

VERANO 2026

LATIN SOUTH FLORIDA

SPRING 2026

VENTURA MUSIC FESTIVAL JULY 20- 26



VENTURA
MUSIC
FESTIVAL



JUSTO ALMARIO & JEREMY BOSCH



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VENTURA MUSIC FESTIVAL'S SUMMER SERIES OFFERS 5 DIVERSE NIGHTS OF LIVE MUSIC, JULY 20-26

Grammy Award-Winning Soprano Angel Blue, A Double-Headline Concert featuring Masters of Latin Jazz, the Music of Beethoven, and More, Across Some of Ventura's Most Iconic Venues

The Ventura Music Festival (VMF) kicks off its 31st season with a landmark Summer Series running July 20th, and July 23 through 26, bringing five concerts to some of Ventura's most beloved and distinctive performance spaces. From an intimate speakeasy-style gala to a powerhouse opera recital to a daring chamber music experience, the 2026 Summer Series showcases VMF's commitment to musical diversity and local cultural vitality. The 31st season of the Ventura Music Festival is generously sponsored by the John & Glenda Hammer Family.

"This summer's lineup is a testament to everything VMF stands for," said Sonia Tower, Interim Executive Director. "In just one week, our audiences can experience Grammy-winning opera at Rancho Campana, the energy of Latin jazz at the Majestic Ventura Theater, cutting-edge chamber music at VC Performing Arts Center, and a one-of-a-kind opening gala featuring 1930's French Jazz Manouche at The Palomino. Each venue shapes the experience uniquely, and we're very excited to welcome the community to the Summer Series."

Festival Gala Opening | Monday, July 20 | The Palomino, 6 PM

The Summer Series begins not with a curtain call, but with a speakeasy door. VMF's Festival Gala Opening on July 20 invites guests into The Palomino for an evening evoking the spirit of a 1930s jazz club, complete with craft libations, elegant small bites, and the live music of the magnifique San Lyon ensemble. Guests are encouraged to dress the part. This signature event serves as both a celebration and a kick-off for the concert week ahead.

Beethoven's Choice | Thursday, July 23 | Ventura College Performing Arts Center, 7 PM

VMF's popular Classical Edge Concert format returns with "Beethoven's Choice," blending storytelling and live performance into an educational journey through one of classical music's most enduring legacies. Artistic Director, classical violinist, and acclaimed musician Nuvi Mehta leads the evening, accompanied by celebrated pianist Greg Anderson of Anderson & Roe.

Angel Blue with Bryan Wagorn | Friday, July 24 | Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center, 7 PM

Grammy Award-winner Angel Blue, widely recognized as one of opera's reigning superstars, takes the Rancho Campana stage for an evening of extraordinary vocal artistry. Known for her deeply affecting portrayals of roles including Aida, Tosca, Violetta in La Traviata, Bess in Porgy and Bess, Mimì in La bohème, and Liu in Turandot, Blue performs alongside celebrated pianist Bryan Wagorn.

A Celebration of Latin Music with Justo Almarino and Jeremy Bosch | Saturday, July 25 | The Majestic Ventura Theater, 6 PM

Two masters of the Latin jazz tradition share the Majestic Ventura Theater stage on July 25th for a night that will be pure rhythm, soul, and fire. Colombian-born saxophone legend Justo Almarino, a forerunner of the Latin jazz movement in the United States, brings his Afro-Colombian jazz ensemble and music from his newly released album Alegria. Rising Puerto Rican star Jeremy Bosch, one of the most electrifying young voices in salsa and Latin jazz today, fronts his own orchestra in a show built for dancing. Two distinct sounds, two separate orchestras, one extraordinary night: Almarino's deeply rooted Colombian jazz tradition meeting Bosch's high-energy salsa fire. This event is ticketed through the Majestic Ventura Theater.

Akropolis Reed Quintet | Sunday, July 26 | Ventura College Performing Arts Center, 3 PM

The Summer Series closes with Akropolis Reed Quintet, an ensemble BBC Music Magazine has described as "sonically daring" with "charisma and integrity." True pioneers of the reed quintet as a modern chamber genre, Akropolis has commissioned and premiered more than 200 works by living composers, bringing an adventurous and vital spirit to every stage they inhabit.

Tickets and Information

Tickets for VMF-presented Summer Series concerts are available at venturamusicfestival.org or by calling (805) 648-3146. The July 25th Latin Music Celebration is ticketed directly through the Majestic Ventura Theater. The John and Glenda Hammer Family are the 2026 Impresario Season Sponsors.

Exclusive Interview with Diego Imperiale

What artists did you listen when you started listening to music?

Ever since I was a kid, I was fond of music that was old already. I grew up in the 90s and whilst I enjoyed the period music, I was always a fan of the 60s, 70s and 80s, The Beatles, Queen, Elvis Presley and Roxette were the first artists I became a fan of, buying my first Cassettes and CDs. Also being originally from Buenos Aires, I did listen to Tango, which is more of a thing of the past as well, but some of it was played at home and I did like it too. Tango singers were influenced by classical opera singers and I believe that has stuck and then later in life made me want to pursue the ability to sing like that, and I worked on it and achieved that sound! It has been a wonderful journey.

How did these musical influences impact on your career?

They did a lot; I have worked as a Paul McCartney impersonator for many years and have been in very successful shows touring different provinces of Argentina and Brazil as well and it is something I don't rule out doing here in the future again. It is a lot of fun and people love a Beatles cover band everywhere. Then there's always a little bit of Beatles in my productions for my own songs, because I grew up listening and also trying to play their songs all the time. The same with Freddie Mercury and Elvis Presley, they have been great inspirations for me at the moment of becoming a singer and pursuing this career full time.

You're also a theater enthusiast and lover... What were your latest theater appearances?

Well, I've been meaning to go back to the theater since the pandemic ended and I was here in Florida but got tied up doing something else, a record and a movie! So, finally this last year, 2023, I could go back to stepping on the theater stage and did two pieces. I was the lead tenor in Puccini's Gianni Schicchi in San Francisco and then I performed singing and dancing as one of the Jets' gang members in West Side Story, here in Florida. I got to do another role there, the one of the teacher at the Gym dance scene and it was a lot of fun. As a trained singer I have always pretty much performed the bigger roles in the musicals, but when they called me to do these roles for West Side Story, a musical I personally love, I was thrilled to jump in and experience the theater doing a different type of role, having to prepare choreography and moves I hadn't done in a while.



continued >>>

Tell me a little more about doing Opera, and away from home!

Yes, it was a challenge, Opera is tough, there's a lot of preparations, learning the music, music rehearsals before the blocking, then blocking and general rehearsals, and things have to be done strictly by the book, there's not a lot of room for bending things to make it more convenient. The whole period lasted about two full months in which I had to be in San Francisco from day one. It was a great experience and I got to perform with very seasoned singers and professionals. The theater was beautiful, it was the Historic Hoover Theater and it was a great success with four sold out shows during the Puccini Festival in San Jose, California. Fred Winthrop was directing, he has staged more than one hundred Operas in the bay area and maestro Thomas Clark, one of my voice teachers, was there performing as Gianni, the lead baritone. They both shared the stage with the great tenors Pavarotti and Domingo in their prime, so it was an honor working with them.

What are your projects for this new year?

Luckily, I am fully booked for the season, performing non-stop every weekend in Palm Beach Gardens where I do jazz, classic rock, ballads, a little bit of everything. It is very rewarding to be also singing with the people around you and having always contact with the crowd during dinner shows. I'm also working on two new albums: one is an anthology of my old songs from when I was young, in Spanish, I want to record them again and share them with everybody; the other one is Lufiend's new record. And, of course, something in the theater but that's always a surprise.

Tell me a little bit about Lufiend!

Lufiend is my original music project and was born here in America, the name means lover in old Shakespearean English, I found the name fascinating because I think it sounds mysterious and unique, and the meaning being a lover, I find it the lover of things, of life, of adventure, of many things, not just love in a romantic way. That is Lufiend, and it is a concept that although it is perpetrated by me alone, it feels like it has a band's vibe and feeling. Because of this feeling that I always have that it is more a group than a solo project, I have added a guitarist and we had two shows together last year, and we are working together now and looking for other musicians to jump on board to make new music as a group.



10,000 Culture, Rhum & Music Lovers Attend 28th Annual South Florida Haitian Compas Festival

Fort Lauderdale, May 18, 2026: On Saturday, May 16, 2026 the rhythmic heartbeat of Haiti echoed through the NoMi Culture & Arts Village as thousands gathered for another unforgettable edition of the Haitian Compas Festival. What began decades ago as a celebration of Haitian music and identity has evolved into one of the most culturally vibrant Caribbean gatherings in the United States; a living postcard of Haitian pride, resilience, elegance, and joy.



28th Annual Haitian Compas Fest

From the moment I arrived, the atmosphere felt very welcoming even though I looked like a white sheep in a paddock of black sheep. The special vibe of the compas music is very conducive to making new friends and connecting with new friends caribe-style. There was music seemingly coming from every direction, the scent of griot and pikliz drifting through the air, and groups of friends and families dancing as though the outside world had temporarily disappeared. It did not feel like a standard concert festival. It felt like stepping into a cultural celebration where everyone was invited to participate.

The music began before sunset and stretched deep into the tropical evening. Compas legends and contemporary stars transformed the festival grounds into a giant open-air dance floor where every bass line seemed to move directly through the body. I especially enjoyed watching different generations dancing together; grandparents who grew up with classic Compas rhythms stood beside younger fans filming performances on their phones while singing every lyric word for word.

Among the celebrated performers were some of the most beloved names in Haitian music. Their appearances reminded attendees why Compas remains one of the Caribbean's most emotionally rich musical traditions. The polished brass sections, romantic keyboard melodies, deep percussion grooves, and smooth vocal harmonies created a soundscape that was unmistakably Haitian.

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Fans erupted for performances by T-Vice, Klass, Nu Look, Kai, Zafem, Plukey Duke, The Oswald Compas Band, Kenny Haiti, Bedjine and K-Dilak, Rutshelle Guillaume, and several rising talents carrying the torch of modern Haitian music with confidence and style. Some performers leaned into nostalgia and romance while a few others urban and not suburban; yet they all stayed rooted in traditional rhythm of Compas.

Another fascinating part of the experience flowed not from the stage, but from the bars and hospitality tents where Haitian rum reigned supreme. Long before modern branding battles and international distribution deals, Jane Barbancourt became part of a lesser-known chapter of Haitian rum history. A member of the extended Barbancourt family, she and her husband Siegfried Linge; a German immigrant and accomplished perfume maker; relocated to Haiti during the mid-20th century and launched their own rum distillery high in the mountains overlooking Port-au-Prince. Their products were crafted at the picturesque "Jane Barbancourt Castle" in Boutiller, where mountain air and Caribbean tradition blended into a uniquely Haitian enterprise.

The original company, operated for generations by the Gardère family, had already become synonymous with Haitian rum excellence throughout the Caribbean and abroad.

Eventually, disputes emerged over the use of the Barbancourt name itself. The original Société du Rhum Barbancourt successfully defended its primary rights to the family name, cementing its place as Haiti's signature rum house. Over time, Jane Barbancourt's operation evolved through restructuring and ultimately became known as Berling S.A., producer of the respected Rhum Vieux Labbé brand still appreciated today by rum enthusiasts familiar with Haiti's deeper spirits culture.

At the festival, however, none of that history felt academic. The rum was part of the celebration itself; poured generously beside plates of Caribbean cuisine while old friends reunited and strangers quickly became companions. I found that aspect especially memorable. There was a warmth to the hospitality that felt authentic and deeply rooted in Haitian culture.

Beyond the music and spirits, the Haitian Compas Festival served as a reminder that Haitian culture remains one of the most influential and underappreciated cultural forces in the Americas. Haiti gave the world revolutionary history, extraordinary art, cuisine layered with African and French influences, and music capable of turning heartbreak into dance.

Walking through the festival grounds felt a bit like wandering through a Caribbean village celebration transported into South Florida. One moment featured elegant women in flowing tropical dresses dancing Compas beside the stage; the next revealed domino games unfolding beneath shaded tents while vendors sold handmade jewelry, paintings, flags, and fresh sugar cane juice. Every corner carried a different rhythm.

For many attendees, the festival represented more than entertainment. It was heritage preservation. It was memory. It was community. Haitian Americans from across Florida, New York, New Jersey, Montreal, and beyond embraced one another with the warmth of extended family returning home. I'm looking forward to attending the 30th Annual Haitian Compas Festival in 2028 and perhaps even sponsoring with a promotional booth for the movie I'm producing "Buddy from Brooklyn" which comes to theatres globally shortly thereafter.

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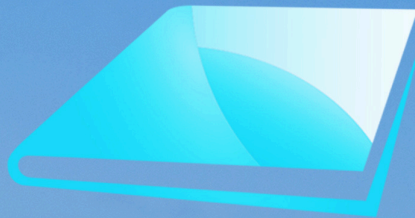
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