

# N.Y. Philharmonic plays to sold-out crowd

## Orchestra starts ninth season with Bravo!

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**VAIL** — The Ford Park parking lots were full by 5:10 p.m.

The lawn at the Gerald Ford Amphitheater was nearly full by 5:30 p.m., a full half-hour before the concert was to begin.

Those are telltale signs that the New York Philharmonic is back in town.

And the orchestra did not disappoint on Friday's opening night of its ninth residency at the Bravo! Vail Valley Musical Festival with performances of Dvorak's Violin Concerto and Beethoven's Third Symphony.

Jim and Karen Haeflner arrived at the amphitheater at 4 p.m., a full hour before the gates opened in order to get prime spots on the lawn.

"We always look forward to it," Jim Haeflner said. "The weather couldn't be better. We're just waiting for the shade to come. We like to be in front where no one can be in front of us, especially on rainy nights with umbrellas."

The umbrellas were out, but in a good way. After what has been a rainy season for the hearty faithful on the lawn, the umbrellas were only needed for protection from



CHRIS LEE | Special to the Daily  
The New York Philharmonic opens its ninth annual residency at the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival to a sold-out crowd Friday night. Maestro Alan Gilbert, standing, led the orchestra.

the sun.

What's more, whatever "Curse of Beethoven" seemed to be on Bravo! this year — it poured for the composer's Seventh and Sixth symphonies and rained a bit on the First — disappeared under radiant sunshine.

"We never miss any of the New York Philharmonic," Harry Cebron of Arrowhead said. "It's wonderful. There's no better place in the summer than this area in the United

States."

In front of a sellout crowd, violinist Veronika Eberle made her New York Philharmonic debut with the Dvorak. Attired in a red, full-length gown, Eberle delivered breath and feeling to the work.

Meanwhile, conductor Alan Gilbert and the Philharmonic gave a light touch to the orchestration, letting Eberle shine. The audience — a sell-out — gave Eberle a standing ovation at the end of Dvorak's

Violin Concerto and Gilbert, as is his custom, let Eberle come out alone for a second time before intermission to soak up the applause and doubtless revel in the completion of her first performance with the Philharmonic, a important rite of passage for most soloists.

Beethoven's Third was the culmination of a season-long celebration of the composer. In addition to being the fourth symphony from

the classical icon this summer, Bravo! has also featured "The Egmont Overture," and "The Triple Concerto" as well as Beethoven's complete set of trios for violin and piano during its chamber-music series, Big Music for Little Bands.

The Third allowed the New York Philharmonic to show its full range during the 50-minute work, including the winds section, which Gilbert was first to acknowledge after the symphony's completion. As for Gilbert, he deftly guided the Philharmonic through the Third, which the symphony had previously performed during its season at Avery Fisher Hall in New York City.

He seemed in complete unison with the orchestra with very few adjustments from his left hand throughout the work, only pausing to wipe his brow with a black handkerchief between movements.

The audience responded in kind with an immediate standing ovation after the completion of the third. Gilbert signaled his appreciation to the crowd by raising both of arms after the Beethoven and then bringing his right hand down to his heart.

"I love the New York Philharmonic and what better place to have it in but the Vail Valley," said Holly Arnold-Kinney of Denver. "I love how you can bring popcorn to your seat and have popcorn and a glass of wine while you're listening to great classical music."