



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Brahms and Dvořák Doubled

"The final concert of our 70th anniversary season features two soloists—together—who have achieved great successes—individually—in the past with the Evanston Symphony audience, players, and Music Director. They are violinist Irina Muresanu and cellist Wendy Warner, and you can read Maestro Eckerling's explanation about what makes their collaborations special in his "Behind the Scenes" column on the next page. In addition to the Brahms "Double" Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra, they will also play a special arrangement for the same forces of one of Dvořák's most popular Slavonic Dances.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) and Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) enjoyed one of the great friendships of musical history, one in which Brahms greatly assisted and influenced Dvořák. Brahms attained fame and then financial success at a much younger age than did Dvořák, and Brahms' Hungarian Dances for piano four-hands were a large part of his early success. Ironically, many of these dances were more of Gypsy than Hungarian origin; Brahms thought of himself as an arranger rather than their composer, and thus did not assign them an opus number in his catalog of works. Only three of the 21 dances were orchestrated by Brahms, and Dvořák orchestrated numbers 17–21. One Martin Schmeling orchestrated the one performed on our concert, Number 6 in D Major, which ranks with Number 5 as the most popular of the 21 dances.

Dvořák followed up this success of Brahms with two sets of eight Slavonic Dances, also for piano four-hands, all of which Dvořák orchestrated. These are original compositions and thus have opus numbers; our concert holds one from each set: Number 3 from Opus 46, a polka, and Number 2 from Opus 72, a starodávny (polonaise). This latter dance will be performed in an arrangement by the Czech/Canadian composer Oskar Morawetz for violin, cello, and orchestra. It will thus serve as a pre-planned encore to the major piece on the first half of the program, Brahms' "Double" Concerto.

SUNDAY JUNE 5, 2016 — 2:30 PM

Brahms and Dvořák Doubled



The "Double" Concerto was the last orchestral work of Brahms' career, and it is reminiscent of the double concertos of the Baroque and Classical periods, such as Bach's Concerto for Two Violins or Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola. This "Double" Concerto is the closest Brahms ever came to composing a cello concerto, as shown by the cello's opening solos in both the first and the third movements. The third movement finale is in the "Hungarian" style of the finales of several of his other major pieces.

The concert and the 70th anniversary season will conclude with what many consider the greatest of the symphonies of Dvořák: the Seventh in D Minor. The key of D Minor is frequently associated with epic struggle and this symphony completely lives up to that connotation. The Seventh has been called the most "Brahmsian" of Dvořák's works, referring to the reputation of Brahms as a master of Austro-German symphonic form. However, the third movement scherzo of the Seventh Symphony is a variant of a Slavonic dance, just as the finale of the "Double" Concerto is similar to a Hungarian dance. So the similarities between these two great composers and friends include both their profounder and their lighter sides. 🎵

—David Ellis



MUSICAL INSIGHTS
FRIDAY, JUNE 3 • 1:30 PM

**MEET IRINA MURESANU
AND WENDY WARNER**

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BEHIND THE SCENES



I have always believed that the main job of a conductor is to provide a point of view of the music at hand, and to present a unified concept of the work to the musicians of the orchestra. However, when a guest soloist is involved, the soloist and conductor must agree on the overall concept before the conductor brings it to the players.

I have been fortunate to have enjoyed wonderful collaborations with many great artists while Music Director of the ESO. The usual procedure is that the soloist prepares their own performance, and develops their own concept of the piece as a whole, while the conductor does the same independently. Then, they get together in advance of the orchestra rehearsals, and make sure that they are not drastically apart in their separate concepts. They then talk about specific sections, transitions, tempo, the meaning of the music, etc. In most places (hopefully), the conductor and soloist will agree. Occasionally, the soloist will point out some pitfalls which the conductor needs to watch for. In other instances the conductor will remind the soloist about a place in the score with an important passage for an instrument in the orchestra.

Sometimes there must be compromises for the soloist and conductor to present the same point of view. Sometimes the soloist's idea about the music is different than the conductor's, but the soloist's conviction is so strong, and what they want to do is so clear, that the conductor will go along with it, knowing that it will be a compelling performance, even though it might not necessarily be the conductor's point of view. A famous instance of this was Leonard Bernstein's compliance with Glenn Gould's concept of Brahms' 1st Piano Concerto for a 1962 performance, in which Bernstein disavowed the concept of the performance in a spoken introduction to the audience!

A very special, although unfortunately rare, circumstance is when a soloist and conductor get together, and very little discussion is needed at all. It seems that whatever the soloist wants to do, the conductor wants to do the same thing, and vice versa. It's as if they are reading each others' minds. I can tell you that it has been my distinct pleasure to have had this experience with both Irina Muresanu and Wendy Warner in their past guest performances with the ESO. Our collaborations have been as though there was real mental telepathy between us. And so I wondered what it would be like if all three of us performed together...in Brahms' "Double" Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra. We are all about to find out, and I'm exploding with anticipation! 🎵

—Lawrence Eckerling
Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

Two World-Class Musicians—One Community Orchestra

The "Big Five" professional orchestras in the US are in New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and Cleveland, with other highly-respected orchestras in similar large urban locations like Los Angeles, Seattle, Washington, DC, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, and Salt Lake City. Smaller cities also boast good professional orchestras: Flagstaff, New Haven, Elgin, Fort Wayne, Louisville, Wheeling, Richmond, Madison, Coeur d'Alene and many others—but what about the rest of the country? Where can a talented, non-professional, amateur (in the true sense of the word meaning "lover") musician with a day job as an architect, police officer, cab driver, lawyer or even a highly-sought-after music teacher find a rewarding experience playing with other musicians? The answer, of course, is a community orchestra, and you can find them in the far-flung corners of the country. That being said, what brings two world-class musicians to the ESO, which, while not "far-flung," is still a community orchestra and not a professional one?

For Wendy Warner, Chicago is home, but that's only one attraction of the ESO. She says that when she first played with the ESO, in 2010, she felt good chemistry between herself and the orchestra and developed an excellent rapport with ESO Music Director Larry Eckerling. She

also sensed that the ESO had strong support from the community (including the best man in her parents' wedding!) and good outreach programs, so she was very happy to be asked back. "When I play with a community orchestra," she said, "I can feel free and can stretch myself." Irina Muresanu has similar feelings. "Boston has 30 or 40 community orchestras," she said, "and I think I've played with half of them!" She says that community orchestras are filled with wonderful musicians, often professionals who are doing other things. Irina finds community orchestras "incredibly interesting because people put a lot of love into them, which creates a certain atmosphere."

High praise indeed from two of the world's best musicians! You can read more about them on their websites at www.wendywarnercello.com and www.irinamuresanu.com and follow them both on Facebook.

Wendy and Irina last appeared with the ESO one concert apart in 2013. We are delighted to welcome these two extraordinarily talented musicians back to our stage—together! 🎵

—Kelly Brest van Kempen

Meet Two World-Class Musicians!

By Kelly Brest van Kempen



IRINA MURESANU

As a little girl in Romania, Irina Muresanu wanted to play the piano. Then her mother quite sensibly pointed out that you rarely see a piano in an orchestra, but there are many violins. Irina thus took up the violin at the ripe old age of six and a half, “old by nowadays standards” for becoming a serious violinist, she says. Irina had obvious talent, so she auditioned for a place in a school for children gifted in music. She passed the exercises in pitch, rhythm, singing in tune and other tests of her musical ability, but failed the physical: she was “too small and skinny.” Fortunately, her teacher intervened and Irina proved that even a small, skinny girl could make great music!

At 12, Irina and her classmates had to decide whether to continue in music. Half the students left the school, but Irina chose to stay and pursue her goal of becoming a professional musician. After college in Bucharest, Irina went to the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign for her master’s and then to the New England Conservatory, studying with famous French violinist, Michele Auclair, for her doctorate. She now teaches at the Boston Conservatory and the University of Maryland.

Many musicians have special routines before a performance. Irina has two. First: when she picks up her violin to warm up backstage, she doesn’t put it down until after her performance. Second: she takes the “obligatory pre-concert nap,” but that was BV—“Before Victor,” her delightful six-and-a-half-year-old son who is learning piano because “it’s good for his brain.”

Since she last performed with the ESO, Irina has “done a lot of playing” and made several recordings. One of those, released in 2015, features Boston composer Elena Ruehr, who dedicated several of the works to Irina; the CD made the first cut for the Grammys. Her current project, “Four Strings Around the World,” is inspired by folk music, but with a twist. Irina isn’t collecting actual folk songs. Rather, she’s looking for works by composers worldwide who draw inspiration from folk music; she has also commissioned pieces by an Indian composer based on ragas and wants to commission a Native American composer for the project.

Irina’s concert career continues to take her all over world. Since 2013, she has performed in Oregon, California, Hawaii, at the Newport, Rockport and Green Mountain Music Festivals, and with “just about every community orchestra around Boston!” She has also performed in The Netherlands, Belgium, and France, where she had her most interesting concert arrangement in St. Emilion—she was paid in wine!

As a child, Irina fell in love with music because of the way it tells a story by expressing emotions. As she grew, so did her understanding of music and her ability to express those emotions with her violin. Now this young woman once thought “too small and skinny” to become a musician is among the best violinists of our time. 🎻



WENDY WARNER

Wendy Warner grew up in Wilmette and started piano at four. When her older sister began lessons on a second instrument, the flute, Wendy declared that she wanted to play the violin. Her mother, however, convinced her that the cello would be a better choice. Wendy agreed but, at age six, wasn’t even sure what a cello was!

Wendy says that she didn’t “fall in love with the cello” right away, so she also continued with piano. She studied with the late Emilio del Rosario at the Music Institute of Chicago, even winning competitions, but wasn’t sure she could keep up both instruments. She remembers playing the Boccherini Cello Concerto with the North Shore Youth Orchestra at 11 and thinking how she could actually sing every note. The cello was then “it.” She started winning competitions at 14, played with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on WTTW, and began practicing even harder. She finally understood that this was to be her career.

As a teenager, Wendy traveled to Washington, DC, for master classes with the great cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, then conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra. Rostropovich also taught at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where Wendy studied after high school. She became a protégée of Rostropovich and, at just 18, won the Rostropovich International Competition in Paris.

Wendy credits Rostropovich with putting her on the right path for her career, but told us with a laugh that they first had some communication problems. She couldn’t understand his heavy Russian accent so he tried singing the various passages to show what he wanted her to do. When that didn’t work well, he thought she had a problem with pitch! Luckily, they worked it out and Rostropovich later invited Wendy to play the Vivaldi Double Concerto with him in Reims, France.

Since her last appearance with the ESO, Wendy has performed in Lima, Peru, and in Xiamen, China, where she’ll return in December. She’s also taking part in the Piatigorsky International Cello Festival this month in Los Angeles. Her latest recording project is the music of Chicago composer Mischa Zupko, which will appear on Chicago’s Cedille label in November.

Wendy has been teaching at Columbus State University in Georgia since 2010 and in 2013 was selected as CSU’s first endowed chair in cello. She very much enjoys teaching, although she has found that when she comes home, she can put her music away and concentrate on her family, which includes three-year-old Jeremy.

Wendy plays two cellos. The first, a gift from her grandmother, was made by Chicagoan Carl Becker in 1960. The second was made in Italy by Giuseppe Gagliano in 1772. While a fine instrument is a necessity, it cannot be brought to its best and highest purpose unless there is a remarkable talent coaxing it to life. That talent is Wendy Warner, considered one of the best cellists in the world. 🎻



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Lawrence Eckerling, Music Director

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- CHOPIN** Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor
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- PROKOFIEV** *Lt. Kije Suite*
- RACHMANINOFF** Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor
Jeffrey Biegel, Piano
- WILLIAMS** *Star Wars Symphonic Suite*

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- MOZART** *Ave Verum Corpus*
North Shore Choral Society
- MAHLER** Symphony No. 2 in C Minor “Resurrection”
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Soprano and Alto TBA