



University Concert Series
University of Missouri

Empire Wild

7 PM | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7
Missouri Theatre



The University Concert Series believes strongly in the value the performing arts holds for our community and its citizens. Because of this, we have made it our mission to bring the highest-quality performances to mid-Missouri.



concertseries.org

Empire Wild, mixed trio



Empire Wild is a genre-bending, crossover trio featuring Ken Kubota, Holly Bean, and Mitch Lyon. Ken and Mitch bring all the cello has to offer - bowed, plucked, chopped and more. Holly can be found singing and pushing the piano into any style the group sets their mind on.

The three musicians channel their love for musical exploration into the trio - fusing the sounds of pop, folk, jazz and more into their songwriting and composition. Their debut EP 'Paper Seasons' features all original songs, highlighting the trio's unique sound and instrumentation. Based in NYC, Empire Wild was selected as an Ambassador Prize winner in the 2020 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition.

Last season the trio delighted audiences with their signature mix of original songwriting and unique arrangements at venues across the country including a stop at South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center, a concert on the Harriman-Jewell concert series in Kansas City and a day at the Kaufman Music Center's Musical Storefronts in Lincoln Center. This fall will feature a Midwest tour through ten states along with educational workshops in Iowa and Ohio.

Individually, all three musicians are committed to community engagement and teaching. Together as an ensemble, Empire Wild feels that it is important to prioritize community-oriented work and bring creative musical outlets and opportunities to students of all backgrounds and skill levels. They have shared their unusual versatility with students through workshops at University of Iowa, the Peabody Institute, and the Preucil School, among others. Equally at home in classrooms, intimate salons and large concert halls, Empire Wild brings a sense of community to every performance.



www.empirewild.com



Holly Bean, *vocals/piano*

In-demand jazz pianist and vocalist Holly Bean learned her craft from legendary pianist, composer, arranger and producer Mr. Donald Brown, a former member of Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers. Based in New York City, Holly performs locally and abroad. She teaches in collaboration with the Listener School of Music, and offers private lessons as well. Holly endeavors to carry on Brown’s legacy through her educational endeavors. Holly is a member of the award-winning crossover chamber trio Empire Wild, managed by the Concert Artists Guild.



Ken Kubota, *cellist*

Cellist Ken James Kubota has shattered perceptions of the typical classical music career. While he is celebrated by The New York Times for “dynamic” and “polished” musicianship, most know Kubota as a YouTuber, social media personality, and for pioneering his unique style of strumming the cello like a guitar. As an artist, many know him as one-third of the band Empire Wild, a group now represented by Concert Artists Guild after receiving their 2020 Ambassador Prize. On social media, his audience numbers in the tens of thousands and continues to rise—he was selected as an Educational Partner by social media platform TikTok, creating fun and instructional videos on playing cello. Most recently he was selected as a brand partner with Ray-Ban and Meta for their product Ray-Ban Stories, a collection of smart glasses.



Mitch Lyon, *cellist*

Cellist Mitchell Lyon approaches music making with a zeal for harnessing the unique power of musical experience. At home with audiences of all types, he has performed in venues ranging from Carnegie Hall to intimate private homes.

An accomplished chamber musician, Mitch specializes in ensemble collaborations that run the gamut from classical piano trios, to crossover string quartets, to jazz combos, to dance and theater collaborations. His crossover trio project, Empire Wild, is currently recording their debut EP featuring original music and songs for cellos, voice and piano.