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### Summer concert series is one of Dublin's 'best-kept secrets'



San Francisco Guitar Quartet

All Walden School concerts are at 7:30 p.m. at the Louise Shonk Kelly Recital Hall on the campus of Dublin School, unless otherwise noted. For more information and a complete schedule of performances, call 563-8212, or visit online at [www.waldenschool.org](http://www.waldenschool.org)

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Fans of Beethoven will never have the chance to ask him why he structured his musical compositions the way he did. But visitors to The Walden School's summer concert series can go straight to the source to get answers.

The school, located on the campus of Dublin School, offers a summer camp program and a program for music educators — both of which draw people from all over the world.

It's named for Henry David Thoreau's most famous work, and director Seth Brenzel has said the name is fitting because, just as it was for Thoreau when he lived on Walden Pond, students are confined to their environment and without technology — no cell phones, television or Internet.

The Walden School has been around for 40 years, and has been offering a summer concert series for

more than 20 years, a series Brenzel called possibly the best-kept secret of Dublin's summer arts scene.

It's a little less well-kept today.

The Walden School has hosted free concerts for the past nine years, featuring music composed by its students, aged 10 to 18, and its composers-in-residence. Before that, audiences had to buy tickets.

The change was instituted to develop more of a community connection and make concerts more accessible. Brenzel said free concerts have resulted in more attendance over the past five years.

This year's series runs through Aug. 6 — next on the list is a performance by The Walden School Players this Friday. Group members play piano, violin, cello, percussion, flute, viola and clarinet. The concert will feature a variety of contemporary concert music by several composers, including some by the school's composer-in-residence, Melinda Wagner. It will be a co-presentation with the chamber group Monadnock Music.

Another co-presentation with Monadnock Music closes the season in two performances Aug. 5 and 6 with the San Francisco Guitar Quartet. The Aug. 5 performance is at the Keene Unitarian Church. The quartet draws from a variety of musical traditions, including classical, world and ethnic music as well as improvisation. One of the group's founding members attended The Walden School's teacher training institute.

"It's nice to reconnect with an alum of a (Walden School) program," Brenzel said.

The Walden School Players will also perform during a trio of composer forums next week, July 26 through 28. Forums are concert performances that feature world premieres of pieces in several musical genres — pop, jazz and rock to name a few — written by Walden School students. Performances are followed by discussions led by composer Wagner, who will serve as moderator, with the composers, performers and the audience.

"They're amazing events," Brenzel said of the composer forums. "What's staggering for most people is that not only are (students) writing music for a concert setting but they have done it in three-and-a-half weeks — for some they are performing the first pieces they've ever written." Audiences can ask the composer specific questions about a piece.

The forum series has the added distinction of being the largest new music festival for pre-college composers in the country. "There are 50-plus world premiere pieces performed in three nights," he said.

Walden School's vocal students will showcase their talents in a choral concert next Friday, July 30, at the Peterborough Town House. The concert will feature a group of 70 singers consisting of students, faculty and staff and a program of American folk music, from that of modern composer Aaron Copland to Jennifer Higdon, a member of The Walden School's advisory board who won this year's Pulitzer Prize in music.

"We wanted to honor her," Brenzel said of Higdon.

No matter what students decide to create during their time at The Walden School, they can do so in a supportive environment.

"It's something (students) take with them whether they become doctors, lawyers, teachers or business people," Brenzel said. "Everyone is rooting for each other. There are no prizes — it's about the process, the experience of bringing something to stage for first time."