

Punta Gorda Symphony adds new outdoor chamber concerts

After four successful outdoor concerts in December and February, select Punta Gorda Symphony musicians will perform newly added chamber concerts at two new locations in Punta Gorda: “Strings in the Garden: Baroque + Beatles + Wine” on March 14 at Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens, 5827 Riverside Drive, Punta Gorda; and “Harborside Brass” on April 11 at Four Points by Sheraton Punta Gorda Harborside, 33 Taylor St., Punta Gorda.



Concertmaster and violinist Ming Gao will perform with cellist Si-Cheng Liu and pianist Charis Dimaras at the Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens. COURTESY PHOTOS / JERRY BEARD

“Our February concerts were entirely sold out and audiences gave us two standing ovations – they keep asking us for more,” says Executive Director Craig Badinger. “After months of navigating the pandemic, the community has been starved for live cultural entertainment. Punta Gorda Symphony plans to meet the demand and continue its safe, outdoor, and socially distanced live concert arrangements guided by CDC recommendations.”

The symphony will offer two different concert times to accommodate as many patrons as possible, but due to limited capacity, all interested patrons are advised to act now, as tickets are selling quickly.

Tickets are \$30 and are on sale online for both concerts. Punta Gorda Symphony also offers a special youth and student ticket price available through the office at 941-205-5996.

“Strings in the Garden: Baroque + Beatles + Wine” will feature a trio of violin, cello and piano led by Punta Gorda Symphony’s concertmaster, Ming Gao. Attendees will have the option to purchase wine and beverages at the Gardens, and to enjoy discounted entry to the full Gardens experience.

Expect everything from a rendition of Vivaldi’s “The Four Seasons: Summer” to Mr. Gao’s own arrangement of “Beatles Mania: A Celebration Medley.” The program will also feature arrangements of Led Zeppelin hits and rock staples “Kashmir” and “Stairway to Heaven.” Other contrasting works like “Oblivion” by Argentine tango composer will transport audiences from the rock halls to the deep undercurrents of Buenos Aires in the 1980s. The full program can be viewed at www.PGSymphony.org/Performances.



PGSymphony Brass Musicians. COURTESY PHOTOS / JERRY BEARD

“Harborside Brass” will be a celebration of music performed by Punta Gorda Symphony brass players at Four Points by Sheraton Punta Gorda Harborside. Beverages and concessions will be available for purchase. Music on the program will feature tunes from Broadway to opera, including “Porgy and Bess” and “West Side Story.” Modern pop favorite “Happy” by Pharrell Williams, and arranged by Matthew McCoy, will also make an appearance. The quintet includes five highly acclaimed brass players that together will fill the harbor with grand and robust sound.

Concerts will be limited to socially distanced audiences of 150, and will follow standard COVID-related health and safety guidelines. All patrons are required to wear a mask upon arrival and throughout the duration of the concert, apart from drinking or eating refreshments within a patron’s own seating area.

Parties of up to six will be provided chairs within their own 6-foot area and will be seated in order of arrival, guided by staff and volunteers to the next available space — a process familiar to those who visit theme parks in Orlando. After the February 6 “Symphony on the Lawn” concerts, 97% of attendees reported being extremely satisfied with Punta Gorda Symphony’s COVID-19 precautions.

Advanced ticketing is required for “Strings in the Garden” and “Harborside Brass.” For more information and tickets, visit www.PGSymphony.org, or call the office at 941-205-5996.

For updates on all programs, join the PGSymphony email list at www.PGSymphony.org/Join.