clevelandclassical•com reprints

Fire & Grace to perform across Northeast Ohio

by Mike Telin



"Music is something that throughout time has developed different flavors around the world," violinist Edwin Huizinga said during a 2022 telephone conversation.

For Huizinga, there are no borders in music. He said that even centuries ago, music was being shared in houses and pubs, for example by the itinerant Irish harpist Turlough O'Carolan.

"He was blind and there are stories of him meeting up with Baroque musicians and composer and sharing tunes with each other. So one of my passions in life is to share the fact that all music is similar in the way that it's created. It comes from a rhythmical background, and a community background."

Fire & Grace — violinist Edwin Huizinga and guitarist William Coulter — take listeners on a journey across cultures, moving freely between musical worlds, and finding connections that are both ancient and alive.

This week Huizinga and Coulter will present their musical magic at five Northeast Ohio locations: October 28 in Akron, October 29 at the Cleveland Institute of Music, October 30 at the Cleveland Museum of Art, October 31 at the Oberlin Conservatory, and November 1 at the Hudson Library & Historical Society. The CIM, CMA, and Oberlin concerts will include Amanda Powell on vocals and Brian Bigley on Uilleann pipes. Except for Akron, all performances are free. Check our Concert Listings page for more details.

How did the kindred spirits of Huizinga and Coulter meet? "We were both hired to perform at an Apollo's Fire summer concert," the violinist said during that 2022 interview. "William was putting together a program of Irish folk music. He was looking

for a fiddle player, and Jeannette Sorrell recommended me. It's funny, he was a little concerned because I was a Baroque violinist and thought, 'Oh dear, is this guy going to be able to play Irish music?'" Since then the two have toured together and recorded three albums: *Fire & Grace*, *Partita Americana*, and *Alma*.

In a recent telephone conversation, Huizinga — who lives in Cleveland and teaches at Oberlin and CIM — said that it's always fun to play locally. "I've realized how much I love to play in the area where I live. That feels so special to me."

Huizinga said that the concert he is most excited about is the one at the Cleveland Museum of Art. This past year, he went through a challenging cancer treatment and was surrounded by people who offered not only extraordinary care but also kindness, patience, humor, and humanity.

"I was trying to figure out how to show my appreciation to all of the incredible healthcare workers at the Cleveland Clinic. I thought, what if I do a free concert at the Cleveland Art Museum and invite all of the people that helped me throughout my whole experience with cancer to come and hear me play. So that night is simply a way of saying thank you."

The violinist said that "one of the beautiful things about this particular run of shows is that we were offered some great gigs last year, which I had to cancel. Then they were able to be rebooked for this year, which is really exciting. So it turns out to be a run of five shows."

Huizinga said that half of the program will include pieces that they've done in the past, and the other half will feature new material. "We're constantly working on new rep and putting different aspects of folk and Baroque together. And it's going to be fun and exciting to have Brian and Amanda join us."

He added that as a faculty member at Oberlin, he wants to bring in new collaborations to share. "I started a folk ensemble a couple of years ago — it's a combination of conservatory and college students. Working with students and getting them to learn music by ear is one of the most fun things to do. Getting them to focus on arrangements, improvising, and soloing."

After more than a decade of collaborating with Coulter, Huizinga said that he is amazed that Fire & Grace is still thriving. "We're actually going to be recording two albums this coming year. "We're putting out an album with Olov Johansson, the incredible nyckelharpa player from the Swedish folk music band Väsen. We're also recording

another album of folk and Baroque tunes that we've been working on for the last couple of years."

Still, what Huizinga looks forward to most is this upcoming series of concerts. "One of the special things I can do as a musician is to play a concert for people and just say thank you for helping me through this and for being there."

Published on ClevelandClassical.com *October 26, 2026*

Click here for a printable copy of this article

Return to the Front Page.