



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Pictures at an Exhibition

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra's 2022–2023 season finale is on May 14 at 2:30 p.m. at Pick-Staiger. The concert opens with Berlioz's Roman Carnival Overture, continues with Maya Anjali Buchanan's belated ESO debut with Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major, and concludes with Mussorgsky's monumental *Pictures at an Exhibition* in Ravel's resplendent orchestration.

We are honored to partner with the Jewish Community Centers of Chicago's Violins of Hope (VOH). ESO musicians are playing four violins, a viola, and a cello from the VOH program, which showcases across Illinois a private collection of 70 violins played by Jewish musicians before and during the Holocaust. Read more about the program inside this *KeyNotes*.

Hector Berlioz (1803–1869) was a French composer best known for his piece *Symphonie Fantastique*. In 1843, Berlioz wrote Roman Carnival Overture, reworked from his 1838 opera *Benvenuto Cellini*. While the opera was decidedly unpopular, his overture was an immense success and became an independent concert piece. A rousing showpiece, it also contains the passionate expression that reflects the composer's romantic nature. The beautiful melody comes from the opera's stunning love duet played by English horn and supported skillfully by the orchestra.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) surprisingly only wrote one violin concerto. Shortly after Tchaikovsky's marriage ended, he composed the piece in 1878 while staying in Clarens, Switzerland. Along with Joseph Kotek, his composition student, they often played violin and piano. Since Tchaikovsky was not a violinist, he valued Kotek's suggestions about the solo part. Kotek refused to play the premiere of the concerto because he felt the concerto would not be well-received. Leopold Auer, another violinist Tchaikovsky had previously written for, also declined to perform it. In 1881, the concerto premiered with Adolph Brodsky as the soloist with the Vienna Philharmonic. While the piece had mixed reviews at the time, it is one of the best-known violin concertos today.

SUNDAY, MAY 14

— 2:30 PM

PICTURES
AT AN EXHIBITION



Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881) interpreted the beauty and originality of the paintings of Russian artist Viktor Hartmann (1834–1873) in *Pictures at an Exhibition*. News of Hartmann's death from an aneurism shocked Russia's art world, and an exhibition of his works was organized to honor him. The piece includes 10 numbers, each serving as a musical illustration of one of Hartmann's individual works of art. The numbers are linked by a recurring "Promenade," a relaxed walk that takes you from one artistic work to the next. Mussorgsky was so inspired by the exhibition that he wrote this piece in just three weeks in June 1874. It did not appear in print until 1886, 12 years after Mussorgsky wrote it. Mussorgsky wrote the piece for piano, and we will be playing the orchestration produced by Maurice Ravel in 1922, which has proven to be the most popular version.

Administrative notes: The ESO strongly recommends mask wearing for audiences. Proof of vaccination is not currently required. These measures are subject to change given public health recommendations. As always, our free Musical Insights program will feature Maestro Eckerling and soloist Maya Anjali Buchanan for an insider's tour of the history and highlights behind the music, as well as performances featuring Violins of Hope instruments, on Friday, May 12, at 1:30 in The Merion's Crystal Ballroom. 🎧



MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2023

1:30 PM

FREE

MEET MAYA ANJALI BUCHANAN

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PUBLIC

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BEHIND THE SCENES



The title of this column is “Behind The Scenes” so, for this issue of *Keynotes*, I thought I’d actually take you behind the scenes of a Music Director in action.

Sometimes being a Music Director of an orchestra is like being a juggler, keeping all of the balls

in the air, and “being comfortable” while doing so! Between our February concert and now, I have simultaneously been doing many projects. The first is preparing for concert No. 3, which was on April 2nd. (And of course, I’m writing this article about four weeks before it will be read by anyone.) I have also been studying music for the May 14th concert. Interestingly, a recording I grew up with of Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, with David Oistrakh, had the last movement with a certain set of “cuts” that are often followed. I’ve conducted the work at least four times, and each time the soloist took the same cuts. But this May, soloist Maya Anjali Buchanan will not be taking any cuts. The cuts normally are in six places and add 52 measures of the concerto. So it’s almost like learning a whole new piece! But I’m looking forward to performing the last movement in this new way!

In addition to all of that, I’ve been busy putting together our 2023–2024 season. That means picking the pieces to play, engaging guest artists, navigating the dates assigned by the concert hall, and matching up

availabilities between the guest artists and the concert dates. And then working with the marketing team so we can describe the new season to you in the very best light, all in time for this issue of *Keynotes*.

I’m also frequently contacted by composers who want us to perform their music and by soloists who want to perform with us. So I’m reviewing new pieces and listening to artists all the time!

And then there is planning Musical Insights, our Evanston Symphony pre-concert lectures, which I present and sometimes perform at the piano. Our Musical Insights on March 31 with Armenian-American pianist Kariné Poghosyan was a great success. And I still have one more to go!

It should be noted that I am only one person of many that do an immense amount of work behind the scenes in order to put on an orchestra season. But I hope this gave you a glimpse of what at least one person does to help the Evanston Symphony put on concerts for you to enjoy!

I look forward to seeing you in May for our final concert of this Evanston Symphony season! 📶

—Lawrence Eckerling

Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

“Feel The Passion” Defines 2023–2024 Season



Moving and eclectic, the ESO’s 77th season features a wealth of the known and the unknown that will captivate and entrance all subscribers. The concert programs feature symphonies by Mozart, Brahms and Dvořák. But they also include an entire program of movie music hosted by WFMT’s LaRob K. Rafael with George S. Clinton’s stunning *The Rose of Sonora* featuring violinist Holly Mulcahy at its center, plus favorites such as George Gershwin’s *An American In Paris*.

A Shostakovich piano concerto and Rachmaninoff’s *Symphonic Dances* headline a program of Russian and Armenian composers, including dances from Khachaturian’s ballet *Gayane*, with its famous “Saber Dance.” The season’s final concert will introduce a new Saxophone Concerto by jazz composer Billy Childs with rising star Steven Banks on saxophone.

Subscribe today to the ESO’s 2023–2024 concert season to make sure you “feel the passion.” 📶

Warm Welcome and Fond Farewell

We are pleased to welcome our new General Manager, Michelle Pranger, who joins the ESO on May 1st. Watch for more news about Michelle on our website and future emails. Wishing you lots of success, Michelle! We also want to express our deep appreciation to Fiona Queen who has been a great gift this past season as our Interim General Manager. All the best, Fiona! 📶



Meet our Soloist: Maya Anjali Buchanan



Recognized for her enchanting performances and exceptional bel canto-like lyricism, Indian-American violinist, Maya Anjali Buchanan, is gaining wide appeal as a dynamic young artist with extraordinary musicality. Named Yamaha's 2020 Young Performing Artist for Classical Music/Violin she has performed on three continents garnering enthusiastic reviews.

Maya has performed in recital and as the featured soloist with numerous orchestras throughout the United States, in China and Europe. She appeared as a guest artist at the Peninsula Music Festival, Harpa International Academy Festival, Brevard Music Festival and made her Aspen Music Festival debut as the recipient of the prestigious 2019 Dorothy DeLay Fellowship Award performing the Glazunov Violin Concerto with the Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra. Describing her Aspen performance, Alan Fletcher, President of Aspen Festival writes, "an immensely appealing artist...with a deep musical understanding,... her [Glazunov Concerto] had great beauty of tone" and *The Daily Gazette* writes "...she played this very romantic work with a deep rich tone, facile technique and a sweetly romantic lyricism" following her 2022 Albany Symphony debut. Highlights of forthcoming engagements include performances with the Evanston, Grand Rapids

and Galveston Symphony Orchestras and the Symphony Orchestra of India in Mumbai.

At sixteen, Maya captured First Prize in the 2017 Crain-Maling Foundation Chicago Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition and made her solo debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She is a top medalist of the 2018 Washington International Competition, 2018 Stulberg International String Competition, 2016 Stradivarius International Violin Competition and 2015 Johansen International Competition. Maya is an alumnus of both the 2020 Menuhin International Violin Competition and the 2022 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis.

In an effort to broaden Western classical music traditions, Maya unveils the music of her heritage by presenting pieces unique to her Indian ancestry, bridging her Eastern roots with her Western classical training. She enjoys showcasing works of Indian influence that reflect the form and improvisational quality of Eastern music, blending techniques of both cultures. An alumna of the Music Institute of Chicago Academy, she studied with Almita Vamos. She currently attends the famed Curtis Institute of Music in the studio of pedagogue Ida Kavafian. Maya performs with a c. 1730 Guarneri 'del Gesù' through the generous efforts of the Stradivari Society of Chicago. 🎻

A personal interview with Maya Anjali Buchanan is available on our website.

Violins of Hope

Evanston Symphony Orchestra is honored to partner with the Jewish Community Centers of Chicago's (JCC Chicago) Violins of Hope program. From April through September 2023, the program showcases a private collection of 70 violins played by Jewish musicians before and during the Holocaust to appear across Illinois for cultural exhibitions, performances, and community education.

Members of our orchestra will be playing four of the special violins as well as a viola and a cello during our concert on May 14, and there will be an opportunity to learn more during the intermission of the concert.



Join us at Musical Insights on May 12 at 1:30 p.m. at The Merion for an opportunity to see and hear the instruments up close. A docent from Violins of Hope will be there, and you'll have the opportunity to get close to the instruments and to learn the story about each one. This is a free event, and all are welcome.

Maestro Lawrence Eckerling says, "Performing this concert symbolically defies the Nazis' goal of annihilating the Jewish people and their culture, and it helps to insure keeping their memory alive." 🎻



Amnon Weinstein, co-founder of Violins of Hope, restores a Holocaust era violin in his workshop.

IMAGE COURTESY OF MIRI KOREN



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EVANSTON SYMPHONY HOLIDAY CONCERT

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The ESO thanks you for your support. All contributions are tax deductible and will be listed in the concert program.

For more information on ESO concerts and events, please contact us, at (847) 864-8804 or visit evanstonsymphony.org.



EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Lawrence Eckerling, Music Director

2023–2024 CONCERT SERIES

Feel the Passion

OCTOBER 22, 2023

SYMPHONIC MASTERWORKS

MOZART

Symphony No. 41 in C Major “Jupiter”

BRAHMS

Symphony No. 2 in D Major

FEBRUARY 11, 2024

RUSSIAN/ARMENIAN DANCES

KHACHATURIAN

Four Dances from Gayane

SHOSTAKOVICH

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Major

Rick Ferguson, *piano*

RACHMANINOFF

Symphonic Dances

APRIL 7, 2024

MOVING MOVIE MUSIC

LaRob K. Rafael, *Host*

WILLIAMS

The Cowboys Overture

MORRICONE

Cinema Paradiso

CLINTON

The Rose of Sonora

Holly Mulcahy, *violin*

Allegrezza Singers

LaRob K. Rafael, *Narrator*

JUNE 1, 2024

FROM CZECH TO CHILDS

DVOŘÁK

Slavonic Dance No. 1

DUKAS

The Sorcerer’s Apprentice

CHILDS

Saxophone Concerto

Steven Banks, *saxophone*

DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 8 in G Major

**SPECIAL
SATURDAY
CONCERT
7:30 PM**

BARBER

Adagio for Strings

GERSHWIN

An American In Paris

Concert Venue

Subscription Series Concerts 1–3 take place on Sundays at 2:30 p.m., Concert 4 takes place on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. All four concerts take place in Pick-Staiger Concert Hall,

50 Arts Circle Dr., Evanston (just off of Sheridan Rd.).

Free, convenient parking. Box office opens at 1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. respectively.

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