

bravo!

New Bravo! music fest director taking festival in fresh direction

Anne-Marie McDermott challenges audiences with eclectic program

By Jill Beathard
JBEATHARD@VAILDAILY.COM

VAIL — Bravo! attendees can expect something a little different at this year's festival thanks to Anne-Marie McDermott. The accomplished pianist has performed for more than 25 years and can now add Bravo! artistic director to her resume.

"I am so honored to have this position; I never would've thought 10 years ago I'd be in such a wonderful position of being artistic director of a festival of this magnitude," McDermott said. "Already the festival has accomplished so much in its 24 year. There's so much we can do. For me to walk into this position at this point in the festival history is such a privilege because there's just so much to work with. It's pretty amazing."

She is shaking things up a bit, though. She has programmed a resident artist who mixes classical, rock and jazz styles (Gabriel Kahane). Renowned mandolinist Chris Thile will perform with bass player Edgar Meyer in an event dubbed "Chamber Bluegrass Jam Band." And she's added



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY
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"controversial" pieces like Mahler's Symphony No. 6 in A minor, an acquired taste for even classical-music lovers, to the lineup.

'Vail's music festival'

Bravo! Executive Director John Giovando considers McDermott's programming more varied, a change he thinks the festival was ready for.

"She's made her initial mark as new artistic director with this style of just being eclectic in her approach," he said. "Every music director, ... they've

i If you go ...

What: Anne-Marie McDermott in recital.

Where: Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater, Vail.

When: 6 p.m. Sunday.

Cost: Free.

More information: Visit www.vailmusicfestival.org.

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all had an enormous influence in its direction and one that's led it to new heights and new growth, and Anne-Marie will, too. The eclecticism is just a little twist on it. After we learn and understand our Vail audience this summer, it will just continue to improve."

Giovando said he is looking forward to the performance of Carmina Burana July 16 by the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra Chorus and the Colorado Children's Chorale. Also, McDermott has programmed works by Beethoven and Mahler for the orchestras and other groups to play throughout the summer, and Giovando said he hopes audiences will respond to that.

"I think the whole new artistic team — Anne-Marie and the new artistic administrator, Jacqui Taylor — they have worked very hard to catch up and learn the festival, and this summer will give them a chance to learn about our community," he said.

Giovando said when former artistic director Eugenia Zukerman announced her resignation, 88 candidates applied to fill the spot. It took the search committee about a year to do interviews and rule out candidates until McDermott was named in April 2010, he said.

McDermott is a resident member of the chamber music at the Lincoln Center in New York City and a member of the piano quartet Opus One, along with Bravo!'s first artistic director, Ida Kavafian.

"She's in the forefront of her career right now, and in the end, it all works very favorably for the Bravo! festival," Giovando said. "All of her presence

across the U.S. and Europe is so exciting for us. Wherever she performs, ... we always get the mention that she's the (artistic director) at Vail's music festival."

Enjoying the mountain air

McDermott said if she had tried to do this 20 years ago she wouldn't have been good at it. Her long career and the relationships she's built with people

in the field have enabled her to better program a festival like Bravo!

"What's so great is having been in the business for over 25 years now, I have known so many of the musicians in this country, and I know them well, and I know the repertoire, and again I've been around for

a while. I'm not a newcomer, and so I'm in a perfect position now to be able to really, I hope, be able to put together great, exciting programs and put together the right artists," she said.

Next year will be Bravo!'s 25th anniversary. The artistic team has already begun planning the program for 2012, featuring the works of Mendelsohn and Brahms. McDermott chooses pieces with the public in mind, hoping to pick works people would enjoy and embrace. She also wants to challenge Vail audiences, though.

"I like to embrace what audiences are going to love and also challenge audiences with certain repertoire that maybe they just don't know," she said.

McDermott's busy performing schedule usually keeps her traveling, so she said she will be glad to spend a summer in one place. Her dog, Sammy, who travels with her, will appreciate it, too.

'I WANT TO TRY AND RESERVE SOME TIME TO HIKE. I DON'T DO A LOT OF HIKING, BUT JUST TO GO TAKE SOME LONG, BEAUTIFUL WALKS ... IS DEFINITELY SOMETHING I WANT TO DO. YOU KNOW I'M A NEW YORK CITY NATIVE, SO I'M NOT USED TO HAVING FRESH AIR, SO JUST FILLING MY LUNGS WITH SOME OF THAT MOUNTAIN AIR — I CAN'T WAIT.'

Anne-Marie McDermott
Bravo! artistic director

i Sunday's free Bravo! recital

Anne-Marie McDermott, piano, 6 p.m.

J.S. Bach

- English Suite No. 2 in A minor, BWV 807.
- I. Prelude.
- II. Allemande.
- III. Courante.
- IV. Sarabande.
- V. Bouree I and II.
- VI. Gigue.

J.S. Bach

- Chaconne from the Violin Partita in D minor (Arr. Ferruccio Busoni).
- "L'Union: Paraphrase de Concert on National Airs," Op. 48.

Chopin

- Ballad No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23.

Schumann

- "Widmung (Dedication)" (Arr. Liszt).

Alfred Grunfeld

- "Soiree de Vienne," Op. 56.

"Most of my time I would say is really going to be spent doing festival things because this will be my first summer out there, and I really can't wait to hear every single program," she said. "I want to try and reserve some time to hike. I don't do a lot of hiking, but just to go take some long, beautiful walks ... is definitely something I want to do. You know I'm a New York City native, so I'm not used to having fresh air, so just filling my lungs with some of that mountain air — I can't wait."

McDermott will perform several times throughout the summer, including a complimentary recital at the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater on Sunday evening to open the festival.

Jill Beathard is an intern at the Vail Daily. Email comments about this story to jbeathard@vaildaily.com.