



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Beethoven's Symphony No. 9

"The Ninth." To a concert-goer or musician those two words can only refer to the last of Beethoven's nine symphonies, which is a measure of its iconic stature in the world of music.

Any performance of the Ninth Symphony is a major event, and we are proud to present it, with the participation of the North Shore Choral Society, in this 65th anniversary season.

This was the first symphony to include words, requiring four vocal soloists in addition to a large chorus for the setting of the "Ode to Joy" by Schiller which provides the climax of the final movement. But the orchestral forces also exceed those of any previous symphony (the premiere was in 1824). The normal orchestra required for the later symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, as well as for the majority of the symphonies of Beethoven and Schubert, comprises the strings, pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, and timpani. In his Fifth Symphony, Beethoven expanded the size of the orchestra with three trombones plus piccolo and contra-bassoon. Then in the Ninth, he added the bass drum, triangle, cymbals, and another pair of horns, creating the types of interpretive difficulties described by Maestro Eckerling in his "Behind the Scenes" column on the next page, as well as the most important fourth horn part in the orchestral repertoire.

In addition to the size of the orchestra, the Ninth is notable for its length, approximately 70 minutes of performance duration as compared to 25–30 minutes for other symphonies of its time. In fact, it's also longer than almost any of the commonly performed symphonies of the ensuing 187 years.



But none of these historical landmarks would matter without the greatness of the music itself, with its theme of the "Brotherhood of Man" and with its universally recognizable melody extolling joy.

There is a close relationship between the Ninth and the opening piece on our March 13 concert, Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No. 3. This is one of four overtures composed as possible preludes to his only opera, *Fidelio*, which celebrates conjugal love and concludes with a joyful chorus which might be thought of as a preview of the choral finale of the Ninth. The *Leonore* No. 3, considered by many the greatest overture ever composed, has a stature which renders much of *Fidelio* itself anti-climactic, so performances of the opera use the *Fidelio* Overture as the prelude while the *Leonore* No. 3 lives on as a stalwart of symphony concerts such as ours. The combination of *Leonore* No. 3 and the Ninth Symphony creates an utterly un-missable program! 🎻

—David Ellis



MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2011
1:30 PM

MEET MAESTRO ECKERLING

3200 GRANT STREET, EVANSTON

⊕ Presbyterian Homes

THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IS AN ILLINOIS NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA PROVIDING DIVERSE, ENJOYABLE AND ACCESSIBLE MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT THAT ENRICHES THE ORCHESTRA, THE AUDIENCE AND THE COMMUNITY.

BEHIND THE SCENES



LAWRENCE ECKERLING,
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Today is Wednesday morning, February 2nd, and I'm sitting down to write this article rather than deal with the huge snow that they are calling "The Blizzard of 2011." Beethoven's 9th. The monster is upon me. The magnitude of this amazing and important work is huge, and the time to wrestle with it again is here.

It is well documented what a turning point this great symphony is from a historical perspective. It is the first symphony to contain a chorus. It is also one of the most loved works in the entire symphonic literature. You would think that because it is so popular that collectively conductors have all of the answers about this work. But the more we examine it, live with it, study it, there are simply more and more questions, and fewer answers!

Composers give us lots of information in a score. Exactly what notes to play, and the tempo, if provided by metronome markings, are the most specific. Dynamics, the balance of one instrument versus another at any given time, the exact length of notes, and the overall character of each section of the work are much more ambiguous, and ultimately up to a performer's interpretation. Even the specific notes played and the metronome markings themselves must not be followed blindly, but rather, within the context of all the other information the composer has provided.

Regarding metronome markings, there are inconsistencies in how they are notated, which cannot be explained with any degree of certainty. There are some places where the only explanation is that there are errors in the notation, for one reason or another. Possibly the great Beethoven was deaf, and his silent perception of tempo was skewed. Possibly the metronome he used was not accurate, or his communication to his nephew Karl, who notated the speeds, had a breakdown. Or possibly, the sound of today's larger orchestras and choruses, playing in larger halls, creates different "speak" times and decay times than smaller halls, requiring different tempi. Plus, there are other sources of information, meaning the notes themselves, and the harmonic rhythm (the rhythm at which the harmony changes), all which influence tempi. All of that information relates to what tempo should be performed ... not just setting a metronome on a number and following "only" that. Also, there are written accounts of Beethoven playing his music where his tempi were constantly varying, which suggests that his music shouldn't necessarily have as steady a tempo as is used by some performers.

As to the specific notes played, even this isn't necessarily as clear cut as it might seem. Beethoven's ideas and desires were truly beyond the capabilities of the instruments of the orchestra of his day. He really wanted notes to be played that were not yet available on those instruments. Specific places in the score provide evidence that Beethoven compromised because of the limitations of the available instruments. For example, when the French horns are playing in octaves, but the lower part suddenly has a note not available on the instrument, he would have the 2nd horn (the low part) jump up nine steps, and then back down again, whereas the first horn only had to go up one step. Felix Weingartner, a famous conductor from the past, wrote a book in 1906 called "On The Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies" with the goal of helping this amazing music to be heard as clearly as possible. But this leaves the question of what ELSE did Beethoven do in his orchestrations to compensate for other notes which were not available on the instruments?

I've laid out some stimulating questions. Answers? Metronome markings, I use my "instinct," which is admittedly influenced by performing practices of our day. (And I realize that is no answer!) Orchestrations? I love much of what Weingartner has written, and implement many of his suggestions. Again it comes down to instinct.

But I warned you... questions abound which are much easier to raise than to answer.

Time to shovel the snow! 🌀

—Lawrence Eckerling
Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

A TRIBUTE TO BARBARA AND DAN MCCARTHY

Young marrieds Barbara and Dan McCarthy first heard the Evanston Symphony Orchestra on February 12, 1947, at NU's Cahn Auditorium. It was only the third concert of the fledgling orchestra, but Music Director Elwyn Owen had persuaded renowned Argentinean cellist, Ennio Bolognini, then principal cello of the Chicago Symphony, to perform Lalo's Concerto for Cello and Orchestra in D Minor. Barbara, herself a cellist, was quite impressed with the ESO and, over the summer, auditioned for and won a place in the orchestra, where she played for almost 50 years.

One of the ESO's most memorable concerts didn't happen because it was overshadowed by national tragedy. The orchestra was in dress rehearsal under the baton of the legendary Frank Miller. Renowned soprano Elisabeth Schwartzkopf was putting the finishing touches on her interpretation of works by Handel, Mozart and Strauss. Then word came that President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated in Dallas. "We wandered the halls of ETHS, waiting," Barbara said, "not knowing what to do." Many orchestra musicians wanted to continue rehearsing and present the concert in the President's honor, but Evanston city officials closed everything down and the concert was canceled. Barbara remembers that Elisabeth Schwartzkopf graciously declined to accept her fee.

Dan was drawn to the ESO because of Barbara's involvement with the orchestra. Barbara says that he "probably attended a few rehearsals and talked to some people, and was gradually taken into the fold" – where he stayed for many years as an ardent supporter, fund-raiser and friend.

Both Dan and Barbara were active in numerous roles with the ESO. Both served as president of the ESO board and gave their continuous financial support to the orchestra, especially during the lean times. They opened their home to visiting soloists, including, in 1985, Christopher Brey, now principal cellist of the New York Philharmonic. A 1992 guest was Evanston native, Christopher O'Riley, a talented pianist and now host of NPR's "From the Top" program, billed as the "preeminent showcase for America's finest young classical musicians."

Barbara was also involved with and served as president of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Evanston Symphony Orchestra, the organization that was the main source of the orchestra's volunteer support. The membership included many prominent women in Evanston, who opened their large, lovely homes for garden parties and house walks to raise money for the ESO. "There had to be enough space for a trio or quartet to play," Barbara said, describing one of the focal points of these events.

Penelope Sachs, former ESO Board president, notes that long-term supporters are one of a small organization's most valuable assets and that the organization will succeed if it has people like the McCarthys. "Barbara and Dan have been extraordinary in their commitment and the number of different ways they've given to the ESO – financially, board service, opening their house to soloists, buying tickets, bringing friends, lending their name, and being cheerleaders and champions for the orchestra. They are stalwarts."

We lost one of our ESO stalwarts when Dan died on January 3 at age 92, but true to form, the family asked those who wanted to honor Dan to make contributions to the Evanston Symphony in his name. Thank you, Barbara and Dan. This concert is in your honor and in memory of Dan. 🌀

—Kelly Brest van Kempen

WORLD PREMIERE HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY 30 CONCERT

Our January 30 concert was among the most notable in our 65 year history. Dazzling soprano Michelle Areyzaga joined the inspired ESO players under Music Director Lawrence Eckerling in the world premiere of *The Promised Land*.

This song cycle on the theme of "the next life," written for the ESO by renowned Vermont composer Gwyneth Walker, was greeted with spontaneous applause after each of the first three songs and a standing ovation at the end of the fourth and final song, "Walk On Up To Heaven." 🌀



GWYNETH WALKER, MICHELLE AREYZAGA, AND LAWRENCE ECKERLING AFTER THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *THE PROMISED LAND*.

PHOTO/DAVID SCHOTTLAND

THE ESO BRINGS HIGH QUALITY MUSIC EDUCATION TO EVANSTON AND SKOKIE



Lawrence Eckerling, Music Director of the ESO, is a strong supporter of music education for all ages. "Music education must be an important component in our school system because music is vital part of humanity," he said at District 65's offices. Maestro Eckerling was observing our ESO program, *Music in Your World*. The ESO brings this highly popular program to 400 pre-schoolers enrolled in Head Start, Pre-K for All and Pre-K at Risk. Led by Northwestern doctoral student, Charles Taylor, we introduce music, dance, music concepts and musical instruments to under-served three to five year olds, who actively participate in these classes. *Music in Your World* is made possible by grants from the Evanston Community Foundation and the Kiwanis Club of Evanston.

We also introduce classical music to middle schoolers in Evanston and Skokie through a program called *Play Me a Picture, Paint Me a Tune!* This music-to-art program, supported by Target Stores, shows 12-14 year olds the connections between music and art, meeting state standards for the arts at the same time. In the lobby at our May concert you can view pictures these students produced.

We encourage families at all our concerts so we provide special program booklets for children, titled *KidNotes*, at every concert at Pick-Staiger Hall. These booklets introduce the music and explain some important musical concepts while entertaining the kids with pencil and paper games as well. (And these booklets are so good that sometimes adults are known to ask for their own copy at our concerts!)

Maestro Eckerling sums up the importance of all these programs. "Our children need to learn how to feel things deeply, how to give and how to love. No other discipline can teach this like music can, and with a lifelong impact." 🎵



CELEBRATE OUR 65TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON— WITH YOUR GIFT TO THE ESO'S 2011 ANNUAL FUND!

What a great season! The Lincoln Trio played the Beethoven "Triple Concerto" beautifully and then captivated us with an Astor Piazzolla encore. Michelle Areyza sang her way into our hearts with *The Promised Land*, Gwyneth Walker's world premiere song cycle for the ESO.

"(We) just loved the music on Sunday. *The Promised Land* was so beautiful. Well, it all was!"
— Patron letter to the ESO

You share the excitement of live symphonic performance each time Maestro Eckerling and the orchestra take the stage. For 65 years supporters like you have helped bring music into our community.

We value every gift given and all ESO donors are featured proudly in our concert programs. In addition, leadership donors of \$125 or more are featured on our special **Share the Stage**—each chooses a favorite instrument to sponsor! Gifts of \$125-\$349 are *Section Members* and gifts of \$350 or more are *Principal Players*. Of course, every gift, whatever its size, inspires others to give and ensures the ESO remains a strong and vital part of our community.

Make your tax-deductible gift today! Please look for the **ESO Share The Stage** display board in the Pick-Staiger lobby at our March 13 concert. You can make your donation at intermission—and choose the instrument you wish to sponsor. Watch your mailbox for more information on **Share The Stage**...and thank you for your support!

DONATION LEVELS

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