Maestro Lawrence Eckerling and the Evanston Symphony Orchestra will be joined by the dazzling violin soloist Chee-Yun for our opening concert on Sunday, October 26 in Beethoven's Violin Concerto. This is a change in both our soloist and repertoire from our original programming. Read all about it in Maestro Eckerling's new column "Behind the Scenes."

All three works on our concert were composed when each composer was in the prime of his life. Two of them were premiered in 1899 and became signature works for their creators. Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) was born into a Swedish-speaking family in the Russian Grand Duchy of Finland. He went to a Finnish-language school all through his teens and then began to study law at the university. He soon switched to music studies in Helsinki, Berlin, and Vienna. Sibelius wrote seven symphonies, a violin concerto, numerous tone poems and a large amount of chamber music, but Finlandia became one of his best known works. The genesis of this work was a melodrama that Sibelius had written to a poem by Finnish writer Zachria Topelius. Sibelius extracted six tableaus from this melodrama, ending with a movement called Finland Awakens. In 1900, Sibelius reworked this movement into an independent tone poem and changed the name to Finlandia.

Like Sibelius, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) wrote only one Violin Concerto, which was premiered in December of 1806. Beethoven had studied the violin as a young man and even made part of his living as an orchestral violist at the beginning of his career. Among the string works that he wrote there are ten violin sonatas and two charming romances for violin and orchestra. Unfortunately for Beethoven, the concerto was not well-received and despite severe revision by Beethoven of both the solo and orchestral parts, never gained popularity in his lifetime. Luckily for us, in 1844 Felix Mendelssohn conducted a concert where the 12-year-old violinist Joseph Joachim played the solo, and it has been popular ever since.

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) had a less auspicious start as a composer than either Sibelius or Beethoven. Two of his earlier jobs were bandmaster at the Worcester County Lunatic Asylum and music director of the Worcester Amateur Instrumental Music Society. From the mid-1880’s to the mid-1890’s he slowly built his reputation as a composer. Elgar’s Variations on an Original Theme (Op. 36), which was also premiered in 1899, has become his most popular major work, as well as the most analyzed and discussed. This piece, popularly known as the “Enigma Variations” is a theme and a set of fourteen variations which represent Elgar; his wife, and twelve of his close friends, including his publisher, Augustus Jaeger. Among the friends that you will hear are a cellist, a violinist, an incompetent pianist, and even a friend’s bulldog.

Welcome to our new season! We’re excited to share this music with you!

—Julie Westbrook
MEET OUR SOLOIST: CHEE-YUN

The Evanston Symphony’s violin soloist on our opening concert, Chee-Yun, was born in Korea into a large extended family. Her parents loved classical music and her mother wanted to study music, but in a male-dominated culture, she was not allowed to do so and remained a girl. So she broke with tradition. She saw to it that Chee-Yun and her sisters took music lessons, hoping that they would become music teachers.

Chee-Yun got used to crowds at an early age because her large family gathered often, which helped her as she toured the world. She enjoys becoming familiar with a variety of cultures. “I love to travel, and I've always been curious,” she says. But things don't always go smoothly. Such was the case in Caracas, Venezuela. “I was just about to launch into the recapitulation near the end of the first movement in the famous Bruch Concerto, and I finished a phrase with a big up-bow, but I lost control of the bow, I managed to catch it somehow. After the concert, the audience members complimented me on my circus catch, not realizing it was all an accident.”

—Luc Ceda

FEBRUARY CONCERT PRESENTING ONLY MUSIC “MADE IN AMERICA”

Our February 8, 2009 concert is one of the most eagerly awaited in many seasons. Maestro Eckart has assembled a program which covers our nation's musical history, starting with classics by Charles Ives and Samuel Barber, and then presenting the Illness premiere of Joseph Schwantner’s “Chasing Light...,” part of FORD MADE IN AMERICA made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund. This is the largest orchestral commissioning consortium in the nation's history. Mr. Schwantner, a Chicago native with a doctorate from Northwestern University, will be in attendance for this premiere. Introducing Chasing Light... will be local favorite Henry Fogel, past president of both the League of American Orchestras and of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The second half of the concert will feature the compositions of violin virtuoso Mark O’Connor. He will appear as soloist in the final movement of his Fiddle Concert and in his “Fanfare for the Volunteer.” Also featured is Mark O’Connor’s greatest hit, his “Appalachia Waltz” in its string orchestra arrangement. His fusion of bluegrass, country, and jazz styles with the classical symphony orchestra has resulted in sold-out houses throughout America, and season subscribers are the only ones assured of having their reserved seats for this February “Made-in-America” special.

AN EVANSTON SYMPHONY CHRISTMAS

The annual An Evanston Symphony Christmas, sponsored by the Evanston Investment firm Romano Brothers & Co., brings you another exciting program of festive music, vocals and dance to usher in your holiday season. It’s the best Yule celebration in Evanston and will leave you humming and singing all the way home. Our media sponsor for this must-see, must-hear concert is Pioneer Press.

The Evanston Symphony Festival Chorus will fill the hall with traditional holiday music, lead an audience sing-a-long and join in a big Hanukkah Choir finale. Evanston Dance Ensemble returns to perform several beautiful dances from Tchakovsky’s The Nutcracker. And, of course, what would Christmas be without Santa?


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Since 1962, Romano Brothers & Co. has provided professional investment services to individuals, corporations, trusts and foundations. Since inception, not only have they been dedicated to enriching the lives of their clients, but they also continue to be committed to supporting the community in which they work. For the past five years, Romano Brothers & Co. has proudly sponsored the Evanston Symphony Orchestra’s annual Christmas concert.

“We pride ourselves on the fact that our portfolio managers and staff extend themselves into the community,” said Joe Romano, President. This year, Joe became a board member of the Evanston Chamber of Commerce. Other members of the firm are active in Evanston, Evanston Library, McGraw YMCA, Evanston Community Foundation, local churches and many other groups.

The philosophy of investing in our community is born out of the firm’s solid, unchanged investment philosophy. “All of our portfolio managers develop personal relationships with their clients and build solid, value-driven portfolios. We never advocate buying fades or trends. Our focus is to reduce volatility and increase profit,” stated Joe Romano.

Romano Brothers & Co. employs seven portfolio managers with an average of 20 years of investment experience. The firm manages $850 million in assets and continues to grow steadily. To read more about the firm visit www.romanobrothers.org.
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October 26, 2008

The Voluptuous Violin

Sibelius Finlandia

Beethoven Violin Concerto—Chee-Yun, violin

Elgar Enigma Variations

February 8, 2009

Made in America

Pain of the Fiddle

Ives Variations on “America”

Schwartzmayer Chasing Light...

O’Connor The Fiddle Concerto (finale) — Mark O’Connor, Appalachian Waltz classical violin/fiddle

Fantasy for the Volunteer

March 22, 2009

The Voice of the Viola

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto

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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 music@evanstonsymphony.org. Visit our website evanstonsymphony.org.

REMINDER!

MUSICAL INSIGHTS
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2008, 1:30 PM

CONCERT PERFORMANCE
CHEE-YUN, VIOLIN
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2008, 2:30 PM