

## Season 14 of Close Encounters, Year 20 of Heights Arts

by Jarrett Hoffman



Close Encounters Chamber Music and artistic director Isabel Trautwein have two reasons to celebrate: the series' 14th season, and the 20th year of its parent organization, Heights Arts.

The minds behind the scheduling have kept things simple for concertgoers to store away in their brains (and for writers to explain): the four concerts take place on Sundays at 3:00 pm, which does seem like a particularly nice time for “up close and personal” chamber music, just as the series likes it. Single and season tickets are available [online](#).

Up first is the Omni Quartet on October 13 at a Carriage House on Herrick Mews Lane in Cleveland Heights. Cleveland Orchestra musicians Amy Lee and Alicia Koelz, violins, Wesley Collins, viola, and Tanya Ell, cello, will bring along Haydn's *Trio in C*, Hob V:G1, Mozart's *Quartet No. 22 in B-flat*, and Robert Schumann's *Quartet No. 3 in A* — written during his exuberant, love-filled first year of marriage to Clara Wieck.



Next on November 24 at Dunham Tavern is “We Too, Part II: Four First Ladies of Music” following up on last year’s season opener. The program includes three string quartets — Margaret Brouwer’s *Demeter Prelude*, Rebecca Clarke’s *Comodo e amabile*, and Teresa Carreño’s b-minor Quartet — as well as Anna Weesner’s new clarinet quintet *Eight Lost Songs of Orlando Underground*.

Among their achievements, Carreño was the first composer chosen to perform for Abraham Lincoln, Brouwer the first female composer-in-residence at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Clarke the first woman instrumentalist in a major orchestra. The clarinet quintet by Weesner — who received a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship — comes with a more light-hearted yet still intriguing factoid: it’s the first work performed at Heights Arts that’s not available on iTunes.



Oberlin Conservatory faculty violinist Mari Sato will be your guide through the program. She’s joined onstage by Cleveland Orchestra musicians Isabel Trautwein (violin), Paul Kushious (cello), and Robert Woolfrey (clarinet), and Cavani Quartet violist Eric Wong.



Jumping over to 2020, the series will celebrate yet another anniversary — Beethoven’s 250th — on March 1 at Eaton Mansion. The “Heights Arts and Beethoven Birthday Bonanza” charts the composer’s output from early in his career (*Violin Sonata in a*, Op. 23) to his bold middle period (*Trio in D*, “Ghost”) and his late avant-garde years (*Cello Sonata in C*,

Op. 102, No. 1). Joining Trautwein and Ell will be pianist Patti Wolf, who’s on the faculty of the University of Texas, Austin.

Close Encounters will close its season on May 3 at a new venue — Hermit Club in Playhouse Square — with a concert examining a neat piece of local music history. In the late 1800s, an assortment of Cleveland’s most musically talented children boarded a steamship and went to Europe to study with teachers like Dvořák and Brahms. They returned home and established notable careers for themselves — helping to spur the

continued development of the city's classical music scene.

Among those young talents were Johann Heinrich Beck, Edward Kresja, and Charles Rychlik, whose compositions have since been stored unpublished at the Cleveland Public Library. For this program, Cleveland Orchestra violinists Miho Hashizume and Isabel Trautwein, Indianapolis Symphony violist Yu Jin, and Cleveland Orchestra cellist Paul Kushious will dust off selections from three of those composers' string quartets, then turn their attention to Dvořák's "American" Quartet.



A "Mix'n'Mingle" with the musicians — tickets sold separately — takes place after the concert in Hermit Club Tavern. That event includes beer, wine, German appetizers, and some juicy stories about musical life in Cleveland from the middle of the 19th century through the beginning of the 20th, thanks to a presentation to be delivered by Trautwein herself.

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