

## Music

# Beethoven popping up all over S.F.

Throughout its 20-year career, the Cypress String Quartet has performed thousands of concerts, commissioned dozens of new works, recorded more than 15 albums and earned a loyal following in the Bay Area. The San Francisco-



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-based foursome — Cecily Ward and Tom Stone (violins), Ethan Filner (viola) and Jennifer Klotzel (cello) — has

been heard in concert halls across North America, Europe, Asia and Latin America and on the popular Netflix series, “House of Cards.”

All good things must end, however, and earlier this year, the Cypress announced that this season would be its last. The quartet plays its final salon concerts May 13-22 in Berkeley, San Francisco, and Palo Alto; a farewell concert is scheduled for June 26 at the Green Room in San Francisco’s Veteran’s Building.

Before that, though, the Cypress plans to celebrate its long, successful run with a series of free pop-up concerts in various San Francisco locations. Performed May 4-19, “Beethoven in the City” will touch down in all 11 of San Francisco’s districts, in venues from City Hall to Crissy Field, St. Anthony’s Dining Room to Justin Herman Plaza and various public parks and libraries.

Beethoven is a specialty for the Cypress. In recent years, the quartet has performed the composer’s chamber works on programs throughout the United States and Eu-



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The Cypress String Quartet, as one of its final acts as a musical ensemble, is bringing a series of free recitals of Beethoven’s music to venues all over the Bay Area.

rope and recorded all 16 Beethoven quartets plus the “Grosse Fuge.” On May 6, the quartet releases its latest recording, a two-disc set of Beethoven’s early quartets recorded at Skywalker Sound in Marin County.

The recording caps two decades of music by the Cypress Quartet. It’s a great send-off — and so are the pop-up concerts, which give music lovers the opportunity to show their appreciation for the quartet’s many contributions to the Bay Area music scene.

**Details:** “Beethoven in the City,” May 4-19, various locations; free. Cypress Quartet Salon concerts, 8 p.m. May 13 and 20, Maybeck Studio, Berkeley;

8 p.m. May 21, Kanbar Hall, San Francisco; 3 p.m., May 22, Woman’s Club of Palo Alto; \$50; additional details at 415-500-2150; www.cypressquartet.com.

**KRONOS GOES OUT OF THIS WORLD:** When Terry Riley turned 80 last summer, the Kronos Quartet marked the occasion with a three-day bash featuring performances and tributes at SFJazz Center in San Francisco. One of the highlights was an excerpt from Riley’s “Sun Rings,” which melds sounds from NASA recordings with live strings and visual imagery by Willie Williams. Kronos revisits this celestial work in a complete performance of “Sun Rings,” coming up in

its next concert presented by Cal Performances.

**Details:** 7 p.m. May 1, Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley campus; \$15-\$76, 510-642-9988; www.calperformances.org.

**SFS CHORUS STANDS OUT:** Under Ragnar Bohlin, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus does outstanding work in a wide range of repertoire all season — and, occasionally, gets top billing at Davies Symphony Hall. That’ll be the case when Bohlin, 140 chorus members, and organist Jonathan Dimmock perform Faure’s gorgeous Requiem for chorus and organ, with soprano Joanna Taber and baritone Hadleigh Adams as vocal soloists. The program also includes Brahms’ a cappella “Fest-und Gedenkspruche” and Mason Bates’ “Mass Transmission,” with the composer on electronica. **Details:** May 1, 7:30 p.m., Davies Hall, S.F.; \$20-\$125; 415-864-6000, www.sfsymphony.org.

**A Fund for Asawa:** I first heard countertenor Brian Asawa sing as Count Orlofsky in the San Francisco Opera’s 1996 production of “Die Fledermaus,” and it was clear from the start that he was a uniquely gifted artist. The Los Angeles-born Asawa, who was the first countertenor to be accepted into the company’s Merola program for young singers, went on to distinguish himself in many roles. Sadly, he died at age 49 on April 18 at his home in Mission Hills, California, and now SF Opera has established a fund in his honor — one, the company announced, that will go toward other Merola participants, with “a particular preference given to countertenors.”

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