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Lawrence Eckerling, Music Director

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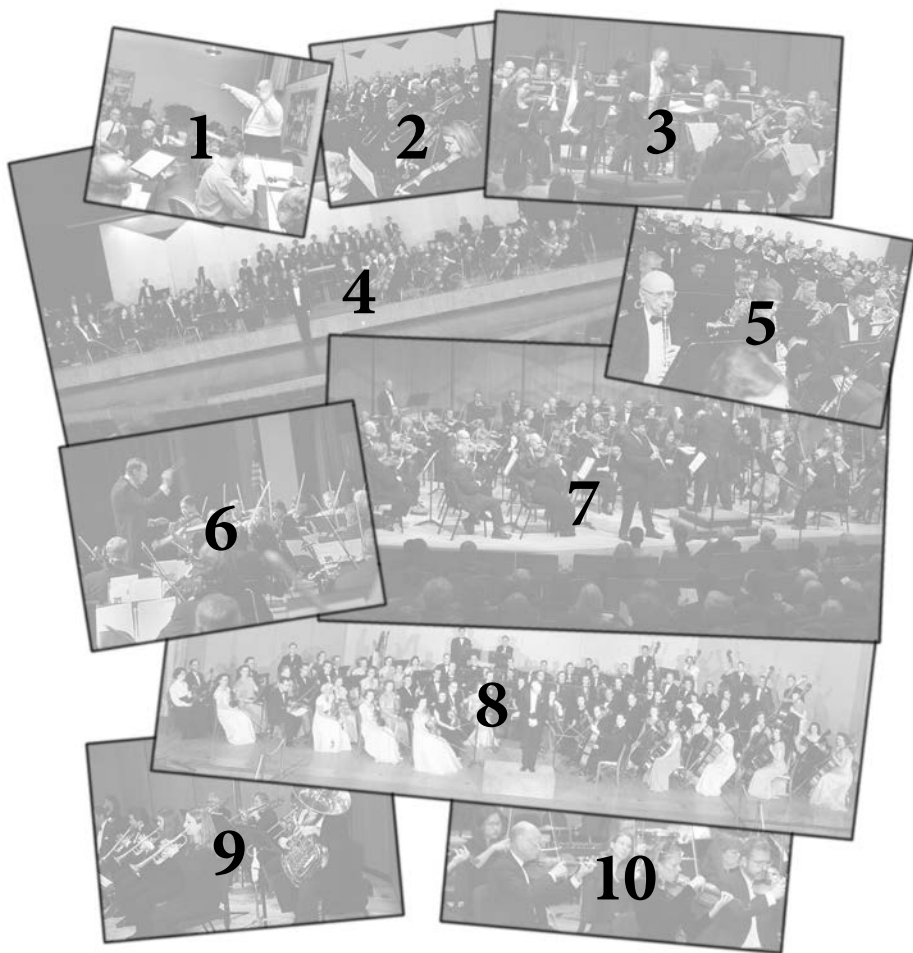


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## DESCRIPTIONS OF OUR FRONT COVER IMAGES

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1. Frank Miller conducts, 1965
2. Evanston Symphony Orchestra, 1999
3. Lawrence Eckerling conducts, 2015
4. Evanston Symphony Orchestra, 1999
5. Evanston Symphony Orchestra — Wind Section, 1999
6. Lynn Schornick conducts, 1999
7. Evanston Symphony Orchestra with Lawrence Eckerling and Clarinetist John Bruce Yeh, 2019
8. Evanston Symphony Orchestra, Hans Heniot Conductor, c.1950
9. Evanston Symphony Orchestra — Brass Section, 1999
10. Evanston Symphony Orchestra — Violin Section, 1999





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# WELCOME

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Dear Friend of the ESO,

Normally at this time I would be writing the welcome letter to our first program book of our 75th Anniversary Season. Sadly, the current pandemic which started for us last March is continuing. Besides the devastation of illness itself, it has robbed us of so many things in life, not the least of which are the live music rehearsals and performances which are so essential to our humanity. All of that has been put on hold for now. I can say that this historical 75th Anniversary book includes a great deal of wonderful information about the Evanston Symphony's rich history. Although I am sure that you will find it enjoyable, it obviously cannot replace bringing the arts back into our lives.

However, one thing that might help is an exciting virtual performance project for the Evanston Symphony Orchestra. This video will provide a chance for the ESO members to work together virtually during the coming months to create a virtual performance to share with our concertgoers. Stay tuned by checking for our Noteworthy emails. Please know that we will get back to live rehearsals and performances as soon as is safely possible. And in the meantime, please read this wonderful book which has been put together for your enjoyment.



Lawrence Eckerling  
Music Director  
Evanston Symphony Orchestra



  
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# WELCOME

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Where does the time go! It hardly seems possible that 75 years have passed since a group of amateur musicians who wanted to play and share great music formed what would become the Evanston Symphony Orchestra. And the vision and enthusiasm of those first musicians continues today.

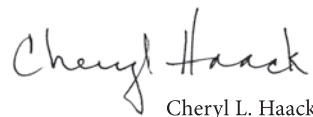
I have been a part of the ESO for the past 26 seasons, and I have seen how much the orchestra means to its musicians.

Like many others, I joined the ESO because I wanted to be part of performing great symphonic works. The experience of sitting in the middle of all that great sound is, for me, unlike anything else!

What has kept the ESO going 75 years? In addition to performing the great classics, the following have been especially meaningful to me:

- The friends I have made with fellow orchestra members and volunteers.
- The ESO's participation in bringing new music to life through groups that are commissioning new works.
- Our Young Persons' Concerts, each of which ended with a side-by-side performance where students from the School District #65 string orchestra programs performed on-stage with ESO musicians. The excitement of the students was contagious and helped me to remember how thrilled I was as a young student when I was able to be part of my hometown symphony.
- The audiences that applaud our Sunday afternoon concerts.

Each ESO musician and volunteer has his or her own special reasons for joining and remaining committed to the orchestra's success, and those reasons have served us well. We look forward to sharing great music with you, our community, for many years to come.



Cheryl L. Haack  
President

Evanston Symphony Orchestra Association



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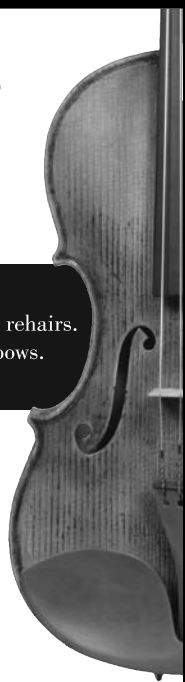
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## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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### MAKING MUSIC MORE ACCESSIBLE

Evanston Symphony Orchestra musicians realize the positive impact that creating, listening to, and engaging in music has on their lives. Over our 75 years, we have used different ways to bring music to many people both inside and outside of the concert hall. We've developed ways to enrich the concert experience for different audience members, bring music to people who can't or don't want to attend concerts, and engage the next generation of musicians and audience.

### REACHING YOUTH:

**1990s:** The ESO hosted **Young Artists' competitions** to encourage young talent from our area and showcase the best of them.

**1990s and 2000s:** *Play Me a Picture, Paint Me a Tune!* ESO and District 65 middle school art teachers collaborated annually on a cross-disciplinary arts program in which students turned music into visual art. *Play Me a Picture* was very popular with students and was featured on WTTW.

**1990s–present day:** *KidNotes* is probably the ESO's best known youth engagement project. We have always encouraged children to attend our concerts with free tickets to subscription concerts for any child under 12 accompanied by an adult. *KidNotes* features music-based puzzles and games in addition to age appropriate information about composers and music to help kids fight the fidgets—and are popular with older concert attendees too! Just shy of 100 *KidNotes* programs have been created by one very dedicated adult, Kelly Brest van Kempen.

**2005–present day:** *Music In Your World*. At the request of District 65, the ESO provides free high-quality music education throughout the school year to vulnerable preschoolers in Head Start and Pre-K classes that helps develop kindergarten readiness. In 2018, we expanded Music In Your World to serve children from 6 weeks–3 years in Early Head Start and the home visiting Early Start program for low-income families with very young children. We moved our Early Start program online during the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to provide supports for these vulnerable families.

**2018 and 2019:** ESO collaborated with District 65 middle school orchestra teachers on two *Young Persons' Concerts*. Middle-schoolers shared the stage with ESO musicians to perform in these special free one-hour concerts that raised donations specifically to help low-income students of color to continue their orchestral studies into high school.



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## REACHING SENIORS:

**2000–present day:** *Musical Insights*, ESO’s pre-concert lecture by our Music Director and General Manager, is an opportunity for seniors to learn more about the composers and works in advance of our concerts and to hear our soloists perform up close! *Musical Insights* is always held in venues that are accessible for seniors, from the Levy Center to Westminster Place to its current home at The Merion in downtown Evanston. ESO has also produced its concert program notes in a large-print format for the past two years, which is much appreciated by many audience members.

**2020:** Developed for seniors living alone and further isolated by the COVID-19 pandemic, *HighNotes* is a special package of music-based “brain activities” developed by the ESO in conjunction with the *Evanston Care Network*. *HighNotes* helps relieve boredom and loneliness, one of the greatest health risks for seniors.

## REACHING PEOPLE IN UNEXPECTED PLACES:

**1990s:** The City of Evanston invited the ESO to perform several summer concerts free to all in the lakefront park at Clark Street.

**2008–2010:** ESO performed a series of outdoor summer pops concerts at Westfield Old Orchard Mall that surprised and delighted shoppers and diners and drew them back to the mall for subsequent concerts.

## THANKING OUR SUPPORTERS

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra is very grateful to the many individuals who donate their time, musicianship, and money to enable us to bring our music to so many people in different ways and places. They are very special to the ESO, as they form the bedrock of our organization. Their dedication and commitment makes us a true “community” orchestra.

The ESO also thanks the businesses, foundations, service clubs, and government agencies that have supported us in our first 75 years, particularly those below who are among our longest-term supporters:

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## HISTORY OF THE ESO

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### THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: DAL CAPO AL PRESENTE

**1945:** World War II was winding down in both Europe and the Pacific. Rationing was still in effect until after VJ Day in August, when food prices began to rise. A successful ad campaign had convinced Americans that milk was necessary for a healthy diet, so the post-rationing price was 63¢ per gallon. A dozen eggs cost 58¢ and a pound of chopped beef was 27¢. You could buy a cup of coffee for 20¢, but students on a frayed shoestring budget knew that you *always* bought two 5¢ White Castle burgers instead of one 10¢ double-meat burger because you got twice as much bread!

In the arts, *Animal Farm*, *Black Boy*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Pippi Longstocking*, and *Stuart Little* appeared in bookstores. John Wayne and Anthony Quinn battled the enemy in *Back to Bataan*, and Gene Kelly danced with Jerry Mouse in  *Anchors Aweigh*. At the top of the charts, Doris Day took a *Sentimental Journey*, Johnny Mercer exhorted us to *Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive*, and Perry Como promised to love *'Til the End of Time*. Ted Mossman and Buddy Kaye had adapted the Como hit from Chopin's Polonaise No. 6 in A Flat Major, but they didn't win the 1945 Pulitzer Prize in Music for their efforts. That honor went to Aaron Copland for his ballet score, *Appalachian Spring*.

Here in Evanston, local classical musicians had played in Northwestern's various orchestras during the war, but a huge influx of veterans on the G.I. Bill in 1945 meant there were no longer places for them in the university's music groups. Into this void stepped a group of enthusiastic, talented musicians to form the Evanston Civic Orchestra, which ten years later changed its name to the Evanston Symphony Orchestra. Since its beginning, the ESO has had a succession of music directors who have each left their mark on the orchestra with enhanced musicianship and innovative programming, all of which have helped make the ESO into one of premier all-volunteer community orchestras in the country.



**1946-47: ELWYN OWEN** — The first conductor of the Evanston Civic Orchestra was also the organist for the Chicago NBC radio station. Owen directed the orchestra for only five concerts, but got it off on the right foot and helped it settle into a performance venue at Northwestern's Cahn Auditorium, where it played until 1952.

**June 14, 1946:** The orchestra's premiere concert featuring popular classical selections including Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, Mozart's "Overture to the *Marriage of Figaro*," Debussy's *Nocturnes*, and Waltzes by Johann Strauss.

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**November 20, 1947:** Leon Fleisher, then 19, performed Rachmaninoff's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in C Minor with the orchestra. Fleisher went on to become one of the most prominent performers of the piano works of Brahms and Beethoven, but his stellar career was interrupted in 1964 by a neurological problem that rendered his right hand almost useless for playing the piano. He re-trained himself to use his left hand and regained a career as an outstanding concert pianist. Fleisher died this past August at age 92.



**1948–1953: HANS HENIOT** — Heniot was the first professional conductor of the Utah Symphony. After five years in Utah, Heniot returned to his native Chicago and in 1948 was hired by the ESO, which he led until 1953.

During his tenure, Fannie Paschell Chase appeared as a soloist several times. She was a talented violinist, the wife of noted arranger and composer Bruce Chase, the mother of concert violinist Stephanie Chase (who performed with the ESO on March 23, 1984), and the grandmother of present-day actors Becki Newton and Matt Newton.



**1953–1958: IRWIN FISCHER** — The orchestra moved to Northwestern's Technological Institute Auditorium for a conductor audition season in November of 1953, performing at "Tech" for the next six years. The winner of the audition season was Irwin Fischer, the Chicago Symphony organist and Dean of Faculty at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. Fischer was also a prolific composer, recording artist, radio performer and author. During his five years at the helm of the ESO, he pushed the boundaries of the orchestra, staging two summer "pop" performances in the Wilmette Bowl at Gilson Park and, in his last year on the podium in 1957–58, *three* Young People's Concerts. The ESO would not hold another Young People's Concert until 2018!



**1958–1960: HERMAN CLEBANOFF** — On March 23, 1958, Herman Clebanoff stepped in as guest conductor for Irwin Fischer and, when Fischer retired at the end of the 1957–58 season, was appointed conductor. Clebanoff was a violin child prodigy and gave his first recital in 1924 at age 7. By age 20, he had already been named concertmaster for the Chicago Civic Orchestra as well as being the Chicago Symphony's youngest member. In 1945 he founded his own orchestra, The Clebanoff Strings, to great success. He also made a number of LP recordings, including songs such as: "Secret Love," "A Certain Smile," and "The High and The Mighty." Clebanoff had a worldwide following because of his unique style and excellent musicianship.

**1958:** The ESO moved to Evanston Township High School, where the orchestra would perform for the next 44 years.

**May 15, 1959:** Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. Sheldon Shkolnik, soloist, age 21. He became a champion of American piano music and gave the local premieres of piano concertos by John Corigliano, among others. His performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* as part of a 1979 Independence Day concert at Grant Park drew a crowd of 350,000.

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Tragically, Shkolnik's life was cut short by AIDS in 1990. Corigliano's Symphony No. 1 is dedicated to friends who had died of AIDS; the first movement is a tribute to Shkolnick.

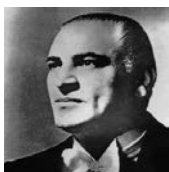
**November 20, 1959:** Alexander Tcherepnin, a Russian-born pianist and prolific composer of over 150 works, performed his own *Deuxième Concerto pour Piano et Orchestre* with the ESO under Clebanoff's direction.



**1960–1962: SIDNEY HARTH** — Harth was born in Cleveland and studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music. At the time of his appointment to the ESO in 1960, he was concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony, leaving both positions in 1962 to become Head of the School of Music at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Harth had also been concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Louisville Orchestras, and could thus also attract first-class artists to the ESO stage.

**March 2, 1962:** Russian-born cellist Raya Garbousova joined the ESO to perform Boccherini's Cello Concerto in B-Flat Major and Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme. She emigrated to this country in 1939 and became particularly well-known for her interpretation of the music of Samuel Barber. In 1945, Barber wrote his only cello concerto, which was composed specifically for Garbousova. and commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky on behalf of the cellist and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Garbousova and Koussevitzky premiered the work on April 5, 1946, in Boston.

In 1948, Garbousova married cardiologist Kurt Biss and settled in DeKalb, where she taught at Northern Illinois University from 1973 to 1991 and gave many master classes at prominent musical institutions. She was a close friend of cellists Mikhail Rostropovich and Janos Starker. The couple raised two sons. Gregory is a pianist and composer. Paul is a violinist and violist who is married to violinist Miriam Fried. One of their sons, Jonathan Biss, is a classical pianist; the other son is former State Senator Daniel Biss of Evanston.



**1962–1984: FRANK MILLER** — In 1962, the baton passed to the legendary Frank Miller, principal cellist of the Chicago Symphony, who would lead the ESO for the next 22 years. In 1930 at age 18, Miller joined the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stowkowski and in 1935 joined the Minneapolis Symphony as principal cellist under Eugene Ormandy. Then NBC announced in 1939 that it was forming an

orchestra for broadcasts with Arturo Toscanini. Miller sent in a recording and, in a *Chicago Tribune* article in 1985, described his audition: "Toscanini summoned me ... and made me play for an hour and a half," Mr. Miller recalled... "I began to feel he was going to make me play every note of music I knew, but when he had heard enough he stopped and I was engaged as principal." Miller's long career at the Chicago Symphony began in 1959 when Fritz Reiner hired him to be the CSO's principal cello, a position he held until 1985, just a few months before his death on January 6, 1986. The following day, the *Chicago Tribune's* John von Rhein celebrated the life of this great artist with these words: "He was called the greatest living orchestral cellist, and no one who followed Frank Miller's long and distinguished career in American symphonic music would question the legitimacy of the claim."



## Highlights from Miller's tenure include:

**January 18, 1963:** The concert featured the Illinois Ballet, the first time that dancers took part in an ESO concert.

**October 25, 1963:** Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra, L. Spohr. With the Fine Arts Quartet, which was founded in Chicago in 1946 and is still going strong.

**November 22, 1963:** One of the most memorable concerts in ESO history was one that didn't happen. The ESO was scheduled to perform for the first evening of Evanston's Centennial Music Festival. The soloist was renowned German soprano Elisabeth Schwartzkopf, who was at the height of her career in the U.S. The date, however, marks a major American tragedy: the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Evanston authorities cancelled the concert, even though the musicians and Schwartzkopf wanted the performance to go on in President Kennedy's honor.

Miller's excellent reputation helped him attract many top soloists to the ESO.

- Piano: Frank Glazer; Jeffrey Siegel; Leonard Pennario; Ralph Votapek; Gail Niwa; Ruth Laredo.
- Strings: Violinists Shmuel Ashkenasi, Samuel Thaviu and Stephanie Chase; Violist Toby Appel; Cellists Janos Starker and Leonard Rose; Double Bassist Gary Carr.
- Voices: Sopranos Eleanor Steber, Kerry McCarthy, Judith Raskin, and Winifred Faix-Brown; Mezzo-sopranos Blanche Thebom and Rosalind Elias; Contralto extraordinaire Isola Jones; Tenor Gregory Kunde; Baritones Michael Cousins and Louis Sudler; and the incomparable William Warfield, Bass.

## ESO'S COMMITMENT TO NEW MUSIC

### Feb 9, 1996

Draganski: *Overture with Fanfares\**  
World premiere—Commissioned by ESO for 50th anniversary.

### Feb 5, 2006

Tower: *Made in America*  
Illinois premiere—Consortium.

### Feb 9, 2009

Schwantner: *Chasing Light*  
Chicago-area premiere—Consortium.

### Jan 30, 2011

Walker: *The Promised Land\**  
World premiere of orchestral version  
—Orchestration created for ESO.



### Nov 10, 2013

Gresham: *Evanston Fanfare*  
World premiere—Created for ESO/Evanston 150.

### Feb 14, 2016

Theofanidis: *Dreamtime Ancestors*  
Illinois premiere—Consortium.

### Oct 25, 2020 (postponed)

Zhou Tian: *Transcend*  
Local premiere—Consortium.

\* These compositions are included on the *ESO Live!* CD, as is Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* from May 8, 2011 with Maestro Eckerling both playing piano and conducting.

- From the Chicago Symphony: Steven Stryk and Victor Aitay, concertmasters; Milton Preves, principal viola; William Schoen, viola.; Adolph “Bud” Herseth, principal trumpet; Walfrid Kujala, flute and principal piccolo; Donald Peck, principal flute; The Chicago Symphony Horn Quartet: Dale Clevenger, Richard Oldberg, Thomas Howell, Norman Schweikert; and Frank Miller himself on November 16, 1979.

Miller also programmed saxophonist Fred Hemke and invited performances from Northwestern’s Opera Workshop and the Opera School of Chicago in conjunction with the Lyric Opera, from the Glen Ellyn Children’s Chorus, the Northwestern Choir under Margaret Hillis, and the North Shore Choral Society.

In addition to the Illinois Ballet, the ESO performed with Maria Tallchief’s Chicago City Ballet, the Sybil Shearer Ballet Company, the Evanston Concert Ballet, and the Ensemble Español Dance Company.

**1964:** Frank Miller and longtime ESO violist and music writer, Lilius Circle, founded the Savoyaires, a group dedicated to preserving and performing the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas on Chicago’s North Shore. Many ESO musicians play in the pit orchestra.



**1965:** Linda Keller, clarinet, and Rick Greene, horn, joined the ESO. Fifty-five years later, they are still vibrant, contributing members of the orchestra!

**December 15, 1970:** First ESO Holiday Concert, which has become an annual tradition.

**June 11, 1971:** In a concert that we all wish had been recorded, the program was Glinka’s *Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture*, Liszt’s *Symphonic Poem, Les Préludes*, and Brahms’ *Hungarian Dances No. 5 and No. 6*. The program listing then continues: “And featuring Bunky Green Jazz and Rock Groups: Boomp, Boomp, Chomp, The Sons; Things are Getting Better, The Sons; Eland Sinfonia for Symphony Orchestra with Rock Band, Timothy Broege (Jim Albrecht, guitar and vocalist; John Priola, trumpet; Fred Poindexter, drums; Bunky Green, alto saxophone; John Hardy and Ernest Sell, bass).”

**May 26, 1972:** The First ESO “Youth Competition” featured violinist Janet Haugland and pianist Douglas Montgomery. Both went on to become professional musicians.

(Janet’s father, who taught music at Northern Illinois for many years, was one of those veterans who entered Northwestern as a music major after WWII, thus indirectly helping to establish the ESO!)



**May 19, 1978:** First concert with the North Shore Choral Society.

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**1982–85:** Frank Miller’s performance schedule with the Chicago Symphony began to conflict more with the ESO schedule just as his health began to decline. With his decision to retire in 1984, the ESO held auditions the following season and chose Dr. Lynn Schornick as Miller’s replacement.



**1985–2002: LYNN SCHORNICK** — Dr. Lynn Schornick earned his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in music at University of Kansas and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a concentration in conducting from University of Texas in Austin.

**November 22, 1985:** Lynn Schornick started off his 17 years with the Evanston Symphony with a bang — or rather, with a lot of *jetés*, *pirouettes* and *arabesques* when Maria Tallchief’s Chicago City Ballet again took the stage with the ESO.

During his tenure Schornick programmed some of the top soloists in the area, including CSO musicians: Daniel Gingrich, acting principal horn; John Hagstrom, trumpet; Adolph “Bud” Herse, principal trumpet; Walfrid Kujala, flute and principal piccolo; John Sharp; cello; Gary Stucka, cello; David Taylor, assistant concertmaster.

In addition, many prominent international musicians came to Evanston to perform with the ESO: Israeli-born violinist Shmuel Ashkenasi; Russian-born pianist Mikhail Yanovitsky; Mexican cellist Carlos Prieto; Ukrainian-born pianist Dmitry Paperno; Cuban-American pianist Santiago Rodriguez; Portuguese-born violinist Gerardo Ribeiro and Scottish violist Paul Coletti.



From this continent came The Chadamin Trio as well as pianists James Tocco, Christopher O'Riley ("From the Top" host), Ramon Salvatore, Gail Niwa, and Ralph Votapek; flutist Carol Wincenc; and Richard Roberts, principal violin of the Montreal Symphony.

On the choral side, Schornick conducted a number of talented vocal soloists in performance with the ESO, including sopranos Winifred Faix Brown, Ollie Watts Davis, Shelley Jameson and the delightful Rose Guccione; David Little, baritone; and Samuel Smith, bass.

Maestro Schornick also conducted the ESO in four of the great choral works: Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and Brahms' *German Requiem*, all with the North Shore Choral Society, as well as Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with voices from 30 local choirs and choruses. Two concerts under his direction featured exciting dance performances by the Chicago City Ballet and the Ensemble Español.

**January 31, 1986:** Concert dedicated to the memory of Frank Miller, who had passed away three weeks earlier on January 6.

**1996–1997:** *KidNotes* makes its appearance. The ESO board wanted to encourage families to attend concerts, but realized that the "fidget factor" could well present a problem, thus the advent of *KidNotes*. What started as an eight-page booklet in 1996 has grown to 20 pages of articles on the music, composers, soloists and other topics relevant to aspects of the concert plus games, puzzles and "really bad jokes."

**1997–2011:** "Play Me a Picture! Paint Me a Tune!" music-to-visual-art competition held in conjunction with Evanston middle schools. Students would listen to a piece of music, then interpret what they heard as visual art.

**March 21, 1997:** First ESO Young Artists' Competition in 25 years.

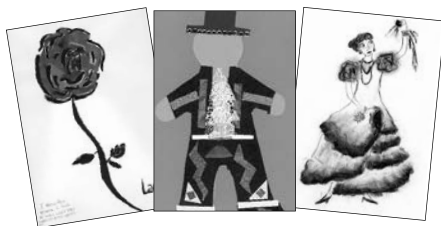


ESO Musicians, c. 1995



ESO Musicians, c. 1999

**KidNotes!**



**March 20, 1998:** Second ESO Young Artists' Competition since 1972. The winner was the very talented young Julie Fischer, who matured into an excellent musician and instructor and is now the ESO's concertmaster, succeeding her outstanding predecessor, Julian Arron.

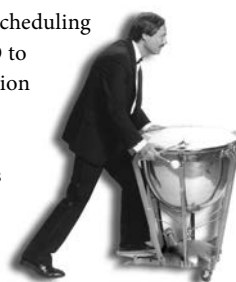
**November 10, 2000:** Verdi's *Requiem* with the North Shore Choral Society, Donald Chen, Music Director; and the Music Institute of Chicago Chorale, Daniel Wallenberg, Music Director.

**May 31, 2002:** Lynn Schornick's final concert with the ESO. Schornick was living in Waukegan and very involved in its burgeoning arts scene; he decided to step down from the ESO in order to take on even more responsibilities in the arts there. In 2003, Waukegan's Goodfellow Theatre was renamed the "Dr. Lynn Schornick Theatre" in his honor.



*Julie Fischer, current  
ESO Concertmaster*

**2002–2003: REINVENTION AND RENEWAL** — Increasing scheduling difficulties at the high school presented an opportunity for the ESO to make radical changes. The board designated 2002–2003 as an audition year and also took the opportunity to change the day and time of concerts and to find a new venue. Beginning with the first audition concert in November of 2002, audience members found themselves at Northwestern's Pick-Staiger Concert Hall on a Sunday afternoon rather than at ETHS on a Friday night. The changes won immediate approval from audience and orchestra alike.



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**2003–PRESENT: LAWRENCE ECKERLING** — From the moment he had the audience howling with laughter at his ESO audition concert, it was clear that Lawrence Eckerling understood what it meant to lead a truly *community* orchestra. That easy rapport combined with his outstanding musicianship made him the unanimous choice of the musicians and board to be the ESO's next music director.

Larry Eckerling was raised in Skokie and, when he was six, his mother enrolled him in the Northwestern School of Music's "Primary Piano Department," which set him on a definitive path. Eckerling received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education (both instrumental and choral music) and his Master's Degree in Orchestral and Opera Conducting at Indiana University in Bloomington. He came to the ESO after 16 years as Music Director of the St. Cloud Symphony in Minnesota, is on the faculty of the Music Institute of Chicago, and since 1984 has been leader and pianist of Larry Eckerling and his Orchestra.

Maestro Eckerling's innovative programming has given the ESO sold-out halls on numerous occasions and his excellent musicianship has gained him the utmost respect of musicians, board and audience. Prominent soloists include:

- From the CSO: Mathieu Dufour, flute; Tage Larson, trumpet; Charles Pikler, viola.
- Flutists Linda Chatterton, Sherry Kujala, and New York Philharmonic flute and principal piccolo, Mindy Kaufman.
- Pianists James Giles, Brenda Huang, Vassily Primakov, Matthew Hagle, duo Irina Kotlyar and Gregory Shifrin, Colton Peltier, Gleb Ivanov, Kate Liu, Sean Chen, Thomas Pandolfi, and several repeat appearances from both the wonderful Jeffrey Biegel and Inna Faliks.
- Violinists Nicholas Kendall, Bella Hristova, Sang Mee Lee, Chee Yun, Alexandra Switala, Rachel Barton Pine, Desirée Ruhstrat, who also appeared



*Irina Muresanu*



with cellist David Cunliffe and pianist Marta Aznavoorian as the Lincoln Trio, Romanian-born Irina Muresanu, who has appeared with the ESO four times, and famous American fiddler and composer, Mark O'Connor.

- Cellists Edward Arron and Wendy Warner; the latter has also appeared on the ESO stage playing double concertos with Irina Muresanu.



*Wendy Warner*

- Other soloists include: David Schrader, organ; Gail Williams, horn; Jordan Wirth, percussion; Evanston's own world-class harmonica player, Howard Levy; the ESO's wonderful principal trumpet, Don Cagen, and the incomparable Ralph Wilder, the ESO's principal clarinet emeritus.

In addition to conducting the Evanston Children's Choir, Evanston Dance Ensemble, Evanston Symphony Holiday Gospel Choir and North Shore Choral Society at the ESO's annual Holiday Concert, Maestro Eckerling has programmed numerous major choral works with the latter group. Individual soloists with the ESO include: Jonita Lattimore, soprano; Kenneth Gayle, Tenor; William Lewis, boy solo; and the exquisite Michelle Areyzaga, soprano.

## ILLINOIS COUNCIL OF ORCHESTRAS' AWARDS

### **Orchestra of the Year**

2017; 2010; 2003; 1996

### **Community Relations of the Year**

2020; 2007; 1998



### **Conductor of the Year**

2014: Lawrence Eckerling

2007: Lawrence Eckerling



### **Board President of the Year**

2018: Vince Flood

2009: Penelope Sachs

2004: Kelly Brest van Kempen

### **General Manager of the Year**

2012: David Ellis

### **Volunteer of the Year**

2015: Sarah Flax

2006: Julie Westbrook

### **Marketing Program of the Year**

1998; 1996

## CITY OF EVANSTON

### **Mayor's Award for the Arts**

2003; 2015



Evanston Dance Ensemble: "Waltz of the Flowers" from *The Nutcracker*

### ESO highlights under Maestro Eckerling include:

**2003:** The ESO begins its pre-concert Friday lectures, first at Westminster Place in Evanston's Presbyterian Homes and now at The Merion, a retirement facility in downtown Evanston. At each event, the soloist joins Maestro Eckerling and ESO's General Manager, David Ellis, for an interesting hour of music, videos and other information about the concert.

**2005:** ESO begins "Music in Your World," an outreach program through Evanston-Skokie School District 65 for children in Head Start.

**March 26, 2006:** "Opera's Greatest Hits" with Jonita Lattimore, Soprano; and Kenneth Gayle, Tenor, including selections from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*: "Summertime," "It Ain't Necessarily So," and "Oh, Lawd, I'm On My Way."



Paula Fischer helping a young violinist at "Music in Your World"

**October 28, 2007:** First appearance with the ESO of the extraordinary Romanian-born violinist Irina Muresanu, who has since performed four times with the orchestra.

**March 16, 2008:** First appearance with the ESO of the delightful soprano Michelle Areyzaga, who has performed a total of four times with the orchestra.

**May 11, 2008:** Jennifer Higdon's Percussion Concerto (2005) with Jordan Wirth, now acting principal percussionist with the Toledo Symphony.

**June 22, 2008, June 28, 2009 and June 27, 2010:** Outdoor concerts at Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Center, Skokie.

**February 8, 2009:** Internationally known fiddler Mark O'Connor performed three of his own compositions with the ESO: The Fiddle Concerto (Mvt. III); *Appalachia Waltz*; and Fanfare for the Volunteer. The ESO also performed Joseph Schwantner's *Chasing Light*, with the composer in the audience.



Composer Joseph Schwantner (r) with then Concertmaster Julian Arron (l)

**January 30, 2011:** Gwyneth Walker's *The Promised Land*, Michelle Areyzaga, Soprano. Walker wrote the work for Areyzaga and was in the audience for this world premiere.

**May 8, 2011:** Maestro Lawrence Eckerling brought down the house as both conductor and solo pianist in Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* — a favorite concert memory of ESO musicians, board and patrons, which can still be enjoyed on our *ESO Live!* CD.

**October 2011:** The ESO's first CD, *ESO Live!* is released in celebration of the orchestra's 65th anniversary.

**March 11, 2012:** In a particularly poignant moment of ESO history, Shirley Miller, widow of Frank Miller, presented Maestro Eckerling with Frank's favorite baton, one that had been given to him by Arturo Toscanini, renowned conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The presentation at this particular concert was all the more fitting because the concert was dedicated to the memory of Lilius Circle, longtime music writer and ESO violist who had founded the Savoyaires with Frank in 1964. Circle had died in 2011.

**November 10, 2013:** The "Evanston 150" Concert celebrating the city's 150th anniversary. *Evanston Fanfare*, M. Gresham; *Overture to Orpheus in the Underworld*, J. Offenbach; *Carnival of the Animals*, C. Saint-Saëns (Kyle and Ryan Jannak-Huang, Piano; Toni-Marie Montgomery, Narrator); *Bolero*, M. Ravel; *Pictures at an Exhibition*, M. Mussorgsky (Orch. M. Ravel).



Composer Gwyneth Walker, soprano Michelle Areyzaga, and Music Director Lawrence Eckerling



Lawrence Eckerling, the "Toscanini baton," and Shirley Miller



(L to R): Morton Schapiro, Toni-Marie Montgomery, Kyle and Ryan Jannak-Huang, Lorraine Morton, and Liz Tisdahl



*All three choirs (Evanston Children's Choir, Evanston Symphony Holiday Gospel Choir and North Shore Choral Society), along with the Evanston Symphony Orchestra, perform the ESO Holiday Concert finale 'Hallelujah'*

**February 1, 2015:** The second canceled concert in ESO history, this time because of a severe snowstorm. The concert was re-scheduled and held on May 31, 2015.

**December 6, 2015:** The Evanston Symphony Holiday Gospel Choir under the direction of Rev. Ken Cherry makes its debut at the ESO Holiday Concert.

**June 5, 2016:** Cellist Wendy Warner and Violinist Irina Muresanu perform Brahms' Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra in A minor, Op. 102 and Dvořák's Slavonic Dance Op. 72, No. 2 in E minor.

**2018:** "Music in Your World" expanded to include children aged six weeks to three years enrolled in Early Head Start.

**April 12, 2018:** The return of the now-named Young Persons' Concert in which District 65 string players went up on the stage and played side-by-side with ESO musicians for the last two pieces on the program. The second YPC was held on May 19, 2019 with a similar arrangement. The ESO hopes to schedule another such concert in 2022.

**May 12, 2019:** The ESO introduces large-print program notes for those audience members who may have trouble reading the regular program notes booklet.

**February 2, 2020:** All-American program including George Walker's *Lyric for Strings* and Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F with Jeffrey Biegel as soloist.



*"Side-by-side" at the Young Persons' Concert*



*Jeffrey Biegel plays Gershwin*

**Thursday, March 12, 2020:** Irina Muresanu was already in town for the Sunday, March 15th, concert and had rehearsed with the ESO on Tuesday. She, Maestro Eckerling and ESO General Manager David Ellis had prepared a presentation for the ESO’s “Musical Insights” pre-concert lecture series at The Merion in downtown Evanston for Friday, March 13th. But Covid-19 was taking on all of the properties of a serious public health crisis and the board therefore made the difficult decision to cancel the March 15th concert and later, as the pandemic worsened, the May 3rd concert.

So, what now? At the moment the ESO can’t rehearse or perform, but we have not lost our community orchestra spirit of outreach. In May we began producing a bi-weekly newsletter called *Noteworthy*, which contains news and plans involving the orchestra, interviews with musicians, and interesting bits of ESO history. It also has a new feature called “Larry Recommends,” in which Maestro Eckerling makes some suggestions for music he’s listening to during this pandemic. Then, in June, we were asked by the City of Evanston if we could contribute something with a musical theme to the City’s “Brain Break” program, which is geared toward a group of some 850–1000 seniors who have become forced to isolate more because of the corona virus. We produced the first issue in July and are continuing to publish this 20-page booklet called *HighNotes* — a type of *KidNotes* without the purely “kid” features — on a monthly basis for as long as the City asks us to do so.

We look forward to resuming our concert season in 2021 and continuing to add to the Evanston Symphony Orchestra’s long, proud history.



*Mahler's Symphony No. 2 "Resurrection" with the North Shore Choral Society, vocal soloists and hugely augmented ESO.*

## VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

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*Gus Brest van Kempen (a.k.a. Guus/Dad/Opa) — Congratulations on 35 years with the ESO! Much love from Je K, Team Richards (Jill, Jim, Connor, Calli, Ciara) and Team Lockerby (Kate, John, Addison, Ryan.)*

—Kelly Brest Van Kempen

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*Congratulations on 75 wonderful years!*

—Sandra and Jeffrey Rochman

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*Congratulations and cheers to the Evanston Symphony Orchestra for 75 years of bringing beautiful music to Evanston!*

—Suzanne and Jim Nelson

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*Many congratulations to the Evanston Symphony Orchestra on their 75th anniversary season. We are proud and happy to have been part of the last 27 years.*

—Toby and Penelope Sachs

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*Thank you to the ESO for commissioning my Overture with Fanfares in 1996, performing it again in 2008, and including it on the ESO Live! CD.*

—Donald Draganski

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*The ESO is one of the truly remarkable aspects of living in Evanston. I'm honored to have been part of it as a board member, subscriber and contributor.*

*Happy 75th and let's all keep this going.*

—Robin and Jan Ashton

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*Congratulations ESO orchestra members, music directors, board and staff, past and present, on our first 75 years of making music by and for our community. Here's to the next 75 and more!*

— Sarah Flax

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*As a longtime member of the ESO, I can say that the Orchestra is not only a great asset to the community it serves, it also is a great asset for all the members of the Orchestra. We are all indebted to the Board and the volunteers who attract our great audiences that keep the ESO actively performing music at the highest level.*

— Michael Papierniak

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*I was introduced to the ESO in 2010 when my daughter joined the orchestra and opened up a whole new musical world for me. Every concert is a thrill. Thank you for your dedication to making such beautiful music. Congratulations on 75 years!*

—Joanne Musolf

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*Our Sundays have been empty without your concerts.*

—Jim and Peg Forbes

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*Congratulations to everyone associated with the ESO on 75 years of bringing quality music to our community. Despite the challenges of this year, I am looking forward to a time when we can safely play together again and share our music with our wonderful and devoted audience.*

—Shelley T. Powell

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*There is no greater joy in life than music.*

*Thank you ESO for 75 years of joy and wonder.*

—Andy and Sue Patino

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*My most vivid recollection of ESO is not only playing piano with them, but the privilege of learning so much from Conductor Larry Eckerling at each and every rehearsal, no matter what the repertoire. Bravo Maestro Eckerling! Bravo ESO!*

—Frank Winkler, pianist

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*I enjoy performing concerts with my talented colleagues for our incredible audience — thank you! It is fun and challenging to continue growing as a musician by learning new pieces and playing old favorites.*

— Andrea Musolf, ESO cellist since 2010

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*It has been our pleasure to be part of the Evanston Symphony family. Congratulations on 30 wonderful years — we're looking forward to many more years of making and appreciating music together!*

— Barbara and Jeffrey Julis

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*Thank you very much for the years of enjoyment from the Evanston Symphony Orchestra.*

— Gayle Anderson

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