

ENCORE returns with an ode to Planet Earth

by Mike Telin



Each summer, ENCORE Chamber Music Institute's Music and Ideas Festival brings artists and speakers from around the world to present engaging performances and thought-provoking discussions that are inspired by a theme such as Creatures of Emotion, Storytelling, and FIRE. The 2024 edition of the Festival will feature six concerts under the theme of Planet Earth.

"I wanted to highlight the universal connection that we humans have with nature," ENCORE founder and artistic director Jinjoo Cho said during a telephone interview. "Anybody who takes a walk in the beautiful Cuyahoga Valley National Park — listening to the sounds of nature — will feel more calm and more centered."

Planet Earth begins on Friday, June 7 at Kendall Lake at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. "Roma Jazz on a Starry Night" features the Olli Soikkeli Band — Olli Soikkeli (guitar), Brad Brose (rhythm guitar), Paul Sikivie (bass), and Evan Arntzen (clarinet/saxophone). "Olli has a special place in that repertoire, and we're excited to do our first concert with him."

The evening will begin with a conversation led by Deb Yandala, President and CEO of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. "Deb will talk about the significance of the National Park to the Cleveland area," Cho said. "I think this concert is the perfect bridge between people and nature."

The Festival continues with "Wander the World with the Verona String Quartet" on Saturday, June 8 at 7:00 pm at the Akron-Summit County Public Library. The free program includes Britten's *String Quartet No. 3 in G*, Verdi's *String Quartet in e*, and Niels Gade's *String Octet in F*. The pre-concert talk features Akron Zoo education mission manager and FrogWatch USA coordinator Carrie Bassett.

Presented in collaboration with the Cleveland Humanities 2024 Festival, “Mystery of the Light” — which takes place on June 9 at 3:00 pm at Harkness Chapel — features Lili Boulanger’s *D’un matin de printemps*, Kaija Saariaho’s *Light and Matter*, Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Phantasy Quintet*, and Felix Mendelssohn’s *String Octet* performed by ENCORE Academy artist-teachers. The guest speaker will be Lisa Rainsong, a naturalist, composer, and retired professor at CWRU and CIM.

“Lisa is going to talk about how insects were the world’s first musicians, and how we engage with those sounds and music in general.” Regarding the ENCORE artist-teachers, Cho said, “We’re really lucky to have these incredible teachers who are also active performers to showcase our faculty. I think the concert will have a real community spirit.”



On Friday, June 14 at 7:30 pm at Oberlin’s Warner Concert Hall, “Director’s Carte Blanche” features violinist Jinjoo Cho and violist Mathieu Herzog, assisted by Hyunsoo Kim (piano), Zach Wuorinen (bass), Johanna Cox Pennington and Sarah Bates-Kennard (oboes), and Richard King and Micah Northam (horns). The program includes Handel/Halvorsen’s *Passacaglia in g*, Grieg’s *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2*, and Mozart’s *Sinfonia Concertante*, and Lorain County Metro Parks senior naturalist Chris Stanton will host the pre-concert conversation.

“Mathieu is the founding violist of the Quatuor Ébène. We have made an album together and over the years we’ve become best of friends. We love playing together and I’m excited to play the Mozart with him. And there will be some incredible musicians joining us on stage, so it’s going to be a fun one for me, and I hope it will be a fun one for the audience as well.”

On Saturday, June 15 at 7:30 pm at the Cleveland Natural History Museum, “Voice of the Whale” features Mihaela Martin, Jinjoo Cho, Stephen Miahky, and Brendan Shea (violins), Eric Wong (viola), Max Geissler (cello), Jasmine Choi (flute), and Hyunsoo Kim (piano) in performances of Paul Wiancko’s *American Haiku*, Grazyna Bacewicz’s *Quartet for Four Violins*, Jean Sibelius’ *Pieces for Violin and Piano*, Johannes Donjon Rossignolet’s *The Nightingale*, and George Crumb’s *Voice of the Whale*. Gavin Svenson, Chief Science Office at the Cleveland Natural History Museum, will lead the discussion.

The series continues on Sunday, June 16 at 3:00 pm at Harkness Chapel with “Earth Makes Us Equal.” The program includes Anton Webern’s *Langsamer Satz*, Carl Nielsen’s *String Quintet in G*, and George Enescu’s *Octet* performed by ENCORE Academy artist-teachers. David Rothenberg, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at New Jersey Institute of Technology, hosts the pre-concert conversation.

And the 2024 ENCORE season concludes on Sunday, June 23 at 3:00 pm in the Village Green of Gates Mills with an “Outdoor Family Concert” performed by the ENCORE Camerata. The free program includes Gustav Holst’s *St. Paul’s Suite*, Béla Bartók’s *Romanian Folk Dances*, Edvard Grieg’s *Two Nordic Melodies for String Orchestra*, and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade for Strings*.

This year’s Summer Academy, which runs June 2-24 in Gates Mills, is hosting 82 students between the ages of 13 to 26. “We have young professionals and hard-working students at major conservatories and various academy programs across America and from abroad,” Cho said. “So it’s an exciting time of year for all of us.”

Click [here](#) for the concert schedule and event tickets.

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