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6 Classy And Classical Venues That Make For A Sensual Summer

By Ed Siegel



Tanglewood doesn't have all the action to itself when it comes to classical music in the summer, though it does have an intriguing-looking summer season. One of the question marks with incoming Boston Symphony Orchestra music director Andris Nelsons is his dedication to the music of our time and he, and other Tanglewood programs, have a promising sprinkling of contemporary music.

While I spend as much time as I can in the Berkshires during the summer other venues are also calling, including the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport and Marlboro Music in Vermont. Then there are summer events right in the city, including the Boston Landmarks Orchestra on the Esplanade as well as Boston Midsummer Opera and Odysseys Opera indoors.



Emersons on the beach. (Lisa-Marie Mazzucco)

1. Shalin Liu Performing Arts Center

The Emerson String Quartet has been the go-to string quartet for decades, even after the departure of the group's charismatic cellist David Finckel. They'll be performing at the Shalin Liu gala with new bro, Paul Watkins, June 6 as well as at Tanglewood July 10 with five, count 'em five, Shostakovich quartets. Finckel became overwhelmed with other projects, including making beautiful music with his pianist wife, Wu Han. They'll be performing at Shalin Liu June 8.

The Emersons aren't the only ones doing the Rockport to Lenox south by southwest trip this summer. Jeremy Denk, one of the most interesting pianists around, will be playing Bach's Goldberg Variations and Ives' Concord Sonata June 29 at Shalin Liu and Aug. 13 at Ozawa Hall in Tanglewood. He's recorded both of them and they're among my favorite CDs of the past few years. He makes Bach swing and Ives accessible.