

## Madison's classical scene bursting with choices

Madison Early Music Festival, Opera in the Park, Madison Savoyards and more this month.

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If one

discounts the innumerable holiday programs of December, it may well be that July is the busiest month of all in Madison's classical music scene.

The Madison Early Music Festival—a local tradition that has garnered national attention—launches its 17th season July 9. It might be the best way to complement all the theatrical tributes to the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. A solid week of concerts, workshops and lectures kicks off with New York Polyphony's program of sacred music of the period, and all lovers of the Bard will want to hear the Baltimore Consort on July 12 in songs and dances from Shakespeare's plays. Readers are urged to peruse all the listings [here](#). And let's not forget that on July 8 the Madison Bach Musicians will add a crucial element to the fourth annual (and critically acclaimed) [Handel Aria Competition](#).

Presenting its second season (and already scooping up critical garlands), the Willy Street Chamber Players bring us five Friday events beginning July 8. The programs are fascinating and the players are top-notch. All are held at the Immanuel Lutheran church on Spaight Street—except for one. And that one, featuring George Crumb's still-compelling *Black Angels* for amplified string quartet, will take place at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Details for all the programs and performers are [here](#).

A brand new event launched last month, and which runs through September: “Summer Sundays in the Garden: Afternoon Concerts in the English Garden” is an every-other-Sunday event that alternates jazz, classical and those hard-to-categorize groups (Clocks in Motion and Harmonious Wail, to name two). Beginning at 4 p.m., the events are free to the public, and it’s hard to imagine a lovelier spot for outdoor music than the 2.5 acres at the corner of Babcock and Observatory drives. Full info can be found [here](#).

It’s only a one-time event, but it is one of Madison’s most beloved summer happenings: [Opera in the Park](#) makes its 15th appearance at Garner Park. Also free, the event is an effervescent mix of excerpts from the upcoming season, Broadway and other light selections and some lusty work for the Madison Opera chorus. And we’ll see the inevitable glow sticks, so 15,000 or so can say they conducted the Madison Symphony!

The [Madison Savoyards](#) spill into August with a total of six performances, but they open July 29 with a production of The Gondoliers. If you’ve yet to experience the unique brand of silly satire and scintillating music that G&S left us, what are you waiting for?

And, of course, there’s never a reason to sit home on a Wednesday in July when you could join 20,000 (or more!) who love to mix music and summer with Concerts on the Square. The highlight this season, courtesy of Andrew Sewell and the [Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra](#) might be on July 27, when they are joined by a master of the Indian instrument, the chitravina. Ravikiran will be featured in his own arrangements of music by Dikshitar for this slide string instrument, with a little Beethoven thrown in—the composer lived around the time of Beethoven, and spent some time studying Western music in Europe. Enjoy!

[Classically Speaking](#) is a Madison Magazine blog about classical music and theater written by [Greg Hettmansberger](#).

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