical prowess and expressive depth" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), violinist **Leila Josefowicz** brings her extraordinary artistry to The Breakers for an evening of exceptional music on Sunday, **July 20** at 8pm. Known for her dynamic performances and commitment to expanding the boundaries of the violin, Josefowicz is joined by acclaimed pianist **Alexei Tartakovsky**. Together they offer a program featuring works by Beethoven, Debussy, and Stravinsky. This is a rare opportunity to experience Josefowicz's artistry in one of Newport's most standout venues.

The 2025 Newport Classical Music Festival ends on a high note on Tuesday, **July 22** at 8pm as the incomparable self-conducted **Orpheus Chamber Orchestra** returns to The Breakers for the Festival's **Closing Night** performance, joined by acclaimed violin soloist **Stefan Jackiw**. Known for its radical approach to musical democracy, Orpheus has proven for over 50 years what happens when exceptional artists collaborate with total trust in one another. Blending the discipline of an orchestra with the spirit of a chamber group, this evening promises to be a celebration of musical excellence and creative collaboration, providing a thrilling conclusion to the Festival. Orpheus performs Arensky's Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with Jackiw, and Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings.

For the full schedule, visit: www.newportclassical.org/music-festival



Photo credit: Lisette Rooney

About Newport Classical

Newport Classical is a premier performing arts organization that welcomes people of every age, culture, and background to intimate, immersive musical experiences. The organization presents world-renowned and up-and-coming artistic talents at stunning, storied venues across Newport – an internationally sought-after cultural and recreational destination.

Originally founded in 1969 as Rhode Island Arts Foundation at Newport, Inc., Newport Classical has a rich legacy of musical curiosity having presented the American debuts of hundreds of international artists and is most well-known for hosting three weeks of concerts in the summer in the historic mansions throughout Newport and Aquidneck Island. In the 56 years since, Newport Classical has become the most active year-round presenter of live performing arts on Aquidneck Island, and an essential pillar of Rhode Island's cultural landscape, welcoming thousands of patrons all year long.

Newport Classical invests in the future of classical music as a diverse, relevant, and ever-evolving art form through its four core programs – the one-of-a-kind Music Festival; the Chamber Series in the Newport Classical Recital Hall; the free, family-friendly Community Concerts Series; and the Music Education and Engagement Initiative that inspires students in local schools to become the arts advocates and music lovers of tomorrow. These programs illustrate the organization's ongoing commitment to presenting "timeless music for today."

In 2021, the organization launched a new commissioning initiative – each year, Newport Classical will commission a new work by a Black, Indigenous, person of color, or woman composer as a commitment to the future of classical music. To date, Newport Classical has commissioned and presented the world premiere of works by Stacy Garrop, Shawn Okpebholo, Curtis Stewart, and Clarice Assad.

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