

# Pack a picnic to harmonize with Charlotte Symphony Summer Pops

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Given that concertgoers by the thousands come out every year for the Charlotte Symphony's Summer Pops, there isn't much danger that people are getting blasé.



But let's be honest. Except for a \$5 suggested donation inaugurated last year for the SouthPark location - still in effect this year to help the orchestra rebuild its finances - Summer Pops has been the same for years. Couldn't the experience use a little freshening up?

There's nothing like food to make an occasion special. So the Observer turned to Holly McLelland of Delectables by Holly, a caterer called on by the symphony, Mint Museum and many others. She and her staff devised a menu for each night that plays off the concert's theme, with food that can safely spend two or three hours in a picnic basket.

Whether your tastes run to deviled eggs or blinis with caviar, there's something here for you. If you're a cook, you'll enjoy grilling shrimp, pureeing gazpacho, or tracking down churros at a Latin market. If not, you'll see plenty here that you can pick up at the supermarket or deli. Each menu has a beverage suggestion at the end.

Summer Pops begins Sunday with...

## 'Symphonic Dances'

*When McLelland saw that the program included music from "Carmen," she knew "that was one I could sink my teeth into." In honor of the ever-popular opera's setting, she devised a Spanish menu. (You could use this for the special concert by Tito Puente Jr. and his band, too.)*

- Tapas platter including grilled prawns with lemon and garlic on a skewer; roasted red peppers; white bean and goat cheese dip; marinated artichoke salad; salt-roasted almonds; focaccia biscotti
- Gazpacho topped with lime crema
- Orange and beet salad
- Churros (fried pastry)
- Sangria

## 'Musical Travels'

*The concerts will include tuneful excerpts from Edvard Grieg's "Peer Gynt." Grieg's Scandinavian origins suggested smoked salmon, McLelland said. While the other music will come from a variety of countries, McLelland kept the menu's geographic range near central Europe, "so as not to make your taste buds go a little nuts."*

- Sandwich platter including salmon and cucumber on pumpnickel with dill cream cheese; Black Forest ham and pastrami on dark rye with Swiss cheese
- Selection of pickles
- Grill brats on a stick
- Potato salad
- Bavarian apple strudel
- Your favorite German beer

## 'Supermen!'

*Note the plural there. This is "A Concert for Father's Day," as its subtitle says. In addition to the hero-worshipping strains of "Superman" and "Rocky," it pays tribute to the Broadway and Hollywood patriarchs of "Fiddler on the Roof" and "The King and I." McLelland has come up with food that dad - and the rest of the family - can chow down on.*

- Pulled pork barbecue on slider buns
- Grilled chicken skewer with white barbecue sauce
- Mexican cole slaw with jalapeño
- Grilled corn salad
- Crusty bread with garlic butter and basil oil
- Chocolate chunk and pecan cookies
- Corona beer with a lime wedge

### 'Music for Lovers'

*The land of romance, by general agreement, is France - which also is the native country of Hector Berlioz, whose music starts the concert. So McLelland's menu emphasizes French "love food," as she calls it. In addition to what you see below, she says, you might include oysters on the half shell, "if you can keep it cold."*

- Baked brie with wild mushrooms and batard; grapes
- Caviar with crème fraîche on a miniature blini
- Pate with apricot mustard and cornichons (small pickles)
- Crusty French bread
- Chocolate-dipped strawberries and miniature chocolate eclairs
- Prosecco or champagne

### 'Celebrate America'

*To go along with the patriotic fare by John Philip Sousa and others, dig into all-American favorites.*

- Braised short rib sandwiches
- Fried chicken legs
- Miniature red bliss potatoes stuffed with sweet potato salad
- Dutch oven baked beans
- Deviled eggs
- Banana pudding
- Watermelon
- Sweet tea vodka