Our Season of “Spectacular Sounds” concludes with a program of Russian music, notable for its colorful orchestration and its use of folk tunes. The concert opens with actual Russian folk-songs, eight in total, which were orchestrated by Anatol Liadov (1855–1914), a composer renowned for his laziness. This 15 minute piece may be his longest completed composition. Liadov’s most famous non-composition was for a commission offered by the ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev in 1910; when Liadov declined the opportunity for The Firebird it became the first major success for Igor Stravinsky.

Stravinsky (1882–1971) was doubtlessly the most important ballet composer of the 20th century, and he followed his career breakthrough of The Firebird with the 1911 ballet which concludes our concert: Petrushka. This was the first ballet in which the music preceded and therefore controlled the choreography. Stravinsky incorporated two recent short works for piano and orchestra into the new ballet, which resulted in a very important part for the orchestral piano, to be played in our performance by Gregory Shifrin. In 1947 Stravinsky revised the orchestration, expanding the piano part while reducing the number of orchestral players required, and this is the version to be heard at our concert.

Petrushka, or little Peter, was a stock figure in Russian puppet shows, and the ballet tells the story of a love triangle between Petrushka, the Ballerina, and the Moor set against the backdrop of the Shrovetide Fair, the Russian version of Mardi Gras. The major theme of the finale is actually a folk-song titled “Down the Petersky,” once recorded by the great Russian bass Fyodor Chaliapin. Stravinsky also used two waltz melodies by Joseph Lanner, a contemporary of Johann Strauss the Elder. However, the usage and orchestration of this material is vintage Stravinsky.

The center-piece of the program is the extremely virtuosic violin concerto of Peter Tchaikovsky (1840–1893). Unlike the other two works on the program, Tchaikovsky did not borrow any of his themes from folk music, but was still vilified for the “brutal and wretched jollity of a Russian kermess,” a reference to the folk-dance quality of the finale. The same reviewer, Eduard Hanslick, concluded “Tchaikovsky’s violin concerto brings us for the first time to the horrid idea that there may be music that stinks in the ear.” Today, of course, this is possibly the most popular violin concerto in the repertoire. Tchaikovsky composed the concerto in 1878 in less than a month in Clarens, Switzerland, the same town in which Stravinsky composed Petrushka.

I trust that you have enjoyed this spectacular season, and our upcoming 65th Anniversary will truly be a season to celebrate. See the flap on this issue of Keynotes for all of the exciting details plus an order form. All orders received by the close of the May 2 concert will not incur the handling charge!

—David Ellis
PLAY ME A PICTURE, PAINT ME A TUNE!

What do 12 years old hear in classical music? Come and see. For 10 years now, the ESO has run a creative music-at-program that serves about 450 middle and elementary school students in District 65. This program, Paint Me a Picture, Paint Me a Tune!, enables students to establish connections between different art forms. Inspired by a piece of music that will be performed at one of our concerts, each student creates a work of art and writes about their creative experience. Students receive free tickets to the ESO concert to experience a live performance of the music they studied and to see their art on display.

This year, the music is Lazar’s Eight Russian Folksongs. The schools and teachers participating are:— McCay YMCA— Lincolnwood Elementary, teacher is Monica Yee— Naven Middle School, teachers are Dan Engh and Denise Taylor— Nichols Middle School, teachers are Nina Benson and Nicole Nava— St. Athanasius, teacher is Mary Ryter

You can see the pictures on display at Blilk Art Materials on Maple Street in downtown Evanston and also in the lobby of Pick-Staiger Hall before this coming concert.

Congratulations to all the students who participated.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ESO LONG-TERM PLAYERS

At the March 21, 2010 concert, the Evanston Symphony proudly recognized four musicians who have performed with the ESO for over 40 seasons. In addition to these four valued players, the ESO wishes to recognize the following musicians for their 20 or more seasons of great performances with the ESO!

Lélias Circle (cello)—49 years
H. Frederick Greene (French horn)—44 years
Linda Kober (clarinet)—44 years
Lynn Malteckoff (violin)—42 years
Michael Papiernik (French horn)—37 years
Gloria Royell (violin)—36 years
Ellen Morris (violin)—36 years
Nancy Robertson (French horn)—35 years
Edwin Bennett (cello)—33 years
John Timpani (piano)—29 years
Karen Ragan (violin)—27 years
Anna Zie Cohen-Helfman (bass)—26 years
Donald Draganski (bassoon)—26 years
Guil Brest van Kemenen (vihuela)—24 years
Cathy Carr (violin)—24 years

IRINA MURESANU

When she was 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 lots of violins. With that observation, Irina 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 and a year later auditioned for a place in a school for children gifted in music. She passed the exercises in pitch, rhythm, singing in tune and all of the other things designed to test her musical ability, but failed the physical because she was “too small and skinny.” Fortunately, her teacher inter- vened and Irina was able to prove to the school authorities that even a small, skinny girl was capable of making great music.

At age 12, Irina and her classmates had to decide whether or not to continue in music. Fifty percent of the students left the school, but Irina chose to stay and pursue her goal of becoming a professional musician. After college in Bucharest, Irina came to the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign for her mas- ter’s degree. From there she went to the New England Conservatory, where she studied for five years with famous French violinist, Michèle Audin. (In fact, Irina is one of only two students mentioned by name as “prominent figures” in Ms. Audin’s 2005 obituary in the Boston Globe.) Irina is a member of the Conservatory’s faculty and has recently finished her doctoral degree. She also teaches at Harvard. (You can read more about her stellar career and numerous awards on her website at www.irinamuresanu.com.)

Many musicians have certain routines that they follow before a performance. Irina has two: the first is that when she picks up her violin to warm up backstage, she doesn’t put it down until she leaves the stage after her performance; the second is what she calls the “obligatory pre-concert nap,” but that was “BV” — “Before Victor,” her son who was born that past year. Naps may be shorter now, if not a thing of the past, but Irina says that, along with napping, lifting helps her to stay in shape. Best of all, Victor seems to love listening to his mother play her violin, which is a good thing because Irina loves to practice. In fact, she doesn’t like to leave her music for vacations; for Irina, the ideal vaca- tion is being able to practice six hours a day!

Irina says that, as a child, she fell in love with music because of the way it tells a story by expressing emotions. As she grew, she did her understanding of music and her ability to express its emotions with her violin. Now this young woman once thought “too small and skinny” to become a musician is among the best of her generation, and we are delighted to welcome her back to our stage.

—Earl Brest van Kampen

FREE CONCERT

Don’t miss the free outdoor concert Sunday, June 27 at 2:00 pm on the North side of Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Center by Crate & Barrel.

Music is “Light Classical and Broadway Favorites,” sure to delight the whole family. Rain date June 29 at 6:30 pm, at the same location.

IRINA MURESANU

Violin

BEHIND THE SCENES

One of the benefits of being the music director of an orchestra is the opportunity to collaborate with many guest artists. I have been privileged here at the ESO to work with artists of the highest caliber. These collaborations are both inspiring and rewarding.

We offer soloists from three basic categories. We have featured musicians from within the ESO (four times in the last seven years). And we also present soloists both from the greater Chicago area, as well as from the rest of the country.

Sometimes, the collaborations are so special, and the audience response is so enthusiastic that there is little choice but to invite them back for more. For this upcoming concert, Irina Muresanu is returning with the famous Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto after an incredibly moving Brahms Concerto a few years ago. And next season, soprano Michelle Anzagna returns in Mahler’s 4th Symphony, as well as the world premiere of a brand new song cycle written for her by the Evanston Virtuosi.

Also returning next season is the North Shore Choral Society, with their new Music Director Julia David, in Beethoven’s monumental Ninth, or “Choral,” Symphony. I look forward to working with many more guest artists, and many more encore engagements.

—Lawrence Eckerling

Music Director
Evanston Symphony Orchestra

NEW ESO SUBSCRIBER

INDIVIDUAL CONCERT TICKETS

DON’T MISS THE FREE OUTDOOR CONCERT SUNDAY, JUNE 27 AT 2:00 PM ON THE NORTH SIDE OF WESTFIELD OLD ORCHARD SHOPPING CENTER BY CRATE & BARREL.

FESTIVAL SONGS

For all concerts: Adult $27 Child $10 Family Package $70 
For family package special: tickets for 2 adults & 3 children

Concert #1 #2 #3 #4

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$__________ ORCHESTRA OF THE YEAR

Our beautiful new home! The ESO Orchestra of the Year Award is reflective of this effort. It is the hard work of our music director, our musicians, our boards and our administration. The award is reflective of this effective teamwork.

—Lawrence Eckerling

Music Director
Evanston Symphony Orchestra

IRINA MURESANU

Violin

IRINA MURESANU

Violin

90s. We send our condolences to her family.

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CONCERT SERIES:

The ESO 2010-2011 Season:

Opening Concert: September 24, 2010

Concerts:

September 24, 2010

October 23, 2010

November 20, 2010

December 18, 2010

February 18, 2011

March 18, 2011

May 6, 2011

June 18, 2011

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SMALL ENSEMBLE CONCERTS:

The ESO will present five smaller ensembles, each with a different focus:

* First Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Pick-Staiger Concert Hall
* Second Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Evanston Public Library
* Third Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Evanston Community Center
* Fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Evanston High School
* Last Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Evanston Armory

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(please use phone or mail order for orders with children’s tickets.)
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Evanston Symphony Orchestra, PO Box 778, Evanston, IL. 60204

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COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA OF THE YEAR!
—Illinois Council of Orchestras

TRIPLE CELEBRATION
OCTOBER 24, 2010
Lawrence Eckering, Conductor

BRACHM Academic Festival Overture

BEETHOVEN “Triple” Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano in C Major
The Lincoln Trio

TCHEAKOVSKY Symphony No. 4 in F Minor

SONGS OF HEAVEN
JANUARY 30, 2011
Lawrence Eckering, Conductor

PUCCINI Preludio Sinfonico

WALKER The Promised Land
(Songs of the Next Life)

MAHLER Symphony No. 4 in G Major

BEETHOVEN’S 9TH MARCH 13, 2011
Lawrence Eckering, Conductor

BEETHOVEN Leonore Overture No. 3

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, "Choral"
North Shore Choral Society
Sarah Hibbard, Soprano
Stacy Eckert, Mezzo Soprano
Eric Ascherfield, Tenor
Paul Grizzell, Bass Baritone

RHAPSODY IN BLUE MAY 8, 2011
Lawrence Eckering, Conductor

BERNSTein Overture to Candide
Suite from Candide

HANSON Marry, Mount Suite

COPLAND Appalachian Spring

GERSHWIN Rhapsody in Blue
Lawrence Eckering,
Pianist and Conductor