

From oldies to opera: Concert series offers variety

Picnics in Tyler State Park. Tubing on the Delaware. Pork Barbecue at The Grange Fair. All these things have come to mean “summer” to the residents of Bucks County.

Now there’s another tradition to add to Bucks County’s menu of summer fun: Crossing Vineyards’ concert series, Summer Under The Stars, on Fridays nights at 7 p.m. from June through September.

Through the grapevine

Christine Carroll

Crossing Vineyards and Winery’s fifth “Summer Under the Stars” season will begin on June 13 and will feature 10 concerts and a new corporate sponsor.

Partnering with Crossing Vineyards to offer the series this year is Haldeman Auto Dealerships, whose showrooms include Lawrence Lexus in nearby Lawrenceville, N.J. The sponsorship allows Crossing to hold the concert ticket price at \$10 and \$80 for a season subscription.

Lawrence Lexus General Manager Brian Bennett agrees that sponsoring the series is a good fit for Haldeman and Lawrence Lexus.

“We’re pleased that we can be a part of bringing top-notch entertainment to the community and to offer it in such a beautiful setting,” he said.

The series debuts with a dance concert on Friday, June 13, at 7 p.m. The popular local party band Generation Next brings personality and superb musicianship to its repertoire. Put on your dancing shoes and enjoy music from Motown right up to today.

Performing artists from Opera New Jersey will entertain on Friday, June 20, with highlights from its 2008 Summer Season, including selections from Verdi’s *La Traviata* and Lehár’s *The Merry Widow*.

On Friday, June 27, The Lynn Randall Quartet will present *The Great American Songbook*. Backed by some

of the region’s finest musicians, vocalist Lynn Randall will offer her unique, jazzy versions of America’s greatest songs. From Irving Berlin to Cole Porter to George Gershwin, you’ll enjoy an evening of wine and the great musical standards we’ve all come to know and love.

A newcomer to the Summer Under The Stars Series, Larry Mc Kenna, one of America’s leading saxophonists, will offer a mellow evening of jazz under the stars on Friday, July 11.

The Eric Mintel Quartet will fill the summer skies with its unique brand of jazz on Friday, July 18. Mintel has performed at the White House, and The Kennedy Center, as well as at jazz festivals around the country.

The Nassau Brass returns with its rousing repertoire on July 25. This classic brass quintet is currently celebrating its 19th year as a performing ensemble, known for its classical selections, as well a wide range of “lighter fare,” including Jazz, Dixieland, Ragtime, Pop, Broadway Show tunes, Americana and Traditional Marches.

Mark Cosgrove, known for his distinctive flat-picking sound, will take center stage with The Good Medicine Bluegrass Band on Friday, August 8. Cosgrove began playing acoustic guitar full time in the mid-1980s when he joined The Lewis Brothers, a Philadelphia-based bluegrass band. Cosgrove has since won the U.S. National Flatpicking Guitar Championship in Winfield, Kansas, and the Doc Watson Guitar Championship in Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

Kate Varley “Goes Green” on Friday, Aug. 15. Hear Dennis Varley’s traditional Irish arrangements and Kate Varley’s beautiful vocals. Tap your toes to champion Irish step dancers and flashy fiddling. End the evening with group céilí dancing led by Dennis and Kate.

Bluegrass fans won’t want to miss the “high and lonesome” sounds of The Jericho Grass on Friday, Aug. 22. Purely acoustic, but casting a wide musical net, the Grass performs arrangements from jazz to country, all with a bluegrass core. Members of the band include John Gehman on guitar, Peter Kane on fiddle, Karl Klingler on mandolin, Toby Hoffman on banjo and John Stetson on bass.

Back by popular demand, The Fairmount Chamber Ensemble will offer the series’ final concert on Friday, Sept. 12. This well-respected group has been delighting



The Eric Mintel Quartet is set to bring some jazz to the Crossing Vineyards and Winery’s fifth “Summer Under the Stars” concert season.

area audiences since 1984 with classical favorites and the string quartet literature of the masters, as well as jazz/pop standards and show tunes.

Performances will be held rain or shine. Guests are asked to bring a lawn chair. Too busy to cook? Order a picnic supper in advance at an additional cost of \$30 per person. Outside beverages are not permitted. Call or check the website for menus and details.

Crossing Vineyards and Winery is located on a 200 year old estate at 1853 Wrightstown Road in Washington Crossing. To purchase tickets or picnic suppers call 215-493-6500, ext. 19 or buy online: www.crossingvineyards.com.

■ *Christine Carroll is a columnist for Wines and Vines Magazine in San Rafael, California. She is also one of the principals of Crossing Vineyards and Winery, a former officer of the Pennsylvania Wine Association’s Board of Directors and Secretary of the Bucks County Wine Trail. You can contact her at: info@crossingvineyards.com.*