



Photos courtesy of Ravinia Festival

Families Take Note:

The Ravinia Festival Offers A Summer Full Of Musical Fun!

By Mira Temkin

Imagine taking your kids to a music festival where they can touch and play the instruments, meet the performers, hear a concert and begin a lifelong appreciation of the arts. It's all happening from June - September at The Ravinia Festival, located along the North Shore in Highland Park. Boasting a history that goes back more than one hundred years, this popular outdoor venue gives music lovers a three-month season filled with classical music, jazz, musical theater and pop concerts.

This summer, Ravinia Festival offers families more reasons than ever to visit the park and yes, bring the kids! There are the Kraft Kids Concerts, Kids Club and a special Family Space, unlike anything you've ever seen before. Plus, you can even celebrate your child's birthday at Ravinia.

With a full calendar of classical performances, you can take your kids to an evening of classical music and sit on the lawn. Special tickets are available for children 10 and under for \$5, while kids under five are free. Bring your own picnic or visit the Ravinia Market for kid-friendly dining options.

"Ravinia is a family-friendly venue and reaching young listeners is essential to our mission," says Welz Kauffman, President and CEO of Ravinia Festival. "We pride ourselves on providing great music from all genres for kids of all ages, as well as making Ravinia an affordable option for parents and families. And with kids being able

to physically interact with Ravinia through Family Space and our Kids Club, the festival's philosophy of REACH*TEACH*PLAY continues on with new listeners and performers every day."

Kraft Sponsors Kid Concerts Series

Kraft has been sponsoring Kid Concerts since its inception 19 years ago and offers eight family-friendly shows from circus to dance. Here's the line up for this summer:

Milkshake	June 12
Synergy Brass Quintet	June 19
Golden Dragon Acrobats From China	June 23
Ralph's World	June 26
Ko-Thi Dance Company	July 10
New Millennium Orchestra	July 24
Delfos Danza Contemporanea	Aug. 28
Tom Chapin & Friends	Sept. 5

Ticket prices range from \$5 for lawn admission, \$10 for general admission pavilion seats and up. The park opens one hour before the kids' concerts start and free parking is available in the west lot (kids concerts only.)

Family Space is filled with interactive music opportunities, music-themed stories, crafts and an "instrument petting zoo" where your kids can actually hold and

play the same instruments they'll see on stage. Open from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. prior to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts on July 11 and 25. The "instrument petting zoo" will be available following the Kraft Kids Concerts on June 19 and July 25, beginning at noon.

Celebrate Your Child's Birthday At Ravinia

Your child will be the star! You can host the party for a group of 20 or more at one of the Kraft Kids Concert series. Party package includes pavilion tickets to the show, table and chair rental, invitations, balloons, a gift for the birthday child from Ravinia Gifts. Lunch is also included, featuring a kid-friendly menu. Additional perks such as goodie bags, entertainment, face-painting and sweet treats are also available. Packages start as low as \$20 per person. For reservations, call 847-266-5087 or email groups@ravinia.org.

Yeah -- It's A Free Kids Club

With the Ravinia Kids Club, kids 12 and under can feel like they're a part of the show. Membership benefits include e-mail updates to special family-related activities, an annual birthday card with free cookie coupon and a welcome kit with a welcome letter, an official member button, stickers and a personalized membership card, good for discounts throughout the park. To join, children can sign

up by visiting Ravinia Gifts, the Kids Club booth at any Kraft Kids Concert or with an adult's permission at www.ravinia.org/kidsclub.aspx.

Don't forget to pick up your free Family Fun Guide at Ravinia with coloring pages, kid-friendly program notes and activities to do in the park.

Let Your Kids Hear The Sound Of Music!

Did you know that exposing children to classical music offers real advantages, both mental and physical? Studies show an early exposure to classical music provides children with a lifelong appreciation of melody and beat. "By handling an instrument, fine and gross motor skills can be enhanced," says Karen Stafford of Music Education Madness. She continued, "The most important benefit, however, is the proven positive effects music has on brain development. Youngsters who have this exposure have an advantage in academic abilities, self-esteem, and improved attitudes."

Concerts For Big Kids, Too

Ravinia also offers a variety of pop concerts with such greats as: Crosby, Stills & Nash, Sting, Peter & Paul's Tribute to Mary, Beach Boys and more. See you at Ravinia this summer...and bring the kids! For tickets, call 847-266-5100 or visit www.ravinia.org. ■

How to Get There

- * Take the train -- Union Pacific North Line with service from Chicago to Kenosha is highly recommended.
- * FREE Park and Ride from the Highland Park and Ravinia Metra train station lots. (Not operable during Kraft Kids Concerts)
- * Park in the Ravinia Festival Parking Lot, but it fills up quickly.