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Pop-Up Bach - be surprised by classical music downtown

By Sophie Braccini



Gold Coast Chamber Players' Pamela Freund-Striplen pops up for Bach! Photo Tony Striplen

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, between 1982 and 2002, the portion of concert goers under 30 fell from 27 percent to 9 percent. Go to a classical music concert today and most of what you see in the audience is a sea of grey. Classic music FM notes that reasons why millennials do not like classical music include that it is long and requires a long attention span, and that concert halls are no place for flat whites or leaf-decorated lattes. But Lafayette resident and director of the Gold Coast Chamber Players, Pamela Freund-Striplen, is about to shift that paradigm, at least on the Lamorinda scale, by offering fun and dynamic performances to residents in locations they would least expect. Her program is called Pop-Up Bach; expect to be delighted in public spaces between May 14 and 18.

The series is envisioned as a surprise to the community and Freund-Striplen expects that most of the spectators will just experience it without preparation. There is nonetheless a program for those who do not want to miss that opportunity to enjoy or discover classical music in unlikely settings, little chunks at a time. The series will start at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 14 during the Taste of Lafayette when the Little Stars Trio will play very appropriately at the Jennifer Perlmutter pop-up gallery in the bank at 3525 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Then on Wednesday, May 15 Freund-Striplen herself will play her viola at the Three-Quarter Century Luncheon from 11:50 a.m. to

noon in Orinda with Amy Likar on flute (this concert is for the seniors attending the annual luncheon offered to those 75 years old and better). Likar will continue playing that same day at Diablo Foods from 12:30 to 1:15 p.m., and that evening Freund-Striplen will play for her yoga class at 8:15 p.m. at Moraga 24 Hour Fitness. On Thursday, May 16 Rachel Stokol, viola, will play from 4 to 4:45 p.m. at Orchard Nursery in Lafayette, and will continue accompanied by Freund-Striplen at Clocks Etc. from 5 to 5:30 p.m. Finally, on Friday, May 17 violinist Chili Ekman will play from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in the Roundup Saloon parking lot.

Freund-Striplen encourages people to get a card at the first miniconcert and get it stamped at each venue, then redeem the cards for goodie bags at the Gold Coast concert on Saturday night, May 18 at the Lafayette Library between 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. That night Gold Coast is welcoming the Telegraph Quartet, a group described by the San Francisco Chronicle in 2017 as ". an incredibly valuable addition to the cultural landscape" and "powerfully adept . with a combination of brilliance and subtlety." The Telegraph Quartet has received numerous international awards and played all over the world; it was awarded the prestigious Walter W. Naumburg Chamber Music Award in 2016. On May 18 the group of young musicians will play the String Quartet in D major by Felix Mendelssohn, the String Quartet in E-flat by Antonin Dvorak, and the Quintet in D major, k.593 by W.A. Mozart.

Freund-Striplen said that organizing this free mini-concert series was quite a bit of work, but also really fun. She has always incorporated education with the work of the Gold Coast Chamber Players, working with local middle and high schools; she is now on a new mission to change people's minds about classical music. She wants to reach a newer audience and to keep on sharing. Her hope is that there will be more of these pop-up mini concerts, as she wants to make it one of Lamorinda's on-going cultural attractions.

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