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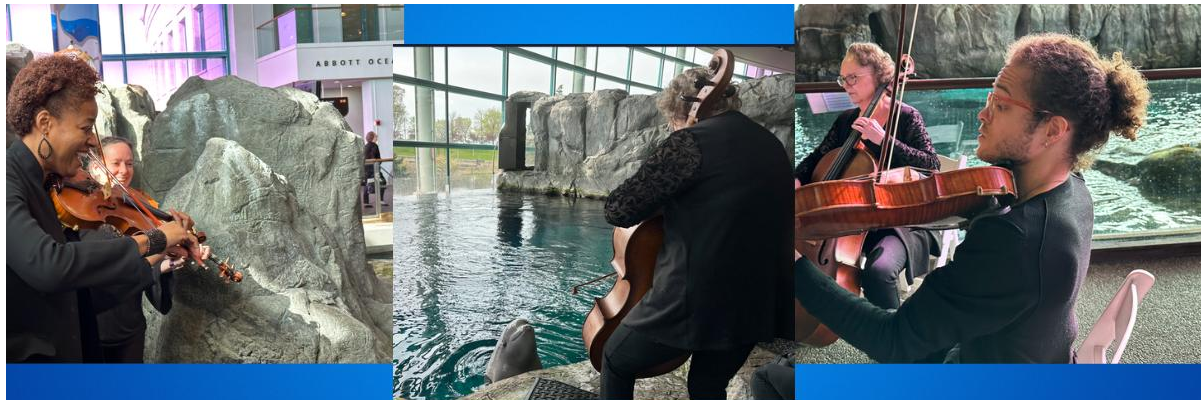
Massachusetts - New York

Chicago Sinfonietta

Connecting and Creating: Surprise collaboration between Chicago Sinfonietta and Shedd Aquarium inspires, delights, and highlights the communicative power of sound in nature and music

CHICAGO, IL – Chicago Sinfonietta partnered with Shedd Aquarium to present a surprise performance in the aquarium's Abbott Oceanarium. Motivated by the recent naming of Shedd's newest beluga calf, Opus (OH-pus), the exciting collaboration highlighted the importance of sound in nature – particularly for belugas to communicate and navigate their world, and its parallels to the importance of sound in the human world. The pop-up event delighted guests visiting Shedd Aquarium.

Chicago Sinfonietta violinists **Edith Yokely** and **Caroline Slack**, Assistant Principal violist **Seth Pae**, and Assistant Principal cellist **Ann Griffin** gave two performances: a “private” performance around Shedd's Secluded Bay habitat – home of the resident beluga whale pod at Shedd - prior to the opening of the aquarium. The string quartet performed Beethoven's “Ode to Joy” from his Symphony No. 9 and themes from his Symphony No. 6, “The Pastoral.” Ms. Griffin also performed Bach's Unaccompanied Cello Suite No. 1 for Opus. The second performance of the same works took place for the public once the aquarium opened, delighting visitors.



Chicago Sinfonietta violinists Edith Yokely and Caroline Slack; Assistant Principal cellist Ann Griffin plays to Opus; Assistant Principal violist Seth Pae and Ann. Photo Credit: Shedd Aquarium/Rachel Mittelstaedt

“As an orchestra known for its innovative concerts and creative programming withing the community, Chicago Sinfonietta is pleased to form a new collaboration with an historic landmark in our community, Shedd Aquarium,” stated **Wendy Lewis**, Interim CEO of Chicago Sinfonietta. “Communication, storytelling, and inclusion are at the heart of what we do. Shedd Aquarium's mission, “Sparking compassion, curiosity and conservation for the aquatic animal world” aligns with our mission to promote symphonic music and connect strongly with our community. Both Chicago organizations are committed to curating important and thoughtful ways to innovate, inspire and ignite interest in our world and to protect it for the future through artful

communication, and we are honored to have been invited to partner with Shedd for this unique event.”

“In our decades of caring for beluga whales, we’ve learned so much about how belugas use sound – and how adept they are at producing unique sounds of their own,” said **Megan Vens-Policky**, animal care supervisor with Shedd Aquarium. “It was a delight to have the talented performers from Chicago Sinfonietta here to introduce new sights and sounds to the belugas at Shedd – as well as to our guests!”

Broadcast quality video and high-resolution images of the collaboration can be found here:
<https://personal.filesanywhere.com/guest/fs?v=8e7066895f626d75b2a6&C=50>

Video Credit: ©Shedd Aquarium/Sam Cejtin

Photo Credit: ©Shedd Aquarium/Rachel Mittelstaedt

Click [here](#) for the aquarium's release.



Shedd Aquarium is a recognized leader in animal care, education, conservation and science that sparks compassion, curiosity and conservation for the aquatic animal world. Every year, Shedd serves as a portal for millions of guests, bringing them eye-to-eye with belugas and bluegills, stingrays and sturgeons, coral reefs, kelp forests and countless other species from around the world. An accredited member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the organization is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and supported by the people of Chicago, the State of Illinois and the Chicago Park District. Please visit www.sheddaquarium.org to learn more about Shedd Aquarium’s upcoming summer events and more.



A tenured orchestra and acclaimed cultural leader that champions diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating community through curated symphonic experiences, Chicago Sinfonietta is a source of community through music, as well as ensuring and inspiring a continued investment in diversity and inclusivity in the genre of classical music to promote fairness and equity. Recognized as groundbreaking, dynamic and daring, with core values built around being culturally responsive and advocates of inclusivity in all aspects of the 37-year-old organization’s work, Chicago Sinfonietta’s unrelenting commitment to being at the forefront of innovation drives its high standard of symphonic experiences. CS takes pride in leading by example with immersive audience engagement activities, impactful career development, education, and extensive community outreach programs. Please visit Chicago Sinfonietta’s website to learn about upcoming events, the 2025-26 season and more: <https://chicagosinfonietta.org>.

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