



USA

MUSIC Festival Special

American splendour

Menlo takes an inventive approach to Bach, while Spoleto uncovers some Italian opera rarities



CENTRE STAGE: JS Bach is being celebrated at Menlo's Center for performing arts

MUSIC@MENLO

Debussy called JS Bach 'this benevolent God to whom musicians should pray to guard themselves from mediocrity'. Fellow countryman Bizet was more succinct: 'Bravo for Bach!'. Last year's tenth birthday celebrations behind it, Menlo is turning 'Bach to the future' – celebrating the man and the music, and examining the legacy in the way it knows best: vibrant performances, illuminating (sometimes provocative) programming, an evening-length 'Encounter Series', 'Café Conversations', audio notes and an audio-visual 'Listening Room'.

Silicon-Valley Menlo prides itself on being context-rich, and the area's appetite for more than passive listening was one of the attractions for founders cellist David Finckel

and pianist Wu Han. Finckel is about to leave the Emerson Quartet after 34 years as its cellist in order to have more time for other projects; and this summer the couple launch an intensive chamber programme at Aspen. Back at Menlo the roster of visiting artists is as strong as ever, including the Danish String Quartet, cellists Colin Carr and Laurence Lesser (sharing Bach's complete Suites), and violinist Soovin Kim who undertakes a solo violin journey from Biber to contemporary composer Jörg Widmann. Menlo's Bach has bite!

WHEN: 18 July – 10 August
WHERE: Atherton, Palo Alto, CA
TEL: 650 331 0202

WEB: www.musicatmenlo.org
HIGHLIGHTS: Two pianists (tbc), Festival Artists: Bach Concerto

for Two Harpsichords, Schubert Rondo in A for four hands, Bartók Sonata for Two Pianos & Percussion (19 July); Danish String Quartet, Festival Artists: Bach arr. Mozart Fugues, Shostakovich Piano Quintet, Beethoven String Quartet Op. 132 (21 July); Soovin Kim (violin) 'Carte Blanche' solo violin music: Biber to Widmann (21 July); Festival artists: Preludes and Fugues – Haydn, Shostakovich, Gershwin, Britten Prelude and Fugue for 18 Strings, Op. 29 (27 July); Colin Carr (cello) 'Carte Blanche': Bach Suites for Solo Cello Nos 3 & 5, Kodály Solo Cello Sonata (28 July); Festival artists 'French Connections': Bach, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Franck Piano Quintet (2, 3 August); Laurence Lesser (cello) 'Carte Blanche': Bach Suites for Solo

Cello Nos 1, 2, 4, 6, Hindemith, Dallapiccola (4 August); Festival artists: Bach *Die Kunst der Fuge* (6, 7 August).

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PETER SCHRAM