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Verdi Among the Vegetables

Midday shoppers at a Baltimore Whole Foods store were treated to a taste of Verdi this past March, thanks to an offbeat marketing move by the Baltimore Symphony



Laura Farmer

Orchestra and the Washington National Opera. Wearing the standard Whole Foods employee apron, tenor Jesus Daniel Hernandez (left) juggled a ripe avocado in one hand, tossed a sly glance at soprano Jennifer Waters, standing by the oranges, and [broke into the famous "Libiamo" aria](#) from Verdi's *La Traviata*. Waters (Violetta) joined him in the duet, and soprano Emily Albrink, mezzo Cynthia Hanna, and baritone Aleksey Bogdanov sang smaller parts. The performance was in anticipation of that weekend's Baltimore Symphony concerts featuring singers from the Washington Opera's Young Artists Program. Surprised shoppers stopped to watch in wonder.

1 Week, 8 Composers, 8 Premieres

Columbia, Missouri will be a hotspot for new music this summer, with eight American composers participating in the inaugural Mizzou New Music Summer Festival at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Jose Francisco Cortez Alvarez, Christopher Dietz, Paul Dooley, Moon-Young Ha, Edie Hill, Amy Beth Kirsten, Jeremy Podgursky, and Zhou Juan will each provide a new work to be performed on July 18 by the chamber ensemble Alarm Will Sound. Over the course of the weeklong festival, the eight will study with composers Stefan Freund, W. Thomas McKenney, Martin Bresnick, and Derek Bermel. The festival is the first major event of the University of Missouri-Columbia's Mizzou New Music Initiative, which also includes scholarships, assistantships, and composition prizes at the University of Missouri. The initiative resulted from a \$1 million donation by the Missouri-based Sinquefeld Charitable Foundation.



In Missouri, Derek Bermel (top photo) and musicians from the new-music ensemble Alarm Will Sound (above) will be among the musicians working with eight composers participating in the inaugural Mizzou New Music Summer Festival in July.