

Entertainment

Salonnieres Sunday

Celebrating women patrons of power in chamber music

By **TIM CURLEY**
INDEX-TRIBUNE MUSIC WRITER

Millions of young music fans had no idea who the “Tchaikovsky” was the Beatles were singing about in “Roll Over Beethoven” in 1964. They weren’t even really sure who Beethoven was. The same was probably true in 1956 when Chuck Berry originally wrote and released the song. A bit of attentiveness and a few movie scores later, we know much more about Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mozart and the like.

Classical music has been around for several centuries and is still a beloved and vital genre. This weekend, it makes a big splash in the Sonoma Valley when the Valley of the Moon Music Festival presents its summer program in the Hanna Boys Center auditorium July 14 to 28. The event is titled “Salonnieres: Women of Power and Influ-

ence, Chamber Music from Bach to Stravinsky.”

The series places a focus on a few of Europe’s most powerful 19th century salonnieres, the women who championed and promoted the careers of

The Valley of the Moon Music Festival is the nation’s first and only music organization presenting chamber music... performed entirely on instruments built when the music was written.

the new composers of the day. There were hundreds of these “salons” across Europe, always organized and hosted by women of a certain social standing. Tanya Tomkins, festival co-founder and artistic director said, “These salonnieres were the ‘influencers’ of their day. Through their salons, they helped to shape the musical taste of their time.”

The Valley of the Moon Music Festival stakes its claim as the nation’s first and only music event that presents chamber music – from the Classical era to the early 20th century – performed entirely on instruments used when the music was written.

As part of the fifth annual festival, there will be seven separate concerts presented over the three-week stretch. The series is a musical tour of several influential European salons, including those of Fanny Hensel in Leipzig, Sara Levy in Berlin and Winnaretta Singer in Paris. For the second year in a row, the festival presents the Blattner Lecture Series, endowed by a gift from Kimberly and Simon Blattner. The series offers a pre-concert lecture to be presented by experts in the field of classical music who will discuss that day’s selections.

The program this Sunday, July 14, is “Mozart’s



Eric Zivian and Tanya Tomkins will perform as part of the festival.

Irrepressible Impresario: Countess Maria von Thun.”

Von Thun, both a countess and keyboard player, was a celebrated bon vivant of the day. She hosted one of the most prominent 18th century salons in Vienna. She is fondly remembered and thanked for her patronage of Mozart and Beethoven. This opening concert will feature Beethoven’s Trio in B Flat Major, Op.11. The day’s finale will be Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet in A Major.

The pre-concert lecturer on this day will be Irene

Zanini-Cordi, associate professor of Italian studies at Florida State University. The concerts begin at 4 p.m., with the pre-concert lectures beginning at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25-\$45.

With the quality of this

program’s music and world class musicians performing, Beethoven will not only roll over, he will sit up and listen with a smile on his ancient face.

valleyofthemoonmusicfestival.org