

Jupiter flyby: this week at ENCORE

by Rory O'Donoghue



The [Jupiter Quartet](#) comes home this weekend. “Cleveland’s one of our favorite places — we love coming back,” cellist Dan McDonough remarked in an interview last Friday. “Three of us went to school at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the Cavani Quartet were our

mentors. It’s always so nice to come back and catch up with them.”

Jupiter aligns at the 2019 ENCORE Chamber Music Festival in concerts on Friday, June 7 and Sunday, June 9, with master classes in between, all at the Gilmour Academy in Gates Mills. This is the quartet’s second ENCORE appearance, and McDonough identifies festival-director-dynamo Jinjoo Cho as a crucial factor in the enterprise’s rapid ascendancy. “Jinjoo and all the faculty build a wonderful sense of community and collaboration. All of the ideals that the Cavani taught us twenty years ago are still cherished, and taught with great enthusiasm.”

Friday’s program at 7:00 pm at the Tudor House features Janáček’s *Quartet No. 1*, “Kreutzer Sonata,” Puccini’s *I Crisantemi* (“Chrysanthemums”), and Dvořák’s *Quartet No. 13 in G*. This year’s theme is “La Bohème: Art and Freedom,” and the Quartet thought carefully in choosing repertoire.

“We quickly gravitated to composers from Eastern Europe,” McDonough said. “We had the Dvořák Quartet in our fingers, and we’ve been playing the Janáček Quartet a lot. We were looking for folk-inspired music, so these two Czech composers were instantly perfect.” The pieces offer different temperaments of Bohemian passion. “The Dvořák is full of joy and unbridled enthusiasm — it’s just a very happy piece overall. The Janáček is more tortured, and romantic in a different way. Romantic with tragedy. It’s a rhapsodic piece, a story-telling of sorts inspired by Kreutzer’s novella of the same name.”

To flesh out the evening, the Jupiter will bring into their orbit an oft-ignored fragment of Puccini's oeuvre — *I Crisantemi* (“Chrysanthemums”). “It’s actually an elegy,” McDonough clarified, “and it’s usually played as an encore, but we put it in the program to connect to the operatic world of *La bohème*.”

None of the works are new to the Quartet — “over seventeen years we’ve played a lot of music!” — but revisiting music is always a treat. They recently played the Puccini in Georgia at a botanical garden, and last played the Dvořák around a decade ago.

Just as returning to pieces never gets old, neither does their steadfast commitment to mentorship and teaching. On Sunday’s concert at 2:00 pm at the Tudor House, the Jupiter joins together with a student quartet, Quatour Lafontaine, for Mendelssohn’s Op. 20 *Octet in E-flat*. McDonough views collaboration with students as not only a teaching but also a learning opportunity. “We try to be as collaborative as we would be with professional colleagues...listening to their ideas, responding to how they’re playing.”

ENCORE brings in gifted students from around the world to help them develop a critical, multi-disciplinary relationship with artistry. “Last time we were here, the level was just amazing,” McDonough said. “The attitude, the musicianship, the flexibility — for a festival that’s still just in its first five years of getting off the ground, the quality of students is so impressive. It makes being here so much more fun.”

From the Cavani to the Jupiter and on to the young quartets at the ENCORE Chamber Music Festival, the lineage of string quartet pedagogy is alive and well. “I learned so much when I was a student and I would collaborate with my teachers,” McDonough remarked. “I remember the benefit of going to summer festivals and getting to play in chamber ensembles that were mixed — some old fogeys and some young people.”

And how does it feel to pass on the torch? “I guess now I’m on the old fogeys’ side,” McDonough laughed. “It’s the wonderful thing about chamber music — there’s always more to learn.”

Both [single tickets](#) and [season passes](#) to ENCORE are still available on their website.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com June 3, 2019.

Click here for a printable copy of this article

[Return to the Front Page.](#)