



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Sibelius 1

Welcome to the opening concert of the ESO's 74th season, titled "Great Composers" in recognition of the many great composers represented in our subscription series. The series culminates in an all-Beethoven concert, the first of two such programs which will commemorate the 250th anniversary of his birth. This first concert's composers are all indisputably great, and include the "red priest" of the Italian Baroque, Antonio Vivaldi, and the two most important Nordic masters—Jean Sibelius and Carl Nielsen.

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) "was not merely the most famous composer Finland ever produced but the country's chief celebrity in any field," according to noted music writer Alex Ross. Our season opens with his most popular composition, *Finlandia*, premiered in 1899 under the title *Finland Awakes!*, and revised in 1900. At this time Finland was neither independent politically- it was a Grand Duchy of Russia- nor culturally- Swedish was the spoken language in the Sibelius household, and Jean Sibelius had to learn Finnish as a second language. *Finland Awakes!* was the final of six historical tableau meant to illustrate the progress of Finland from darkness to light during the nineteenth century. The 1900 revision added the final reprise of the "Finlandia" hymn, which in subsequent years became a stand-alone choral work under such titles as "On Great Lone Hills" and "O Mighty Land." *Finlandia* was an immediate sensation and remains Sibelius' most popular work to this day.

The program continues with the Flute Concerto of Carl Nielsen (1865–1931), Denmark's most famous composer and, along with Sibelius, Scandinavia's leading symphonist. In 1922 Nielsen composed a highly regarded Wind Quintet for the Copenhagen Wind Quintet; its success made him plan to write a concerto for each of the Quintet's members. He was only able to complete those for Flute (1926) and Clarinet (1928) before his death in 1931. Our soloist in this short, two movement work is Mindy Kaufman, the flute/piccolo player in the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 — 2:30 PM

SIBELIUS 1

Ms. Kaufman will also display her virtuosity in the best known of the three piccolo concertos by Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741). Known as the "red priest" due to the color of his hair, Vivaldi spent most of his life as the music director and composer for a Venetian orphanage for girls. He composed over 500 concertos, of which about 230 featured his own instrument, the violin.

Our concert concludes with the grandly romantic Symphony No. 1 of Sibelius, which, like *Finlandia*, was premiered in 1899 and then revised in 1900. It uses the largest orchestra of any of the seven Sibelius symphonies. This is the earliest well known symphony by a Finnish composer, which led to its being termed a "nationalist" piece. (Please see the article by Maestro Eckerling on the next page for further thoughts on the "nationalist" label.) However, many commentators have found an influence of Tchaikovsky due to the symphony's wealth of emotion, in particular the glorious melody in the finale. Sibelius himself wanted his works to be considered as pure music, without any such labels. You may judge for yourself on November 10! 🎶

—David Ellis



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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2019
1:30 PM

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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. For more information on ESO concerts and events, please contact David Ellis, General Manager, at (847) 864-8804. Write us at Evanston Symphony Orchestra, PO Box 778, Evanston, IL 60204. Email us at esomusic@evanstonsymphony.org. Visit our website evanstonsymphony.org.

BEHIND THE SCENES



What is it about the music of Jean Sibelius that is so DIFFERENT from all the other composers of his era? There are certainly some answers. Those answers are more easily demonstrated by listening to the music than just with words, even though that is precisely what I'm going to attempt here.

Most often, when one hears the name Sibelius one thinks about his three works which are most often played: Violin Concerto, Second Symphony, and *Finlandia* (which opens our concert). What is generally written about *Finlandia* is how "nationalistic" it is, and how this work has been adopted as Finland's "second national anthem." I actually did a non-scientific search on YouTube, listening to no fewer than 20 examples of Finnish folk music. And EVERY SINGLE ONE of the examples was in a minor key, whereas the bulk of *Finlandia* is in a major key (including the nationalistic hymn in the middle). While *Finlandia* reportedly made people think about their national home, due to its original title ("Finland Awakens"), the heroic and triumphal qualities of *Finlandia* are due much more to the music itself.

Very few writers seem to articulate the characteristics of Sibelius's music, other than it being "nationalistic," so I'm going to try. His First Symphony, which closes this concert, in certain ways is very similar to symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Brahms, etc. Its structural form is very typical, about 40 minutes in length, with four movements: A slow introduction leading to an energetic allegro, a slow second movement, a scherzo, and a finale.

But Sibelius deviates from the norm in the details of the music. For example, instead of long melodies (the last movement is the exception), there are melodic fragments, almost in a mosaic style, rather than longer melodies that are manipulated and developed in a traditional sonata allegro form. The third movement scherzo is most similar to convention, but its central "trio" section is completely unique to Sibelius, both harmonically and in its orchestration. The finale is the exception in that in the middle of frenetic development, sequences with each new phrase rising higher than the previous...it suddenly stops and breaks into a long, beautiful, gorgeous tune. Then, after even more frenzied development, the beautiful melody returns until the symphony comes to an abruptly quiet close.

Another characteristic of Sibelius is the prominent use of timpani, which rumble through much of the symphony giving it a certain dark character. French horns in their low registers, and particularly oboes in low registers also contribute to this dark character. And there are throbbing pulsating rhythms on off-beats that are relentless, contributing to, and in fact, defining, the musical ambiguity that keeps the listener a bit off-balance.

And the opening of the symphony, in which a solo clarinet accompanied only by quiet, rumbling timpani, is completely ambiguous about what key it is in, thus leaving the listener with complete uncertainty as to where the music is heading. One then can only listen to find out by taking the miraculous journey of the Sibelius First Symphony. 🎧

—Lawrence Eckerling

Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

Crescendo Circle

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra is delighted to welcome members to our new Crescendo Circle. Members have been loyal supporters of the Evanston Symphony Orchestra and have made donations consistently over multiple years. Crescendo Circle members will be recognized in our program books beginning with the November 10 concert. The Board of the ESO would like to thank these valued members for their contributions to help keep classical music live and affordable to all in our community. 🎧

Keynote Society Welcomes Ann Dow Weinberg

The Evanston Symphony's Keynote Society recognizes and honors those who have generously provided for its future through bequests, trusts, and other life income gifts. Ann Dow Weinberg attended ESO concerts faithfully for many years. Ms. Weinberg passed away earlier this year, leaving a substantial bequest to the ESO, and we thank her for her loyalty and generosity. 🎧

In Memoriam

Lynn Malnekoff



Lynn Malnekoff, a long time member of the Evanston Symphony Orchestra, sadly passed away in September. Lynn played in the viola section for more than 50 years, right up to the 2018/2019 season. Her love of

music was evident to all who played with her. She was a keen viola 'fiddler,' too. We send our condolences to her family. 🎧

An article about Lynn can be found online under 'News' on our website, evanstonsymphony.org.

Meet our November Soloist, Mindy Kaufman



Mindy Kaufman is the consummate New Yorker—raised in White Plains, musically trained at Eastman in Rochester and now a longtime member of the New York Philharmonic in Manhattan.

Mindy's earliest musical memory is piano music coming from their next-door neighbors' apartment. She was fascinated by the music and begged her parents for a piano, which they bought when she was seven. For the next year, Mindy and her twin brother took lessons, but by the end of the year, as Mindy puts it, "my brother gave up music for sports—he's now a tennis pro—and I gave up sports for music!"

Mindy credits the White Plains public school system for giving her an excellent grounding in music. She also received scholarships in both piano and flute to the Music Conservatory of Westchester. By her sophomore year in high school, Mindy knew that she wanted to make music her career and decided on flute over piano. When asked why, she replied that "the piano is a lonely instrument. It's not very social," and is not part of an orchestra except in specific instances. "It's also harder than the flute because you have to read two lines of music and train your hands to respond independently, and it requires more physical strength than the flute does." Then she added with a laugh, "Or maybe I was just more talented on the flute!"

With the help of her supportive music teachers, Mindy chose to enroll at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester and was scheduled to study with Joseph Mariano. However, a shake-up over the summer led to Mariano's leaving, so Mindy ended up with one of Mariano's former students, Evanston's own Walfrid Kujala. Mindy studied for a year and a half with Wally, who commuted from Chicago to Rochester every week, "from one snowy city to another." She chose Wally because he was an orchestral musician, which is where her own interests lay. Mindy describes him as "a stabilizing

influence. I still have music with his handwritten notes on it," she said. "The music itself is falling apart, but I'll never get rid of it because of Wally's wonderful notes!"

In 1979, Mindy auditioned for a piccolo position with the New York Philharmonic. She was successful in the preliminary rounds and made arrangements to fly to NYC for the final round, which Zubin Mehta would be judging. However, a snowstorm canceled her flight and her only option was to spend eight hours on a Greyhound bus that made constant stops and, in those days, was filled with smokers. She arrived "too tired to be nervous. I had no adrenaline, so I played a great audition for the final!" And won. At age 22, Mindy had secured a place as flute and solo piccolo in the New York Philharmonic, where she is now The Edward and Priscilla Pilcher Chair. Mindy described several memorable concerts in her career. One was a performance of Wagner with Jessye Norman and Leonard Bernstein, a definite "wow!" event, and another was with Danny Kaye as guest conductor of the NY Phil. "Danny Kaye was one of the best conductors I ever played with," she said. "He was very good—and lots of fun!" A third memorable concert was when Lorin Maazel conducted the Philharmonic in North Korea. Because of diplomatic maneuvering, it wasn't until 15 minutes before the performance that the orchestra was informed they would indeed be playing "Arirang," a 600-year old folksong beloved in both Koreas. Mindy says that by the end of the performance, even the starched and bemedalled military officers in the audience were in tears. Mindy's career has taken her to such diverse places as Shanghai, where she teaches at the Shanghai Orchestra Academy, and West Point, where she has given master classes to the professional army musicians in the bands at the U.S. Military Academy. She has also played for an audience of 250,000 on July 4th in Central Park and has many movie soundtracks to her credit, including *The Untouchables*, *Aladdin* and the just-released *The Joker*.

Welcome to our stage, Mindy Kaufman! 🎷

—Kelly Brest van Kempen

This concert is generously sponsored by Westminster Place.
We appreciate their continuing support. Please read about what Westminster Place has to offer.

Gallery C — A Celebration of Self Expression

We have all heard the old saying *'birds of a feather flock together.'* Well, at Westminster Place it seems they hang together, too. At least, when you're talking about the campus' resident artists. You'll find their latest work adorning the walls of Gallery C, the community art gallery located in the C wing of One Calvin Circle.

This exhibition is the fifth presented in Gallery C since it first opened last spring. The shows rotate every three months and feature the work of the community's professional and amateur artists.

From landscapes to still life, watercolors and oils to mixed media, the work displays a full breadth of artistic approaches and inspirations. "My favorite part of the show is discovering people you never knew created art," said Art Committee member Carole Bergstraesser. "That surprise factor starts a lot of conversations and allows the residents to share a different part of their lives."

This show is both an exhibition and a celebration of the resident's love of art. As stated in the gallery's brochure — *We celebrate our lives together and our diversity in this gathering of esthetic perspectives.*

To learn more about Westminster Place or visiting Gallery C call (847) 570-3422. 🎷



PHOTO BY YANCEY HUGHES

The Evanston Symphony Gospel Choir sing with the Evanston Children's Choir as Santa looks on

Celebrate the season with Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* with gorgeous dancers, three choirs, Handel's Hallelujah Chorus from *The Messiah*, and, of course, Santa! All for your delight on December 8 at ETHS

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra's holiday concert again will delight audiences of all ages. Come for a magical afternoon of festive classical music, singing, and dance on December 8, 3 p.m. at ETHS. And this concert is all about our community. We welcome singers and dancers from all over Evanston to come together to celebrate the season. Nowhere else in Evanston can you celebrate the holidays with over 350 performers on stage who truly represent our community.

The full Evanston Symphony Orchestra is joined by North Shore Choral Society, Evanston Dance Ensemble, Evanston Children's Choir, Evanston Symphony Gospel Choir, and the Advanced Vocal Ensemble from Evanston Township High School. Together we will play, dance, and sing your favorite holiday music.

The favorites we're looking forward to: the *Nutcracker* Suite, danced by Evanston Dance Ensemble; 'Believe' from *The Polar Express* sung by Evanston Children's Choir; the orchestra performing Nigel Hess' *Christmas Overture*, with all your favorite carols; Rush's *Angels in the Snow* sung by North Shore Choral Society and the Evanston Children's Choir; and the gospel song 'Oh What A Pretty Little Baby' sung by our very own Gospel Choir, led by Reverend Kenneth Cherry, backed by the full orchestra.

At the end of the afternoon, join in with our carol sing-along. We will finish with three choirs singing *Hallelujah*, from Quincy Jones *A Soulful Messiah*. This music is taken from Handel's *Messiah* (composed in 1741) but updated as an inspiring Gospel song. You will be on your feet and joining in—we promise!

December 8 is a perfect way to start the holidays for the whole family. Special family packages and all tickets are available on our website: evanstonsymphony.org, or simply use the ticket order form on the flap facing this page and mail it to P.O. Box 778, Evanston, IL 60204, or call 847-864-8804. 🎶



PHOTO BY YANCEY HUGHES

The Evanston Children's Choir



PHOTO BY YANCEY HUGHES

EDE danced Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite accompanied by the ESO



PHOTO BY YANCEY HUGHES

The North Shore Choral Society leads the audience in a holiday sing-a-long



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