



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Made In America

Music Director Lawrence Eckerling has assembled an exciting mixture of classic and recent American works for the Sunday, February 8 concert of the Evanston Symphony Orchestra. Read his "Behind the Scenes" column for more details about how this eagerly anticipated program reached its final form.



MARK O'CONNOR

Our concert is (with one exception) chronological, beginning with the *Variations on "America"* by Charles Ives (1874-1954), generally considered the first great American composer. Ives' full time job was insurance (he is credited with the invention of whole life insurance), but composition was his true love. Ives wrote the "America" variations about 1891 for solo organ, but it has become best known in the version we will hear—its witty 1964 orchestration by the American composer William Schuman (1910-1992).

The *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber (1910-1981) is also an orchestration, by Barber himself of the second movement of his 1936 String Quartet, Op. 11. The expansion to a full string orchestra was requested in 1938 by Arturo Toscanini, the leading conductor working in the U.S. at the time. In its orchestral form the *Adagio* has attained iconic status as a true American classic.

We skip ahead in time to the most recent piece on our program, Joseph Schwantner's *Chasing Light...* (2008), which has its Illinois premiere at this concert. The background of the commissioning program which led to our premiere is detailed in a separate article in this issue of Keynotes. Mr. Schwantner also wrote the poem which served as the inspiration for each of the four sections of this 18 minute work. Interestingly enough, *Chasing Light...* is the only piece in this concert conceived as a purely orchestral work; the other five compositions either include a soloist or were orchestrated from smaller performing forces.

The second half of our concert is devoted to three works by Mark O'Connor,

whose blend of instrumental and compositional virtuosity is reminiscent of such great Romantic composer/performers as Franz Liszt and Niccolò Paganini. Mr. O'Connor's best known composition, the *Appalachia Waltz* (1993) will be played in its version for string orchestra with solo violin as the centerpiece of this O'Connor triptych. The *Appalachia Waltz*, originally composed for the string trio of Yo-Yo-Ma, Edgar Meyer and Mr. O'Connor, is flanked by two large movements for violin and full orchestra: the finale of the *Fiddle Concerto* (1992) and the *Fanfare for the Volunteer* (1994), itself the third of *Three Pieces for Violin and Orchestra*. Taken as a whole, this sequence of three separate works for violin and orchestra, devised by Mr. O'Connor, can be viewed as a full-scale three movement classical violin concerto.

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra is proud to support the wide range of American music, both classic and recent, represented on this concert and we are sure that you will be proud as well when you hear these superb compositions! 🎻

—David Ellis



MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 6, 2009
1:30 PM

Meet composer Joseph Schwantner and learn about what's behind his music. Sherry Kujula will play selections of his works for solo flute. Join Maestro Eckerling for this pre-concert lecture/recital in the Assembly Hall of Presbyterian Homes, 3200 Grant St. in 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

What a concert we have this February. This concert is truly “Made In America”! We will play two classic American works by Ives and Barber and then compositions from two living composers – Joseph Schwantner’s *Chasing Light...* and Mark O’Connor’s *Appalachia Waltz*, *Fiddle Concerto* finale and *Fanfare for the Volunteer*. We will also have the unique situation of both living composers being present at the concert. This is an honor for you the audience, for me the conductor, and for all the musicians in the orchestra. This isn’t just a live performance but truly living music.

I always knew that I wanted Mark O’Connor to perform with us this season. He is an exceptional musician with talents in many genres of music. We also knew, when planning this season, that we would be performing the new work from the Ford Made In America project. I have to consider many factors when putting together programs, from the availability of soloists to performance dates and even sponsorship. Sometimes we get truly lucky, and circumstances force some extraordinary but magical combinations. This was one of those fortuitous times. All the schedules aligned and we are privileged to have two amazing composers living with us for a week in February, performing with us, listening to us and engaging in outreach programs in the community. All the pieces slotted into place and created a program better than I could ever have hoped.

One of the interesting questions for me, the conductor, then is, “What is it like to prepare the score of a new work in anticipation of performing these pieces either in front of, or actually with the composer?”

I know that in my studies of a symphony by, say, Beethoven, there has been many a time when, (just like the TV game show) I’ve wanted to “use a lifeline and phone a friend.” But I didn’t have Beethoven’s phone number or e-mail address to ask a question! So the advantage of preparing a work with a living composer is that you can contact them for clarification, and Joseph Schwantner and Mark O’Connor are actually available to answer questions. (Questions such as, “Exactly what did you intend when you wrote...?”)

There is an evolution that happens with the performance of virtually every work. The composer composes what is considered the final draft of the work and it goes into rehearsal and performance. Then the composer makes adjustments according to how the actual sound differs from what he or she had imagined in his/her head. These changes might be a note change based on a miscalculation or a copyist error, and could be as minor as changing a particular instrument’s dynamic marking from forte to mezzo forte, all in the name of making something that is meant to be heard, actually heard, and in the clearest possible way.

So you can see that these are indeed living pieces which continue to evolve. In the case of performing *Chasing Light...*, instead of taking months or years for these small revisions, with a new Ford Made in America performance virtually every week all kinds of changes happen, and quickly. The work matures at an accelerated rate. One conductor hears another’s performance. And each conductor brings something of his/her own to the work, which is heard both by the composer and other conductors. The work develops its own traditions, but instead of this taking a lifetime, or several lifetimes, it happens in the span of a single year. It’s a fascinating phenomenon that is very unique to Ford Made In America.

In the case of Mark O’Connor’s works we are performing at this concert, the solo violin part is being performed by the composer himself. Each time the composer performs his own work, the music continues to evolve. While we will have to wait until after the performance to know for sure, it is likely that Mr. O’Connor’s performance will sound at times different from his recordings of these works. All three works have had time to mature since they were first performed and recorded. It is a very interesting example of comparing “what the composer wrote” with how he actually plays the music, and definitely sheds some light (and provides food for thought) about how literal and “frozen” the directions on the printed page should be, and how much “liberty” is (or should be) allowed.

When it is all said and done, an orchestral performance is a collaboration, and a meeting of the minds between a conductor and composer (dead OR alive). And as always, the conductor is the “concept unifier” for the orchestra players (all who have their own set of musical personalities). It’s no wonder then, that every single performance of *Chasing Light...* will necessarily be different from each other, and, being the great work that it is, will show its infinite number of personalities and possibilities.

I am definitely looking forward to Mr. Schwantner’s and Mr. O’Connor’s residencies when they will attend (and in the case of Mr. O’Connor, also perform with) the Evanston Symphony’s final rehearsal and performance. The three of us will have the opportunity to experience how the Schwantner and O’Connor visions and the Evanston Symphony Orchestra’s visions interact. And that interaction is precisely what you, our audience, will experience at the actual performance. This is what makes the art of live music so fascinating, compelling and rewarding. 🎵

—Lawrence Eckerling
Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

MEET MARK O’CONNOR – AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL

Get ready for an exciting showcase of American Music! The Evanston Symphony will present Mark O’Connor as soloist in the finale of his *Fiddle Concerto*, the *Appalachia Waltz*, and *Fanfare for the Volunteer* on our February 8th concert.

Mark O’Connor grew up in Seattle “in a family of dancers,” he says. “My first instrument was the classical guitar.” He describes what caused him to settle on a career in music. “It all happened when I was 12 years old—in just one month—June, 1974. I won the National Junior Fiddle Championship and appeared on the Grand Ole Opry program; I also made a recording, becoming the youngest fiddler ever to have a national recording contract: I guess that was my moment of truth—I was going to follow a career in music.” Mark adds, “It should be noted that the violin and fiddle are the exact same instrument. I look at it this way: the violin is such a great instrument that it deserves to have so many names!”

Many critics have remarked on his very personal, very American style, especially in his melodies. After hearing one of his compositions, *The New York Times* wrote, “If Dvorak had spent his American leisure time in Nashville, instead of Spillville, Iowa, the New World Symphony would have sounded like this.” “Recently, the Dubuque, Iowa, Symphony presented back-to-back performances of my Americana Symphony and the New World Symphony,” Mark reports, “and it was observed that Dvorak’s music is melancholy; he really missed his homeland, while my music has a brighter mood—the constant attraction to go West, seeking a new homeland.”

O’Connor has studied and composed music in the folk genres of many periods in American History. Asked if he did all his own research, he responded, “I brought in a musicologist for the *Liberty!* project, which is about the American Revolution. We found some interesting things. In one old manuscript, I recognized some songs I learned as a boy. Then we came across a little piece of paper—it was a note from Thomas Jefferson, who of course played the violin, listing his favorite fiddle tunes, such as “Soldier’s Joy” and Devil’s Dream,” and again I recognized these from my childhood.” 🎵

—Lillias Circle



MARK O’CONNOR,
VIOLIN/FIDDLE

ESO TO HOST COMPOSER JOSEPH SCHWANTNER FEBRUARY 5–8, 2009



JOSEPH SCHWANTNER,
COMPOSER

As part of **Ford Made in America**, the largest orchestral commissioning consortium in the country’s history, the ESO will host Pulitzer Prize winning composer Joseph Schwantner for a residency prior to the ESO premiere of *Chasing Light...* on Sunday, February 8, 2009. Mr. Schwantner’s residency will begin with a pre-concert talk and reception on Thursday, February 5, followed by visits to students and faculty at New Trier Township High School in Winnetka, the Merit School of Music in Chicago, and Midwest Young Artists in Highwood on February 6, and 7, 2009. These visits will offer hundreds of Chicago area high school students the opportunity to meet Mr. Schwantner and present their original compositions based on haiku poetry to the composer. This educational outreach program is a vital component of **Ford Made in America**, and enhances the ESO’s existing educational outreach, which includes *Play Me a Picture, Paint Me a Tune* for middle school students and *Music in Your World* for Head Start pre-school children.

Ford Made in America is made possible by a generous grant from Ford Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company. Spearheaded by the League of American Orchestras and Meet The Composer, **Ford Made in America** offers an unparalleled opportunity for ensembles in smaller communities to premiere a new work by an established American composer of national repute, and brings music by a living composer to audiences nationwide. 🎵

Joseph Schwantner’s *Chasing Light...* is part of
Ford Made in America
A Partnership Program of the League of American Orchestras and Meet The Composer



Ford Made in America is made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund.

This program is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Additional funding is provided by The Aaron Copland Fund for Music,
Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, and The Amphion Foundation.



SUPPORT THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY WITH A GIFT TO OUR ANNUAL FUND

At our concerts you share the joy of music each time Maestro Eckerling and the orchestra take the stage. The ESO is committed to our mission of keeping live symphonic performances accessible to everyone. Because we keep ticket prices low, the ESO earns only about half of its operating budget from ticket sales. The other half comes from contributions – from people like you. Your gift also supports *Music In Your World* and *Play Me A Picture, Paint Me A Tune!*, the ESO's music education programs in partnership with School District 65, that strengthen educational outcomes and enrich the lives of our children.

All ESO donors are featured proudly on our **ESO Community On Stage** display in the Pick-Staiger lobby at our concerts. We value every gift given. For a leadership donation of \$350 or more, your name, or the name of whomever you choose to honor, is displayed as a *Principal Player* and donors of \$125–\$349 are *Section Members*. Each has their choice of instrument on our special *Share the Stage* display, which recognizes our most generous supporters. Of course, every gift, whatever its size, inspires others and ensures the ESO remains a strong and vital part of our community.

Make your tax-deductible gift today! Please look for the **ESO Community On Stage** in the Pick-Staiger lobby at our February 8 concert. You can even 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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THE JOY OF THE SEASON CELEBRATED AT AN EVANSTON SYMPHONY CHRISTMAS

Over 1,000 listeners, musicians, singers and dancers reveled in seasonal joy at our holiday concert in December. The ESO played a wide selection of holiday favorites introduced by our Master of Ceremonies, ABC7's Harry Porterfield. The Evanston Dance Ensemble troupe of 32 young dancers brought the Nutcracker Ballet to life and enthralled our audience; in the second half the Evanston Festival Chorus (directed by Sue Young) joined the orchestra with glorious singing. And, as always, Santa and his elves visited the concert during the final singalong. We would like to thank our sponsor, Romano Brothers & Co, an Evanston investment firm, for all their support of this great community concert.

In the spirit of the season, the Evanston Symphony Orchestra also put together at this concert a collection of educational items as a gift for Head Start classrooms. We would like to thank all audience members who brought a gift. 🎶



JOE AND DICK ROMANO AND STAFF OF ROMANO BROTHERS & CO., HARRY PORTERFIELD, LAWRENCE ECKERLING AND CHERYL HAACK, ALONG WITH THE EVANSTON DANCE ENSEMBLE.

A BIG THANK YOU TO AN IMPORTANT VOLUNTEER



JULIE WESTBROOK

The board of the Evanston Symphony Orchestra sends a heartfelt thank you to Julie Westbrook for her wonderful lectures at Musical Insights for the past five years. Julie is spending more time on her own singing career so we will have a new lecturer, David Ellis, our General Manager. You may still see Julie at some Musical Insights as she is always interested in learning more about our programs and seeing



an extra performance by our soloists. Do come and hear David, Lawrence Eckerling, and meet Joseph Schwanter at Musical Insights on February 6th, 2009 at Presbyterian Homes. 🎶

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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.



This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council



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REMINDER!

MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2009, 1:30 PM

CONCERT PERFORMANCE

MARK O'CONNOR, VIOLIN/FIDDLE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2009, 2:30 PM