

ChamberFest Cleveland: Music, literature, nature, and beer!

by Mike Telin



From the beginning, ChamberFest Cleveland's programming has centered around creative themes. For season eleven, which runs from June 14 through July 1, the Festival takes on a literary slant with *Lightness of Being*.

During a recent conversation with Roman Rabinovich and Diana Cohen — two of the Festival's three artistic directors — Rabinovich said that he has been a fan of Milan Kundera's 1984 novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* for many years. "It's rich in ideas that are very deep but also entertaining and timeless. And Kundera is also an amazing writer about music — you can tell he has a deep knowledge of classical music."

Cohen added that like music, that novel explores every aspect of the human condition with its archetypes of personalities, relationships, politics, war,

and culture. "It explores so many different multitudes that we decided to see what we could do with it."

On Thursday, June 8 at 7:00 pm at Loganberry Books, there will be a panel discussion that will view the novel through its historical context, cultural perspective, and place in modern fiction. Panelists include Dr. James Krukones (Professor of History at John

Carroll University), Charles Oberndorf (Local Author and Instructor at University School), and John Sabol (Host of “New Czech Voice of Cleveland” on WHKW 1220 AM and Co-Author of Cleveland Czechs). Students from CIM’s Advanced String Quartet program will give a pop-up performance in the store leading up to the panel. The event is free.

“We think this is the perfect avenue for us to reach into Cleveland’s literary community,” ChamberFest’s executive director Jessica Peek Sherwood said during a telephone conversation. She added that whether or not people have heard of or read the novel, the event is a great way to introduce people to the Festival.

On Wednesday, June 21 at 7:00 pm you can join the Mac’s Backs Book Club for a discussion about Kundera’s novel. The event is free. The book will be available at Mac’s Backs at the 20% book club discount during the month of June.

And on Thursday, June 15 at 6:45 pm The Cleveland Institute of Art Cinematheque will present the 1988 film *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, directed by Philip Kaufman and starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Juliette Binoche, and Lena Olin. Click [here](#) for tickets and more information.

If the outdoors is to your liking, Celebrate Father’s Day on Sunday June 18 from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. “Dads, Dvořák, and Donuts” will feature three performance stops along the Center’s ADA accessible All Peoples’ Trail. “The performances will begin in the pavilion, and when that ends, people will move to the next stop, and then to the third spot, and then back to the pavilion,” Sherwood said. “The music will continue for a little over an hour and people are encouraged to pop in for as much or as little as they want to take in.”

Regarding the musical selections, Sherwood noted that works involving keyboards will be in the pavilion, the gazebo is a beautiful space for duos, trios and quartets, and solo works will be performed at the Marsh Overlook. “It will be a lovely mix of music, a lot of it drawn from the programs we performed during the week, with the addition of solo pieces and some other surprises.”

The event will also include two stations where kids can participate in some hands-on music making with percussion instruments like rainsticks, bird calls, and thunder tubes. “We’ll have people leading activities like building rhythm layers and exploring sounds. So I think it will be a fun and different way to think about making music.”

The literary connection to the Festival’s theme will be highlighted. “People from Lake Erie Inc. will lead some youth writing activities that will tie in music and nature. And

with “donuts” in the event’s title, EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute will be on hand to sell donuts, pastries, coffee, and juice.

“I think it will be a family/child-friendly event,” Sherwood said. “Each piece is only five to eight minutes long, and then people can go to the next spot. We’ll be encouraging kids to say hello to the artists and the artists to say hello to them. And the way the Nature Center is set up, you could just find a place to sit and listen from a distance.”



On Thursday, June 22 at 7:30 pm ChamberFest invites the 18-and-over crowd to join them at Waldorf Beer Hall at Forest City Brewery for “Brahms, Bagatelles, and Brews.”

Sherwood said that like the Nature Centre, this too will be an informal gathering with music. “If they haven’t been there before, the brewery is quite a large space, and the Waldorf Beer Hall even has a stage. There’s a wonderful

beer garden outside, and there’s great food. It will be a festive night out and a chance for people to hear some great classical music.”

This event will feature some previously performed works along with a variety of solo pieces. “Bill Caballero is going to play a piece for horn and electronics — I am very interested to hear that.”

Sherwood noted that there is a long tradition of chamber music being played in bars — a tradition that should be continued. “Chamber music is all about musicians having a good time performing and having a good time with the audience. Chamber music, as we know, is a very personal type of experience, and I think setting it in the brewery is going to be just ideal. It will be a wonderful place to celebrate.”

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