

**Summary Press Acclaim**  
**Napa Valley Festival del Sole • 2008**

**The Festival**

A feast for the senses is on offer here, with a lineup of performances by Joshua Bell, Jean-Yves Thibaudet...the Dallas Symphony Orchestra in its festival debut and others, followed by gourmet meals and wine.

*–New York Times*

Now in its third year, this festival is a tantalizing mix of music, fine wine and five-star cuisine.

*–Sacramento Bee*

Festival del Sole — a star-studded extravaganza that in just three years has become one of the hottest tickets on the global classical music circuit.

*–Diablo Magazine*

The Festival is not just about music... it's also a celebration of food, wine, art, hospitality and Napa high style — which has become synonymous with the very best of life. This elaborate and elegant Festival is rich in content with stars of the concert world who love performing at this venue as much as the audiences love hearing and seeing them.

*–Nob Hill Gazette*

It wasn't the castle... the exquisite views, or the wonderful weather, or the feeling of being in a pastoral renaissance drama. No, what made Joshua Bell's appearance at Castello di Amorosa tonight so infinitely remarkable is that during the intermission Bell hopped off the stage, strolled down the aisle, and hung out. You don't get this kind of close camaraderie at Avery Fisher Hall or the Kennedy Center.

*–North Bay Bohemian*

**The Music**

***Festival Del Sole draws big crowd in Napa***

Showing an extraordinary clarity of sound, the Del Sole Festival Orchestra conducted by James Gaffigan...performed a concert of Bizet, Ravel and Mussorgsky, ending with Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. Natasha Paremski's performance of the Rachmaninoff had the entire audience on its feet... Soprano Measha Brueggergosman delivered a knock-out performance of Shéhérazade, Ravel's song cycle of desire.

*–Piedmont Post*

***Power Diva***

Canadian soprano Measha Brueggergosman is a hip diva for the 21st century... Her natural charisma, in addition to her ravishing voice, have already won her comparisons to such legendary opera divas as Leontyne Price and Jessye Norman.

*–Santa Rosa Press Democrat*

***Colorful multi-media collaboration mesmerizes Festival del Sole crowd***

Last Sunday afternoon, a program of a different stripe brought a curious crowd to Yountville's Lincoln Theater. . . . "Life: A Journey Through Time" featured the works of one of the great nature photographers of our time, Frans Lanting. . . . Under the direction of Carolyn Kuan, the Napa Valley Symphony Orchestra provided a flawless performance of the Philip Glass score. . . . Lanting's photos are absolutely awesome as projected on three giant screens [and] Glass's score provided an emotionally driven and epic soundtrack.

–*Napa Valley Register*

***Roar of Bravos***

The Ravel Piano Concerto in G also got a vivid performance, with Jean-Yves Thibaudet imparting a perfect balance of Gallic sparkle and suavity. After the roar of bravos at the end of the Beethoven, Mr. van Zweden led the orchestra in a rousing Brahms Hungarian Dance No. 5.

–*Dallas Morning News*

***Ravishing sounds from violinist Bell and youthful chamber ensemble fill castle air***

The audience had come to bask in the expected musical triumphs of one of the world's best and most captivating violinists, Joshua Bell. But the crowd shoehorned into the castle's courtyard had no idea it would also encounter a marvelous chamber orchestra like no other performing in concert halls around the world today — the remarkable UBS Verbier Chamber Orchestra.

–*Napa Valley Register*

***Music's man on the move***

...[Nolan Gasser's] latest piece, "American Festivals," might have the potential to become our own home-grown, thoroughly colloquial ode to joy. A joint effort of Gasser and librettist-poet Robert Trent Jones Jr., the work received its rousing world premiere in July at the opening event of Napa Valley Festival del Sole.

–*InsideBayArea.com*

***Brilliant young pianist***

Conrad Tao. . .stunned a Festival del Sole audience last summer. . . . Tao did it again last Friday night — not only playing every note of George Gershwin's beloved "Rhapsody in Blue," but doing it in his own stylistic way. [It] was both poetic and imaginative. . . . a dazzling performance.

–*Napa Valley Register*

***Bach Transcends All***

Dmitry Sitkovetsky's violin quietly sang the stately, soulful Saraband Aria opening the Goldberg Variations; the young, supremely talented string players of the UBS Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra joined in as a chorus of hushed voices, and there came an hour of sustained magic that few concertgoers have a chance to experience.

–*San Francisco Classical Voice*

***Festival del Sole reunited acclaimed artists for outstanding midweek chamber concert***

Two of the world's top performance artists – Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Joshua Bell – paired up for Edvard Grieg's best known sonata for piano and violin. . . . Both Thibaudet and Bell were more than up to anticipated standards for their exquisite reading of the "Violin Sonata No. 3 in C Minor." . . . Together again also applied to the pairing of soprano Lisa Delan and pianist Kristin Pankonin for a world premiere of Bay Area composer Gordon Getty's "Four Dickinson Songs." The work featured Getty's musical setting of four Emily Dickinson poems [that] ranged from eerie to playful, somber to amusing, and were rife with atonal drama.

–*Napa Valley Register*

***Amazing soloists, remarkable symphony make festival magic***

The promise of musical magic was written all over Friday night's Festival del Sole concert. It marked the wine country debut of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the return of incomparable pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet and the fiery bow of violinist Dmitry Sitkovetsky. Thibaudet's superlative and sweeping reading [of Ravel Concerto in G] is the definitive yardstick... Sitkovetsky proved the ideal candidate to interpret Prokofiev's "Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major." This was lyric, top-drawer Prokofiev.

*–Napa Valley Register*

***Enthralling***

Once again, the evening's shining star was this incredible orchestra — 33 of the best players and youthful alumni of the Swiss festival's [UBS Verbier] resident orchestra. A tight, disciplined team, the enthralling ensemble rewarded the audience with magnificent playing all evening long.

*–Napa Valley Register*

***Exciting music-making***

Napa Valley Festival del Sole came to an impressive conclusion with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra under its dynamic new music director, Jaap van Zweden, performing an all-Mahler program... It was the lean, supple performance of the Mahler Fifth that demonstrated the potential for exciting music-making in the years to come for Van Zweden and his new ensemble.

*–San Francisco Classical Voice*

***Put it on your calendars***

The Festival's final concert on Sunday evening was an electrifying performance of Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, led by Dutch conductor, Jaap van Zweden. As the last note to the symphony sounded, the audience was on its feet with ear-splitting applause that went on and on.

*–St. Helena Star*