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## Staunton Music Festival Hits All the Rights Notes: Master Works, New Premieres, Dazzling Performances

STAUNTON, VA – August 1, 2025 – The Staunton Music Festival, hailed as one of the most distinctive classical music events in the mid-Atlantic region, is gearing up for its highly anticipated 2025 season. From August 15 through 24, audiences will embark on a truly extraordinary immersion into music from across centuries.

More than just a series of concerts, the Staunton Music Festival stands apart for its unique blend of historical accuracy, innovative programming, and deep commitment to both the familiar and the cutting-edge. By special invitation from Carsten Schmidt, the Artistic Director, musicians come from all over the world to play in Staunton. Although the rehearsal and performance schedule can be demanding, artists derive a great amount of joy and satisfaction from the rare pieces they get to play and the audience responses.

### What Makes the Staunton Music Festival So Unusual?

- **Staged *Messiah* and Concert *Magic Flute*:** In a bold and thought-provoking move, this year's festival will feature a staged production of Handel's *Messiah*. While *Messiah* is traditionally performed as an oratorio, the festival challenges perceptions by bringing its inherent drama to life visually. Conversely, Mozart's beloved opera, *The Magic Flute*, will be presented in a concert version, allowing the sheer musical brilliance to shine unadorned. This intriguing reversal of typical performance styles promises fresh perspectives on cherished works.
- **Bridging Eras: Old and New in Dialogue:** Unlike many festivals that segregate new music, Staunton Music Festival masterfully weaves together works spanning six centuries, often on the same program. This creates a vibrant dialogue between historical masterpieces and commissioned world premieres. This year, audiences will experience the "**Virginia Soundscapes**" project, dramatically increasing public awareness of the exceptional creative work being done by living Virginia composers, alongside music from across the ages.
- **Intimate Venues, Global Talent:** Over 90 acclaimed professionals from leading ensembles like the New York Philharmonic and Metropolitan Opera converge in Staunton. These world-class musicians perform in intimate historic venues throughout downtown Staunton, chosen for their superlative acoustics and charm. This close-up experience fosters a powerful connection between performers and audience, allowing for a truly immersive and personal musical encounter.
- **Period Instruments:** The festival is a rare gem in its dedication to performing music composed before 1850 on authentic period instruments. This commitment provides audiences with an unparalleled opportunity to hear works as they would have sounded centuries ago, offering a rich and historically informed listening experience. From Baroque opera to early chamber music, the instruments themselves become storytellers, revealing nuances often lost on modern instruments.

- **More Than Just Concerts:** Beyond the evening's ticketed performances, the festival offers free midday concerts, late-night cabaret performance, pre-concert talks by noted scholars and performers, surprise pop-up performances in downtown locations, and opportunities to interact with composers-in-residence. These elements provide context and deeper understanding, enriching the overall festival experience for both seasoned classical music lovers and newcomers.

"We are incredibly excited to welcome music lovers to Staunton," says Jason Stell, Executive Director of the Staunton Music Festival, "Our mission is to present classical music in a way that is both deeply reverent to its origins and boldly innovative in its presentation. From staged oratorios to world premieres, we invite audiences to discover the timeless power and surprising relevance of classical music in ways they've never imagined."

The Staunton Music Festival is one of Virginia's signature cultural experiences, a testament to the enduring power of music to inspire, challenge, and connect. Don't miss this opportunity to witness musical history come alive and discover the future of classical performance. Single-event tickets and festival passes are available. Midday concerts are free. Visit [www.stauntonmusicfestival.org](http://www.stauntonmusicfestival.org) for a full schedule and ticket information.

### About the Staunton Music Festival

Renowned for its commitment to historical performance on period instruments and its innovative programming that juxtaposes old and new works, Staunton Music Festival offers outstanding classical musical performances by acclaimed artists from around the world. Acclaimed as "Virginia's world-class music festival" (*Travel + Leisure*), it is a European-style music festival spanning ten consecutive days and nights of eclectic chamber, vocal, and symphonic music.

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