



Community Arts Program (CAP)

2026 Summer Concert Series

41st Season!

EMPIRE WILD

Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ



Empire Wild is a genre-bending crossover ensemble founded by **Mitchell Lyon** and **Ken Kubota**, two Juilliard-trained cellists dedicated to exploring musical frontiers and pushing their instruments to the limit. The ensemble fuses pop, folk, jazz, and more into their innovative songwriting and compositions, while their program features a mix of original music, inventive covers, and fresh takes on classical pieces.

Honored with the Ambassador Prize in the 2020 *Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition*, Empire Wild has captivated audiences nationwide with its unique artistry. Their debut EP, *Paper Seasons*, showcases original songs that highlight their distinctive sound and instrumentation. Recent performances include stops at prestigious venues like the Harriman-Jewell concert series in Kansas City and Lincoln Center's Kaufman Music Center.

Since they first met as undergraduates at the Juilliard School, Mitch and Ken have shared a desire to explore further musical vistas. Mitch is driven by a passion for leading string players in new stylistic directions, incorporating contemporary techniques into existing repertoires, and challenging assumptions about the cello's role in the broader musical landscape. Ken, seeking a renewed sense of purpose, redefined his approach to music, focusing on joy, collaboration, and the inspiration found in shared musical experiences. He often treats the cello like a guitar, exploring its capabilities and challenging its social norms. Both musicians are committed to community engagement and teaching, prioritizing creative musical outlets for students of all backgrounds.

Empire Wild thrives on collaborations with unique artists, enriching performances and offering audiences fresh, dynamic experiences. With that, it explores a wider sonic landscape, celebrating good music across genres and providing a platform to express diverse human experiences and emotions.

A surprising Community Arts Program (CAP) 2026 Summer Concert Series opening awaits, with Empire Wild! From Bach and Gershwin, to the Beatles and beyond. Intimate, unpredictable, and guaranteed to have the audience smiling!

Press Contact Person, Phone, and Email

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