

# Music at Eden's Edge brings free cell-violin concert to Peabody and Topsfield

By Keith Powers / Correspondent

Posted Feb 22, 2018 at 7:50 AM

## If you go...

**WHAT:** Music at Eden's Edge

**WHERE:** Peabody Institute Library, 82 Main St., Peabody; and Peirce Farm, 116 Boston St., Topsfield

**WHEN:** Monday, Feb. 26, 7 p.m. (Peabody) and Monday, March 5, 7 p.m. (Topsfield)

**TICKETS:** Free. Visit [www.edensedge.org](http://www.edensedge.org).

Sometimes the music just doesn't fit.

Doesn't fit the instruments, that is. There's plenty of great music, but when a cellist and a violinist come together, "we really only have the pieces by Kodaly and Ravel to play," says cellist Jacques Lee Wood.

"Those are the most famous," he says, noting quickly that he and violinist Annie Rabbat have already performed them frequently. So when they were planning the latest Music at Eden's Edge programs, they had to improvise.

Or more specifically, they had to arrange. The free programs, which will be performed at the Peabody Institute Library (Feb. 26) and Topsfield's Peirce Farm (March 5), will include works by Handel/Halvorsen, Villa-Lobos, Boccherini and Robert Honstein that Wood, Rabbat and others have re-imagined for their own set of instruments.

“Annie and I have been playing together with many different groups,” Wood says. “I think we met in *A Far Cry*” — the Boston-based string ensemble — “and we’ve done other chamber concerts.”

Wood served as MEE’s artistic director — taking over for founder Maria Benotti — for a couple seasons, but had to step aside because of obligations to his growing family. (As if on cue, two young boys noisily make their presence known in the background of the phone call.)

A graduate of New England Conservatory, with subsequent degrees, including a DMA, from Yale, Wood is one of the more active participants on Boston’s freelance musical scene. He’s performed many times with the Criers. He has a growing duo programming adventure going with a close friend, guitarist Simon Powis, that includes an upcoming trip to China — and a recording before that. He’s a member of the Pedroia String Quartet, and has auditioned for the principal cellist seat in the Cape Symphony Orchestra. He’s also a familiar face at the Manchester Summer Chamber Music festival, which gives concerts in the Barn at Castle Hill.

Then there’s his early music side. “For two-and-a-half years, all I did was play Baroque cello,” he says. “I studied with Robert Mealy at Yale, and that got me into playing early music. And later I joined the Trinity Baroque Orchestra (based in New York), where he was concertmaster.”

That early music training — with its emphasis on historic performance practices — has helped with this MEE program, especially with the Boccherini sonata.

“First off, I’m almost sure Boccherini didn’t write it,” Wood says. “It’s not one of his published sonatas. It popped up in the early 20th century, arranged by this Frenchman, Bazelaire. It’s a nice contrast to the other pieces on the program. But the articulation markings are just crazy. They don’t seem appropriate to Boccherini’s era. They are so deeply French — really Romantic — every thing is a melody, everything slurred together, no separate notes. It feels like Bazelaire wrote it for himself, not trying to preserve anything of Boccherini.”

But that’s the downside — and the upside — of arrangements: the tricky attempt to make something new out of existing material.

“Part of the purpose is to capture the essence of the original,” Wood says. “It can be a challenge. We’re also playing Villa-Lobos’s ‘The Jet Whistle,’ which was written for flute and cello. It’s not uncommon to have a violin play a flute part, but in this piece Villa-Lobos had a flute technique that was supposed to sound like a jet engine.

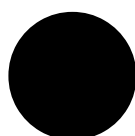
“We’ll have to see how Annie tackles that one.”

Cellist Jacques Lee Wood and violinist Annie Rabbat perform “By Special Arrangement,” works by Handel/Halvorsen, Villa-Lobos, Boccherini, and Honstein, on Feb. 26 at Peabody Institute and again on March 5 at Peirce Farm in Topsfield. These programs are free, but reservations are recommended. Visit [www.edensedge.org](http://www.edensedge.org) for more information.

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*Keith Powers covers music and the arts for GateHouse Media and WBUR’s ARTery. Follow [@PowersKeith](https://twitter.com/PowersKeith); email to [keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com](mailto:keithmichaelpowers@gmail.com)*

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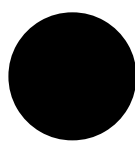
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