

Kent Blossom Music Festival: In-Person and Remote for 2021

by Daniel Hathaway



“What a year!” Kent Blossom Music Festival director Ricardo Sepúlveda said in a recent telephone conversation. “But we’ve been fortunate. The challenges of the pandemic provided us with opportunities to learn, to explore, to be creative and innovative, and how to adapt to rapid change.”

The more you collaborate with others, the less control you have over your own operations. In the case of Kent Blossom, the summer education program that was established in the same year that The Cleveland Orchestra moved into its summer home in Cuyahoga Falls, the program that provides chamber music coaching for young players by members of the Orchestra takes its cues not only from the Orchestra, but also from Kent

State University. And since the novel coronavirus made its appearance, the program has also been subject to the health protocols of the State of Ohio.

“We learned what would and what wouldn’t work,” Sepúlveda said. “We could have interns operating virtually from different continents, but chamber music is all about working up close, and lessons, master classes, and chamber music are challenging in a virtual environment. We had to make an early call about our students.”

KBMF deferred admissions to the program from last year to 2021 and



received commitments from 25 students, who are attending virtually without charge thanks to donors. But ensembles will be deferred for another year.

A second component of the Festival — faculty concerts — will go forward this summer under conditions that have continually become more favorable. “We applied to the University for permission to hold four in-person concerts and were approved. The first two are Kulas Visiting Artist performances funded by the Kulas Foundation, and will feature the violin/piano duo of Paul and Helen Wang (pictured) on July 14, and flutist Demarre McGill with pianist Rodolfo Leone on July 21.”



The third concert on July 23 will be played by the Miami String Quartet, the Festival’s Quartet in Residence, while the final performance on July 28 will feature Cleveland Orchestra members Joela Jones, piano, Richard Weiss, cello, Jeffrey Rathbun and Corbin Stair, oboes, Daniel McKelway and Robert Woolfrey, clarinets, Barrick Stees and Gareth Thomas, bassoons, and Michael Mayhew and Jesse McCormick, horns in a program that includes Mozart’s *Serenade in c*, K. 388.

Originally, capacity in Kent’s Ludwig Recital Hall was to be limited to 50 attendees. “Last week, we heard that we were able to increase the audience to 200,” Sepúlveda said. “That’s short of the hall’s 265 seats — not a full house, but larger.”

Even with the increased capacity, the concerts will still be live streamed, as originally planned. “We began live streaming in the past when we had 10-15 international students who wanted to be able to share their progress with their families, and now that gives us the possibility of a global audience,” Sepúlveda said.

KENT BLOSSOM FESTIVAL FACULTY CONCERTS

Ludwig Recital Hall, Kent State University,
1325 Theatre Drive, Kent

Hybrid concerts. In-Person attendance limited to 200.
Click [here](#) for tickets & [here](#) for link to free live stream.

Wednesday, July 14, 7:30 pm - Paul Huang, violin & Helen Huang, piano (Kulas Visiting Artists). Mendelssohn's Sonata in F, John Corigliano's Sonata (1963), Eugène Ysaÿe's Solo Sonata No. 3 in d ("Ballade") & Franck's Sonata in A. Ludwig Recital Hall, Kent State University, 1325 Theatre Drive, Kent.

Wednesday, July 21, 7:30 pm - Demarre McGill, flute & Rodolfo Leone, piano (Kulas Visiting Artists). Valerie Coleman's Fanmi Imèn, Lowell Liebermann's Flute Sonata, Op. 23 (1987), William Grant Still's Songs & Yuko Uebayashi's Flute Sonata (2003).

Friday, July 23, 7:30 pm - Miami String Quartet, Festival Quartet-in-Residence (violinists Benny Kim and Cathy Meng Robinson, violist Scott Lee and cellist Keith Robinson. Haydn's Quartet No. 30 in E-flat ("Joke"), Erwin Schulhoff's Quartet No. 2 (1925) & Dvořák's Quartet No. 10 in E-flat.

Wednesday, July 28, 7:30 pm - Members of the Cleveland Orchestra & Festival faculty. Set 1: Joela Jones, piano & Richard Weiss, cello. TBA. Set 2: Jeffrey Rathbun & Corbin Stair, oboes, Daniel McKelway & Robert Woolfrey, clarinets, Barrick Stees & Gareth Thomas, bassoons, Michael Mayhew & Jesse McCormick, horns. Mozart's Serenade in c, K. 388.

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