
There are music festivals and there are music festivals. Then there is the Moab Music Festival – a mélange of musical programming set in one of the most splendid landscapes on earth. Old and new music – chamber music, vocal music, jazz, traditional music – performed by outstanding musicians in a setting of form, color, and light that creates an unmatched artistic experience... Music in Concert with the Landscape.

Founded in 1992 by **Michael Barrett** and **Leslie Tomkins**, prominent musicians based in New York, the Festival gathers world-class instrumentalists and vocalists annually to celebrate vibrant music in an awe-inspiring landscape. An ever-expanding audience comes from all parts of the United States and from Europe to enjoy this unique combination of sight and sound.

Composers range from Bach to Bernstein, from Ravel to Rorem, from Dvorák to Danielpour. One performance may feature a vocalist celebrating a French chanteuse; the next a chamber ensemble performing Brahms; then a jazz ensemble playing with a Latin flair; then an exploration of contemporary music by the season's Composer-in-Residence, who will be present to discuss his or her work. For patrons, the three weekend fall festival – which in 2003 won ASCAP's coveted award for "Adventurous Programming" in the music festival category – is a potpourri of musical offerings performed by dynamic, highly accomplished musicians. In June, the Festival offers a four day "Musical Adventure" benefit raft trip with performances held at scenic sites along the Colorado River.

Many concerts take advantage of the remarkable environment and are set outdoors in unique settings – under a pavilion along the Colorado River, in a tent under towering rock monoliths, in a park sheltered by the shade of an ancient cottonwood. Benefit concerts are held each year in local private homes and in a red-rock wilderness grotto: a natural stone amphitheater with perfect acoustics. Patrons are taken by jet boat downriver to this special site carved by centuries of spring floods of the river. *The New York Times* called the concert "an event that combines human and natural grandeur."

Whether held outdoors or indoors (in the local historic concert hall or the excellent auditorium at the county high school), concerts thrill audiences with the quality of the performances and intimacy of the experience. And when the music is not playing, patrons enjoy the scenic wonders of the area – Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, the snow-capped La Sal Mountains, the red-rock cliffs along the Colorado River. Or they can browse the diverse craft and art shops of Moab and enjoy dining in diverse restaurants.

As Michael Barrett has said, "Bringing high quality musical performance to a place where Nature is performing her own magic is a privilege for all us. These two wonders come together – truly in concert – for an artistic experience that is unique in the world."

- The Moab Music Festival was founded in 1992 by Michael Barrett and Leslie Tomkins. Michael, a pianist and conductor and General Director and CEO of the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts in New York, serves as Music Director of the Festival and Leslie, a violist, serves as Artistic Director. (For bios, visit www.moabmusicfest.org)
- The Festival's main season is a three weekend period in early September embracing the Labor Day holiday. Up to a dozen concerts are scheduled in a variety of indoor and outdoor venues in the Moab area. This includes benefit concerts – Colorado River concerts taking patrons by jet boat down to a red-rock grotto 30 miles south of Moab and evening concerts with dinner at local homes.
 - In June there is also a special four day benefit river trip taking musicians and patrons down the Colorado River. Performances are held in scenic areas along the route.
- Since 1992, over 150 musicians have performed at the Festival, and audiences have welcomed a broad range of internationally acclaimed Composers-in-Residence including Lowell Liebermann, Richard Danielpour, Lukas Foss, Lou Harrison, Chen Yi, Aaron Jay Kernis, Paul Moravec and others.
- The Festival has won numerous awards including
 - The Utah Arts Council's 2002 Governor's Award in the Arts in the category of Arts Organizations
 - ASCAP's 2003 First Prize for "Adventurous Programming" in the Music Festival category
 - 2007 Governor's Mansion Artists Award
- The Festival's Mission also encompasses a variety of youth music education and community cultural enhancement programs. Festival artists perform at assemblies for Moab area school children and return throughout the year as Artists in Residence in the schools and community.
- The Festival is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization governed by a Board of Trustees. (Trustees list at www.moabmusicfest.org). There is a small permanent staff and over 100 community volunteers.
- The Festival's web site is www.moabmusicfest.org

Moab, Utah sits in the midst of one of the most unique, splendid landscapes in the world. Most people have seen Moab's wonders somewhere – in a motion picture, in a television commercial, on the license plates of Utah cars, in paintings and photos that stun the senses with color and form.

John Huston and John Wayne were there. Tom Cruise hung on a Moab cliff, and Thelma and Louise went over one. Marlboro Country was nearby and Jeep country is everywhere. Edward Abbey and Terry Tempest Williams write of the land. Local photographer Tom Till captures it in books, photos, and calendars. And renowned artist Adele Alsop uses it in her wildly expressionist paintings.

Perched below the edge of the arid Colorado Plateau, Moab is red-rock country. The mesas, the arches, the cliffs, the mountains are a rich rust-red hue. The green of the juniper and pinion, the sage, and the cactus is a stunning contrast to the fiery colors of the earthscape, which has been carved by geologic forces, wind, snow, and rain into fantastical shapes.

Balanced Rock and Delicate Arch are there. The snow-capped La Sal Mountains are there. Strange slickrock landscapes are there. Majestic towers of rock reach skyward, and springs gush with a pure, delicious water.

Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park are located in Moab. So is Utah's Dead Horse Point State Park. A local museum traces the history of the land – from when dinosaurs roamed (leaving a treasure trove of bones and footprints) to when Anazazi Native Americans formed a sophisticated society (evidenced by petroglyphs, baskets, and pottery) to when Mormon settlers came, followed by outlaws, then town folk, then uranium miners, and more recently mountain bikers, hikers, river rafters, and music lovers.

And a river runs through it. The mighty Colorado comes out of the Rocky Mountains and cuts a winding red cliff canyon northeast and southwest of Moab. Seventy five miles south of town – in the middle of Canyonlands National Park – the Green River joins the Colorado, creating Cataract Canyon Rapids, the largest rapid in the United States. Further downriver is Lake Powell and beyond that lies the Grand Canyon.

For those who like adventure, Moab has it all: biking, river rafting, jeeping, hiking, rock climbing, mountaineering. For those who like handicrafts and visual arts, the local artisan community offers an array of paintings, lithographs, pottery, leathersgoods, sculpture of every medium. For those who just want to stop and look, some of the most breathtaking scenery on earth is accessible by car.

Local accommodations range from campsites to motels to fine riverside resorts. Cuisines include American, Southwest, Chinese, Mexican, Continental, and some good, hearty steaks. Breakfast can be outstanding. There is also a local winery and some excellent local brews.

And for Festival music lovers, outdoor concert venues offer the chance to see these splendors – often in the waning sun of evening – as they listen to outstanding musicians play beautiful music.

Festival patrons are not just coming to concerts when they come to Moab Music Festival. They are coming to a landscape unique in the world. Whether they attend indoor or outdoor Festival events, they will be awed by the country. The music and the landscape work in concert to create a richness of experience that is possible only in the Moab environment.

A critical part of the Music Festival's Mission is to utilize the talents of visiting professional musicians in ways that enrich the local culture and provide musical education to children and adults alike.

During the Moab Music Festival in September, the Festival's Education Outreach Program provides a special educational concert for each Grand County School (two elementary schools, one middle school, one high school) and at a charter school. A group of the visiting musicians – including the Festival's Music Director – perform works appropriate to the children and provide a tutorial about the music, instruments, and the process of becoming a musician. The Education Outreach Program reaches each child in the Grand County School District.

Free concerts are offered to the community each Labor Day. Rocky Mountain Power sponsors a concert to bring young and old together for an afternoon of music that usually includes classical, traditional and jazz music as well as familiar American tunes. In 2007 there was also a free special concert for children and a new sold out Musical Walk Benefit Concert -- a hike with a concert -- was held. In 2008 the Musical Walk Benefit Concert will again be held in a "secret location", a natural "concert hall" where Festival musicians will perform for patrons.

Also during the Festival, Utah radio personality Gene Pack, a former board member, provides special classical music recording to Moab's community radio station KZMU and broadcasts some of the concerts to the radio audience.

Thanks to the generosity of the S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Foundation, in 2002 – 2003, clarinetist/saxophonist/composer Eric Thomas spent more than 20 weeks in Moab as Artist-in-Residence.

In 2004 – 2005, piper Christopher Layer served as Artist-in-Residence. He helped to found the Moab Community Dance Band, coaching the ensemble and each of its members. He organized musical events throughout the community and offered a course in musical arrangement of traditional music.

In 2006 – 2007, Layer continued his work during several visits and flutist Marco Granados and Jackeline Rago, Venezuelan cuatrist and Music Educator, also came to Moab to work with both children and adults.

Moab Press Contact: phone: (435) 259-7003
Andrew Yarosh
e-mail: andrew@moabmusicfest.org
Aubrey Davis
e-mail: aubrey@moabmusicfest.org

Michael Barrett

Co-founder /Music Director

Leslie Tomkins

Co-founder /Artistic Director

Composers-in-Residence

Lou Harrison – 1994, 1996
John Musto – 1994, 1998
Jon Deak – 1995
James Sellars – 1997
Lukas Foss – 1999
Peter Lieberon – 1999
Bruce Adolphe – 2000
Chen Yi – 2001
Zhou Long – 2001
Lowell Liebermann – 2002
Paquito D’Rivera – 2003
Richard Danielpour – 2004
Aaron Jay Kernis – 2005
Paul Moravec – 2006
Carla Kihlstedt – 2007
Derek Bermel – 2008
William Bolcom – 2008

Composers

Bruce Adolphe – 2001
Derek Bermel – 2008
Philip Kent Bimstein – 1999
Paquito D’Rivera – 2002, 2003, 2006, 2008
Gerald Elias – 1999, 2002
Tom Kraines – 2003
John Musto – 2003, 2004, 2008
Emily Wong – 1999, 2002
Denny Zeitlin – 2001
Eric Zivian – 2003

Piano

Aglia Angelova – 1998, 1999
Michael Barrett – 1993 through 2008
Steven Blier – 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996,
1998, 1999, 2001
Michael Boriskin – 2001 through 2005
Paul Hersh – 1993 through 2008
Grant Johannesen – 1998
Jon Klivenoff – 2007
Donna Kwong – 2002, 2003, 2004
Steven Mayer – 1997, 1998
John Musto – 1994, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004,
Ken Noda – 2000
Ilya Poletaev – 2007
Susie Petrov – 2007
Samora Pinderhughes – 2007
David Shimoni – 2008

Marija Stroke – 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000
Pete Sutherland – 1999, 2000, 2005, 2006
Butch Thompson – 2005, 2006
Charles Webb – 2000
Emily Wong – 1999, 2002
Alon Yavnai – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006
Denny Zeitlin (jazz) – 2001
Eric Zivian – 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008

Violin

Mio Alt – 2005
Maria Bachmann – 2001, 2006, 2007, 2008
David Balakrishnan – 2007
Emily Bruskin – 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004
James Cooke – 1993, 1994
Lisa Crockett – 1993, 1994
Cenovia Cummins – 1997, 1999, 2000
Arture Delmoni – 2005
Gerald Elias – 1998, 1999
Vesko Eschkenazy – 1998
Gregory Ewer – 2007
Timothy Fain – 2002 through 2008
Lisa Fako – 1993 through 1998
Krista Bennion Feeney – 1995, 1996
Jennifer Frautschi – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006,
2007, 2008
Laura Frautschi – 2004
Roberta Frier – 1997
Laura Goldberg – 1995
Karen Gomyo – 2006, 2007, 2008
Eva Gruesser – 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001
Stefan Hersh – 1994, 1997
Nick Kendall – 2005
Juliette Kang – 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003,
2004, 2005, 2007
Benny Kim – 1998
Jesse Mills – 2004, 2008
Ayano Ninojima – 2007, 2008
Adela Peña – 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000
Evan Price – 2007
Barbara Scowcroft – 2003, 2004
Lynnette Stewart – 1999
Lucy Stoltzman – 2000, 2001
Axel Strauss – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008
Ruth Waterman – 1993, 1994
Weigang Li – 2001
Paul Woodiel – 1999 through 2008
Yiwen Jiang – 2001

Viola

Zvi Carmeli – 1998
 Honggang Li – 2001
 Barbara Primus Hamilton – 2001
 Paul Hersh – 1993, through 2008
 L. P. How – 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008
 Scott Lewis – 1994, 1999
 Kelly Shanafelt – 1995
 Mads Tolling – 2007
 Leslie Tomkins – 1993 through 2008
 Nancy Uscher – 1995, 1996

Cello

Edward Arron – 2007, 2008
 Julia Bruskin – 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004
 John Eckstein – 1999, 2004
 Alexis Pia Gerlach – 2006, 2007, 2008
 Natalie Haas – 2003, 2007
 Julian Hersh – 1998
 Thomas Kraines – 2000 through 2005, 2007
 Dorothy Lawson – 1995, 1997, 1998,
 1999, 2001
 Gregory Sauer – 1993, 1994
 Mark Summer – 2002, 2003, 2007
 Tanya Tomkins – 1994 through 2008
 Jeremy Turner – 2004, 2005, 2007
 Nicholas Tzaravas – 2001
 Felix Wurman – 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996

Doublebass

Robert Black – 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997,
 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007
 John Deak – 1995
 John Feeney – 1995, 1996
 Richard Hartshorne – 2000
 Roy Wiseman – 2001

Flute

Timothy Day – 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999,
 2001, 2003
 Marco Granados – 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008
 Sally Foreman Humphreys – 1997
 Christopher Layer (flutes/bagpipes) – 2001
 through 2008
 Elizabeth Mann – 2000, 2005
 Elena Pinderhughes – 2007
 Gretchen Pusch – 1993
 Nestor Torres – 2003
 Eugenia Zukerman – 1997

Oboe

Marilyn Coyne - 1997, 1999, 2000
 Pamela Epple - 1995
 James Roe - 2006

Clarinet

Dan Block – 2005, 2006
 Derek Bermel – 2008
 Christopher Cullen - 1996, 1999
 Paquito D’Rivera – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006,
 2008
 Alan Kay – 2006
 David Krakauer – 2006
 Eric Thomas – 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998,
 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004,
 2007

Bassoon

Crawford Best – 2000
 Larisa Gelman – 2006
 Christopher Layer – 2007
 Melanie Sanguinetti – 1995
 John Steinmetz – 1997

Trumpet

Stephen Burns – 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000,
 2002, 2005, 2007
 Bret Jackson – 1997

Trombone

John Rojak – 2007

Horn

Neal Deland – 1997, 2000
 Michael Thornton – 2007
 Eric Ruske – 2006, 2007

Percussion

James Baker – 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001,
 2002, 2003
 Ron Brough – 2005
 Glen Fittin – 2003
 Leonardo Granados – 2005, 2007
 Ben Herman – 2001, 2007
 Amy Knoles – 1996
 Dan McMillan – 2006
 Rolando Morales – 2003
 Amy Putnam – 1994
 Pablo Rieppi – 1997, 2000

Harp

Lysa Rytting – 1997, 2001

Guitar

Jake Armerding – 2004
Steve Gibb – 2007
Matt Munisteri – 2005, 2006
Brendan O'Shea – 2004
Pete Sutherland – 1999, 2000, 2005, 2006
Mare Teicholz – 2005, 2006, 2007

Cuatro

Jackeline Rago – 2005, 2007

Mandolin

Taylor Armerding – 2004

Banjo

Tully Cathey – 2002
Greg Liszt – 2004

Accordion

Joe Barbato – 2006
Jeremiah McLane – 2003
Emily Smith – 2007

Erhu

Xu Ke – 2001

Vocalists

Vocalists: Soprano
Amy Burton – 2001, 2003
Christine Brandes – 2006
Brenda Feliciano – 2002, 2003
Risa Renae Harman – 1996
Constance Hauman – 1994
Dina Kuznetsova – 2007
Jonita Lattimore – 2007
Monique McDonald – 1998
Sylvia McNair – 2000
Susan Narucki – 2005
Cyndia Seiden 1995
Lisa Vroman – 2008
Cynthia Watters – 2002

Vocalists: Mezzo-Soprano

Dana Hanchard – 2004
Lorraine Hunt Lieberson – 1997, 1999
Lucy Schauer – 1993, 1995, 2002
Delores Zeigler – 1998

Vocalists: Tenor

Paul Appleby – 2008
Darius de Haas – 2004, 2005
Steven Goldstein – 1995
Theodore Green – 2001
Jeffrey Picon – 1996, 2002
Steven Tharp – 1998

Vocalists: Baritone and Bass

Matt Boehler – 2008
Phillip Cutlip – 1996, 2002
Scott Hendricks – 2000
James Martin – 2004, 2007
Patrick Mason – 1995, 2008
Kurt Ollmann – 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998,
1999, 2003
William Sharp – 1995, 2003, 2004

Ensembles

2 Foot Yard – 2007
Abramyan String Quartet – 1999
The Claremont Trio – 2002, 2003, 2004
New York Festival of Song – 1993, 1994,
1995, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007,
2008
Paquito D'Rivera Trio – 2002, 2003, 2004,
2006, 2008
Shanghai String Quartet – 2001, 2005
SoLaRe Trio – 1998
Turtle Island Quartet – 2007
University of Utah Jazz Band – 1998, 1999,
2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004
Trio Solisti – 2006, 2007
Zivian-Tomkins Duo – 2004, 2008

Additional Artists

Julia Barrett, narrator – 2002
Humphrey Burton, author and narrator
– 1993
William Colvig, instrument builder – 1994
David Lee, poet and author – 2000
Gene Pack, narrator – 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005
Ed Schloth, narrator – 1997
Michelle Spencer, dancer and choreographer
– 1995
Jamie Bernstein Thomas, narrator – 1993,
1997, 2002, 2006, 2007
Terry Tempest Williams, author – 2000, 2002

A key part of the Festival's programming are performances that put music in a context, allowing audiences to enjoy works as part of a larger historical or musicological experience. Examples from recent seasons include:

“What Makes It American?” – A program examining whether American composers have embraced or rejected European models to create a distinct American Music. Composers included Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Eric Zivian, John Musto, Mrs. H.H.A. Beach, Virgil Thomson, Charles Ives, and Ned Rorem.

“We are Women” – a semi-staged concert devoted to the songs of Leonard Bernstein celebrating women. The program was written by Music Director **Michael Barrett** and the composer's daughter Jamie Bernstein, who hosted the evening.

“Souvenir de France” – selections from soprano **Amy Burton's** theatrical evening consisting of songs made famous by the French chanteuse Yvonne Printemps

“Mozart, You Kid You!” – a celebration of Mozart's 250th Birthday, narrated by Jamie Bernstein with samples of Mozart's instrumental and vocal works.

“America the Beautiful” – a concert of works exploring the unique qualities of American urban and rural life, including readings by local author Terry Tempest Williams and a specially commissioned work by composer Gerald Elias embracing excerpts from the oral history of Bessie White, who had grown up on a ranch at the evening's concert site. Other composers included Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, and Paul Schoenfeld.

“Piano Talk” – a Festival feature with **Paul Hersh** – pianist, violist and music professor at the San Francisco Conservatory – in which Mr. Hersh explores the complexities of a variety of compositions, such as, in 2003, Schubert's *Fantasia* in C Major for violin and piano, D. 934.

“At Harlem's Height” – a concert produced by the New York Festival of Song that showcases the music, songs and poetry of Harlem in the 1920's and 1930's.

Classical chamber music performances from the 2002 – 2008 Seasons included:

Johannes Brahms	<i>String Quintet</i> in G Major <i>Piano Trio</i> in C Major, Op.87
Clara Schumann	<i>Trio</i> in g minor, Op. 17
Robert Schumann	<i>Piano Quintet</i> in E-flat Major, Op.44
Claude Debussy	<i>Sonata</i> for violin and piano in g minor, L. 140
Maurice Ravel	<i>Piano Trio</i> in a minor, Op. 70/1
J.S. Bach	<i>Partita</i> , No. 1 in B-flat Major, BWV 825 <i>French Suite</i> No. 5 in G Major, BWV 816 <i>Brandenburg Concerto</i> No. 3 in G Major, BWV 1048
Antonin Dvorak	<i>Piano Quintet</i> in E-flat Major, Op. 87 <i>Quintet</i> for strings in E-flat Major, Op. 97
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	<i>String Quintet</i> in g-minor, K516
Arnold Schoenberg	<i>Verklaerte Nacht</i> , op. 4
Aaron Copland	Duo for flute & piano

Traditional music performances from the 2002 – 2008 Seasons include:

“Scots on the Rocks” – a concert of old and new Celtic music

“From the French Court to the Cajun Kitchen” – a concert of folk music from France, from Quebec, and from Louisiana

“From Green Grass to Bluegrass” – a concert tracing the influence of Irish music on bluegrass

Vocal music performances from the 2002 – 2008 Seasons include:

Popular American songs by Gershwin, Berlin, Porter, and Rodgers

Robert Schumann *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48

Ned Rorem *Santa Fe Songs*

J.S. Bach *Jauchzet Grot in allen Laden!* BWV S1

William Bolcom *Bastianello* (*Western United States Premiere*)

John Musto *Lucrezia* (*Western United States Premiere*)

Jazz performances from the 2002 – 2008 Seasons include:

Paquito D’Rivera and Friends – Jazz Improvisations

University of Utah Jazz Band

Darius de Haas – The Songs of Stevie Wonder

Paul Woodiel & ensemble – Swinging with Django

Turtle Island Quartet – Coltrane and more

Performances of music by living and contemporary composers

from the 2002 – 2008 Seasons include:

Tribute (2002) Emily Wong

The Lordly Hudson (1948) Ned Rorem

Prayer to St. Catherine (1959) Virgil Thomson

Divertimento (1999) John Musto

A Child’s Reliquary (1999) Richard Danielpour

Four Seasons of Futuristic Cuisine Aaron Jay Kernis

Tempest Fantasy (2004 Pulitzer Prize) Paul Moravec

Soul Garden Derek Bermel

Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant Jésus Olivier Messaien

Each year the Moab Music Festival hosts several Colorado River Benefit Concerts. In 2007 these fund-raising events will be on the afternoons of Thursday, August 28, Thursday, September 4, & Thursday, September 11, 2008. Details on these concerts, can be found in the Festival Brochure at www.moabmusicfest.org.

When patrons of Moab Music Festival's Colorado Benefit Concerts step off their motorized launches after an exhilarating journey down the river, they see only a forest of tamarisk. They are 30 miles downstream of Moab, having passed under famed Dead Horse Point and the even more famous cliff where Thelma and Louise met their final onscreen fate. Guests have probably seen flights of blue heron, and, if they are lucky, a brown bear loping along the riverside.

They have arrived for an afternoon that *The New York Times* has called "an event that combines human and natural grandeur"

After a short walk down a path through tangled vegetation the grotto emerges. "I love the look on people's faces when they first see it," says **Michael Barrett**, the Festival's Music Director. "No photograph does the grotto justice because it is more than color, shape, and size. It has an enveloping spiritual dimension that only can be experienced in the place itself. This is the wilderness, carved and maintained by Nature."

The Sounds of Silence

Michael likes to tell the story of performing John Cage's *4' 33"* (*Four Minutes and Thirty-Three Seconds*) in the grotto. Often thought of as an all too ironic avante-garde work, the piece is four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence – in three movements. In any normal concert hall, street noise, a rumbling subway or a distant siren is likely to fill what seems like a void. But in the grotto, the silence was lush. It wasn't an absence of sound but a richly textured presence of silence.

"I asked the audience to take part in the performance, to be the chorus," Michael relates. "I lowered the piano key cover at the end of the first movement, raised it again at the end of the second movement, and closed it at the finale. It was a stunning artistic experience that none of us will ever forget."

Richness of Music

When music interrupts the natural silence of the grotto, the sounds are crisp and golden at the same time. Gene Pack, who spent forty years as a beloved broadcaster hosting classical music on public radio, described an all Bach concert in the grotto as "the peak musical experience of my life". The program included two *Brandenburg Concertos* as well as mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson's performance of Cantata *Ich Habe Genug* ("I have enough").

"The music of that afternoon still rings in my ears," says Barrett.

When Nature Joins In

Sometimes Nature joins in the performance. Jamie Bernstein Thomas related on her radio show from Tanglewood the extraordinary afternoon when Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* was performed on two pianos in the grotto. (Yes, two grand pianos had been transported downriver for the day).

The Rite of Spring (*Le Sacre du Printemps*) caused a scandal when it was introduced in Paris in 1913 as a ballet choreographed by Nijinsky. It evokes the lives of an ancient tribal people and, in particular, the spring sacrifice of a virgin who dances herself to death. The music is wild, primitive and pagan.

The first part comes to a brilliant crashing end. As Ken Noda and Michael Barrett lifted their hands from the pianos, back from the river came an echoing response, deeper and longer than anyone recalls before or since. Michael looked down to see drops of blood on his piano keys (he had cut his finger in the intense playing) as a raven swooped into the grotto, perched itself on a rock, and loudly proclaimed that it would stay for the rest of the piece. Indeed, it proceeded to caw an accompaniment as the performance resumed.

Each year offers unique special moments in the grotto to Festival patrons who choose to take part in these special benefits. Many will recall the concert two days after September 11, 2001 when the music had special elements of both violence and deep sorrow. Others will recall not only the music but the convivial post-concert wine receptions where artists and patrons mingle and talk about their unique shared experience of music in Nature's special concert hall.

See fact sheet for details about the Colorado River Benefit Concerts or visit www.moabmusicfest.org.

Moab Press Contact: phone: (435) 259-7003
Andrew Yarosh
e-mail: andrew@moabmusicfest.org
Aubrey Davis
e-mail: aubrey@moabmusicfest.org



National Press Representative: Elizabeth Dworkin
phone: (914) 244-3803
elizabeth@dworkincompany.com

Logistics

The Festival's critical partner for the Colorado River Concert is Tag-A-Long Expeditions of Moab, whose founder and President Bob Jones brought the river grotto venue to the attention of the Festival back in the early 1990's.

Jones' staff and the operations crew of the Festival, led by Rex Holman, spend the morning of each concert day ferrying down to the grotto all the musicians, the instruments, music stands, food and refreshments, catering equipment, and, of course, sanitary facilities. Then come the patrons. And when it is all over, everything must come back up river and the concert site left absolutely clean. This is a wilderness area – only Nature not man, should change it.

The Voyage of the Grand Piano

Often, the greatest challenge of the River Concert is the ferrying of a grand piano (or even two!). Legs removed and wrapped in moving blankets and straps, the piano is slid carefully up a gangway and strapped on its side into a motorized boat. It makes quite a sight as it slowly floats past red rock canyon walls, meandering around sand bars – and occasionally beaching on one of them.

Once the piano arrives, the most delicate – and back-breaking – work begins. Each year the height of the river and the shape of the bank are different. Setting the gangway and securely unloading the piano is a unique challenge. Even the placement of the piano in the grotto is new every summer. Each year's spring floods leave a different floor in the grotto. A wooden stage is put down and leveled. Only then can the piano tuner – Miriam Graham – do her job.

The Patrons' Experience

Patrons of the Benefit Concerts gather at noon. Buses take them for a 30 minute ride to the "put in" site downriver at Potash. The drive takes them past scenic cliffs that are favorite sites for wall climbers (called "Wall Street"), past arches and petroglyphs, down to the boat ramp from which rafters head to the Colorado's famed Cararact Canyon, the largest whitewater rapid in North America.

The motorized boat trip from Potash to the grotto concert site takes about 45 minutes on flat water which flows through a varied landscape of towering red mountains, slickrock, cliffs with variegated sandstone layers and underneath famous Dead Horse Point. From beneath the covers that shelter them from the sun (or, sometimes the rain) passengers can also gaze up at the cliff, from which Thelma and Louise's car flew off into the Colorado.

Arriving at the landing, patrons are helped down a gangway and take a short walk to the grotto where comfortable seating is provided. Many people choose to climb to one of the ledges of the grotto, sitting on the rocks or using blankets or pillows they have brought. The concert begins shortly and includes an intermission.

A wine and hors d'ouvres reception follows the music, allowing patrons and musicians to mingle and talk. Boats are loaded up at regular intervals and patrons return to the Potash landing and bus back to Moab. By this time, the sun is lower in the sky changing the color and even the shape of the landscape.

“An event that combines human and natural grandeur”

The New York Times

“With sandstone walls for acoustics, willows for privacy and river sand for a stage, this outdoor concert of the Moab Music Festival is the hottest ticket of the season”

Sunset Magazine

“In the nine concerts that form the soul of the Moab Music Festival, elitism exists only in the quality of the performances. The concerts... are presented as lively causal affairs that take a refreshing approach to art music”

Salt Lake Tribune

“Some say it has the purest acoustics of any concert venue in the world and it’s right here in Utah. The Colorado River’s ‘Grotto,’ as it is called, is the centerpiece of the Moab Music Festival. It’s a place where awe becomes easy.”

KSL TV, Salt Lake City

“... spectacular outdoor scenery with chamber music is a winning combination.”

Chamber Music Magazine

“It’s a perfect way, if not an easy way, of combining music with the land’s ancient beauty.

Eugenia Zuckerman, CBS “Sunday Morning”

“The elements are part of the mystique of this place... the music in this timeless beauty held its audience absolutely spellbound.”

Doug Miller, “Outdoors with Doug Miller”

“Moab isn’t just the gateway to some of the most magnificent scenery you’ll find anywhere in the world. Once a year it’s also host to one of the more novel music festivals you’ll ever encounter. The unique drawing power of the Moab Music Festival ...is that it fuses breathtaking desert landscape with high-caliber chamber music concerts. There aren’t too many summer music festivals where you can enjoy outdoor programs with mountains as a backdrop, or with a grotto as a concert hall.”

Edward Reichel, Desert News

“Where else can you visit a desert and come home spiritually satiated with art, natural and man-made, so closely connected merely because it was equally sublime.”

Janice Graham, Pleasant Grove Review

“The sky was clear and the music was nothing short of breathtaking.”

Janet Lowe, The Times Independent

“The hallmarks of the festival are musical excellence, creative programming and an audience-friendly attitude.”

Salt Lake Tribune

“Classical music deserves to be heard in Nature. The intimacy and the isolation of this is what makes it so amazing.”

Bryan Summerhays, Salt Lake, UT

“I’ve been to concerts in Vienna. There’s nothing anywhere in the world, in my opinion, like coming here.”

Martha Fralick, Denver, CO

“I’m just transformed every time I come here...”

Ben Little, San Francisco, CA

“I ...have J.S. Bach coursing through my veins. I’ve heard Bach around the world and have never heard it done better or in a more beautiful setting.”

Jane Heitman, Grand Junction, CO

“Friends from Manhattan who attended the evening of French music at Star Hall said they could not have had such an enjoyable evening in New York. Why? Because they felt they were not at the concert but in the concert.”

Robert Fulghum, Pack Creek, UT

“The Gershwin 100th Birthday Celebration was truly elegant. I have never before heard Gershwin played with such commitment and stylistic validity as we experienced at that concert. All of the performers were absolutely tuned in to the period and purpose of the music. They were superbly prepared. The event was filled with pure joy!

K. Newell Dayley, Associate Dean,
College of Fine Arts and Communications
Brigham Young University

Love it...So impressed by the world class musicians.

The King Family
Boston, MA

AS FOR THE RIVER GROTTA CONCERT....

The acoustics here are so good it’s like you can see every note come out of the instruments. A fabulous experience.

Fred Siersma
Denver, CO

This is the most amazingly spiritual setting I’ve ever played in. Everything I’ve ever played here ... takes on a more universal meaning in this place.

Dorothy Lawson, Cellist