

## ENCORE embraces the journey with “Tales of Travel & Transformation”

by Stephanie Manning



Summer 2022 has seen a surge in travel, as those who were kept from family, friends, and favorite places over the past two years try to make up for lost time. The upcoming July 4 weekend should be one of the busiest yet. But for those staying in the Cleveland area, the ENCORE Chamber Music Institute’s Music & Ideas Festival is offering audiences a musical getaway on July 3 at 4:00 pm with “Tales of Travel & Transformation.”

The featured performers, the Verona Quartet, are a group of world travelers themselves. Hailing from four different countries, the musicians — violinists Jonathan Ong and Dorothy Ro, violist Abigail Rojansky, and cellist Jonathan Dormand — have performed as a group across four continents. Over the past two years of their residency at Oberlin Conservatory, the Quartet has appeared in venues all over Northeast Ohio — this weekend, they will add the Gilmour Academy’s Dodero Center to that list.

A travel-themed concert is apt for a group that embraces the concept of cultural migration — their 2021 debut album, *Diffusion*, celebrates the influence of folk music in works by Janáček, Szymanowski, and Ravel. Not only that, but the name Verona — a tribute to William Shakespeare — ties in to the broader theme of ENCORE’s 2022 season: “Storytellers.”

Also the Quartet-in-Residence for ENCORE’s Summer Academy, the Verona will be joined by other Festival faculty and fellows — violinists Jinjoo Cho, Steve Miahky, and Sibbi Bernhardsson, violists Eric Wong and Joe Burke, cellists Max Geissler and David Dietz, and pianist Christina Dahl. Franz Schubert’s *Piano Trio No.2 in E-flat*, a 45-minute work packed with thematic and melodic material, will follow Osvaldo

Golijov's string quartet *Tenebrae*, which the composer wrote to contrast his experiences in Israel and New York.

"I wanted to write a piece that could be listened to from different perspectives," Golijov wrote in his program notes. "That is, if one chooses to listen to it 'from afar,' the music would probably offer a 'beautiful' surface but, from a metaphorically closer distance, one could hear that, beneath that surface, the music is full of pain."

Kicking off the evening will be *Quiet Music* by Andrew Rindfleisch, ENCORE's 2022 Highlighted Living Composer. This work for solo cello transforms the instrument's sound through the use of harmonics and a practice mute. And before the first note, a 3:00 pm panel discussion will feature Cleveland business owner Sofia Syed, who will recount how her own travel experiences inspired a cross-country move to open her coffee shop, Roasted Tremont.

At the other end of the program is Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence*, the composer's love letter to Firenze, where he spent time during Russia's bitter winter months. The eloquent four-movement work was his first for string sextet, an instrumentation he called "unimaginably difficult" — but his persistence paid off. His final verdict? "I'm terribly pleased with myself."

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