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valley of the moon music festival

TANYA TOMKINS & ERIC ZIVIAN, DIRECTORS



Photo Credit: Genesis Vondergeest

VALLEY OF THE MOON MUSIC FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES ITS 12TH SEASON POSTCARDS FROM DVOŘÁK

Award-winning Sonoma festival explores Dvořák's musical world through mainstage concerts, outdoor performances, family offerings, and pre-concert lectures.

SONOMA, CA, APRIL 21, 2026 — Valley of the Moon Music Festival, Sonoma's premier and award-winning summer chamber music festival, announces its 12th season, *Postcards from Dvořák*, to take place July 11–26, 2026 in the heart of California wine country.

Now in its 12th year, the Festival continues to build its national reputation for intimate performances on historical instruments, world-class artistry, and immersive musical storytelling. Featuring an international roster of acclaimed artists and emerging musicians, the 2026 season invites audiences to go on a world tour with Antonín Dvořák, visiting the people, places, and cultural traditions that shaped his musical voice. Performed on historical instruments, the season sheds new light on beloved repertoire by Dvořák and others.

Led by Festival co-Founders and Directors, Tanya Tomkins and Eric Zivian, the 2026 season features an international roster of acclaimed artists and rising stars, including violinists Rachell Ellen Wong, Jennifer Frautschi, Elizabeth Blumenstock, and Tien-Hsin Cindy Wu, alongside Bay Area favorites such as pianists Jeff LaDeur and Audrey Vardanega. The Amizia Quartet, named *Best Discovery* in the San Francisco Classical Voice Audience Choice Awards, returns as the Festival's 2026 Fellowship Quartet-in-Residence.

"Dvořák is a natural choice to anchor our 12th season," said Eric Zivian. "While deeply rooted in musical tradition, he was remarkably open to cultural influences from around the world — traveling extensively and embracing new ideas in ways that were rare for a 19th-century composer. His music reflects a wide emotional range, grounded in a profound love of life,

perfectly embodying VMMF’s commitment to openness, exploration, and joy.”

“Dvořák’s travels connected him with composers and audiences across continents,” said Tanya Tomkins. “His openness, heartfelt musical voice, and deep respect for other traditions continue to inspire us. For us, he represents the power of music to bring people together across cultures and communities.”

Across seven mainstage programs — including the popular *Rising Stars: Cremona Apprentice Showcase* — the season places Dvořák in conversation with composers from Europe and the U.S., including Smetana, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Chopin, Vaughan Williams, Rebecca Clarke, Florence Price, Harry T. Burleigh, Charles Ives, and Leoš Janáček.

The Festival remains committed to amplifying underrepresented voices in classical music. The 2026 season includes the lesser-known Austrian composer Mathilde Kralik from Brahms’ circle, and American composers Florence Price and Harry T. Burleigh, among others — part of VMMF’s ongoing effort to broaden the classical canon and reflect a richer, more inclusive musical history.

Inspired by Sonoma’s renowned hospitality, each mainstage concert at Hanna Center Auditorium concludes with a complimentary wine reception, inviting audiences to connect with artists and fellow music lovers while enjoying premium wines and sweeping valley views.

The Festival also extends its commitment to community engagement through pay-what-you-wish outdoor concerts, family programming, and educational lectures. Discounted tickets are available for patrons ages 35 and under, and students with valid school ID receive complimentary admission.

Community Impact

Since its founding, the Festival has made a meaningful impact in the Sonoma community and beyond, presenting performances for thousands of attendees, providing mentorship opportunities for emerging musicians, and supporting local nonprofit partners. Through its Cremona Apprenticeship Program, Valley of the Moon Music Festival has trained the next generation of chamber musicians, while its community concerts and educational initiatives have expanded access to classical music for audiences of all ages.

2026 Season Highlights

Main Stage at Hanna Center Auditorium

Saturday, July 11, 4:00 PM — *Bohemian Homeland* (Opening Night)

A vibrant opening celebrating Dvořák’s origins in 19th-century Prague, featuring music by Smetana, Haydn and Dvořák shaped by the folk traditions of Bohemia and Austria.

Sunday, July 12, 4:00 PM — *With Love from Vienna*

In the 1870s Dvořák first ventured beyond Bohemia, spending considerable time in Vienna. There, he was championed by Brahms, and would have been inspired by the music of Mendelssohn, Kralik, and Chopin.

Saturday, July 18, 4:00 PM — *English Impressions*

Like many European composers, Dvořák's music became popular in London, and he was invited to spend time there in 1884. A rhapsodic program, tracing resonances between English and Bohemian traditions in music by Dvořák, Vaughan Williams, and Clarke.

Sunday, July 19, 4:00 PM — *Russia: In Shadow & Song*

This deeply expressive concert, pairing the elegiac voice of Arensky with the dramatic intensity of Dvořák, celebrates his visit to Russia at Tchaikovsky's invitation.

Friday, July 24, 6:00 PM — *Rising Stars: Cremona Apprentice Showcase*

A showcase spotlighting the extraordinary young musicians selected for the Festival's renowned Cremona Foundation Apprenticeship training program.

Saturday, July 25, 4:00 PM — *American Roots*

Dvořák lived in the U.S. from 1892-1895, where he connected deeply with the American people and their music. Centered around African American and American folk traditions, this program brings Dvořák into conversation with Price, Burleigh and Ives.

Sunday, July 26, 4:00 PM — *Final Years: Going Home* (Season Finale)

A radiant closing program celebrating Dvořák's final return to Bohemia with music by Smetana, Janáček, and Dvořák.

Alfresco and Community Events

In addition to its mainstage series, Valley of the Moon Music Festival will present a range of performances that extend into the broader Sonoma community.

Wednesday, July 15, 7:00 PM — Alfresco Concert at La Luz Center

Held on the La Luz Center patio, this pay-what-you-wish performance will feature comments from the stage in Spanish and English. Tickets begin at \$2.

Sunday, July 19, 11:00 AM — Kids and Family Concert at Sonoma Community Center

A free outdoor concert designed for families, featuring a vibrant mix of musical styles and traditions.

Tuesday, July 21, 7:00 PM — Alfresco Concert at Buena Vista Winery

An evening of music by Dvořák and Suk in the historic Fountain Courtyard. Audiences are invited to arrive early, enjoy a glass of wine, and listen to music in one of Sonoma's most distinctive settings.

These performances bring the Festival beyond the concert hall into the broader Sonoma community.

Blattner Lecture Series

The Festival’s Blattner Lecture Series offers audiences deeper historical and musical context for selected programs, and for the season’s general theme. Curated by musicologist and Harvard University professor Kate van Orden, the series features distinguished scholars including van Orden, Elaine Fitz Gibbon, and Michael Beckerman. Lectures are free to concert ticket holders and take place Saturday, July 11; Saturday, July 18; and Saturday, July 25 at 2:30 PM in the Hanna Center Conference Room.

Festival Passes and Tickets

New for the 2026 season, Valley of the Moon Music Festival introduces Prime Seating at Hanna Center Auditorium, offering patrons the opportunity to reserve seats in the first four rows throughout the Festival for a more personalized and consistent concert experience. Available exclusively through the Ultimate Festival Pass or Festival Pass, Prime Seating allows passholders to select and retain their preferred seats for the entire season.

Festival pass options for 2026 include the Ultimate Festival Pass (from \$400), which includes all mainstage concerts, pre-concert lectures, and both Alfresco concerts; the Festival Pass (from \$345), which includes all mainstage concerts and pre-concert lectures; and Weekend Passes (\$100), which include one weekend of mainstage concerts including the Saturday pre-concert lecture.

Pass	Includes:	Price	With Prime Seating
Ultimate Festival Pass	All mainstage concerts, lectures, and Alfresco concerts	\$400	\$525
Festival Pass	All mainstage concerts and lectures	\$345	\$470
Weekend Pass	One weekend concert + Saturday pre-concert lecture	\$100	N/A

Single tickets and additional pricing details available online.

Tickets and passes are now available at: valleyofthemoonmusicfestival.org

About Valley of the Moon Music Festival

The Valley of the Moon Music Festival is an award-winning summer chamber music festival in Sonoma, California, presenting internationally acclaimed artists and emerging musicians in intimate performances on historical instruments. The Festival combines artistic excellence, mentorship, and the distinctive hospitality of Sonoma wine country, training the next generation of professional musicians while offering audiences a fresh way to experience chamber music.

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