



# KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

## Verdi Requiem

Our season concludes with one of the most popular and spectacular choral/orchestral works ever composed, the 1874 Requiem of Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901). The North Shore Choral Society will supply about 150 singers, and the Evanston Symphony will be augmented by four extra off-stage trumpets (plus four trumpets in the ESO itself) and a very important bass drum. And of course Verdi calls for four vocal soloists with full operatic qualities and vocal ranges.

The Requiem has somewhat flippantly been called “Verdi’s greatest opera,” and its theatrical and melodic qualities lend some credence to this description. However, it is written within the form of the Latin mass for the Dead, and thus that form must be respected in performance. What this means for the audience is that the 90 minute work is presented as a whole without an intermission, and that the first point at which latecomers may be admitted is at the end of the *Dies Irae*, about 50 minutes into the piece. So please do not be late!


This Requiem is sometimes referred to as the “Manzoni Requiem,” because Verdi composed it in memory of Alessandro Manzoni, his fellow Italian patriot and the author of one of the greatest novels ever written in Italian — *I Promessi Sposi* (*The Betrothed*). However, Verdi had actually composed one movement of a requiem in memory of Rossini in 1868, but this requiem was not performed. Verdi took his *Libera me* from the Rossini Requiem and revised it extensively for the Manzoni Requiem, for which it serves as the dramatic finale for solo soprano and chorus. Verdi composed six new movements to precede the *Libera me*: the *Kyrie*, *Dies Irae*, *Offertorio*, *Sanctus*, *Anus Dei*, and *Lux aeterna*, of which the *Dies Irae* is by far the longest.

JUNE 15, 2014

2:30 PM

PICK-STAIGER CONCERT HALL

*This concert has no intermission.  
Latecomer seating about halfway through program.*

Each of the four vocal soloists has an important solo during the piece, and all of them unite in various duets, trios and quartets, both with and without the chorus. The chorus has its moment in the brassy *Sanctus*, which does not feature the soloists. There are only a few passages which unite all four soloists plus the complete chorus, the most striking of which is the *Lacrymosa*, which uses music which Verdi had cut from his 1867 opera *Don Carlo*. The opera which immediately preceded the Requiem was *Aida* (1871), and it is noteworthy that Verdi used the *Aida* and *Amneris* from the premiere of *Aida* as his soprano and mezzo-soprano for the Requiem. He also used the tenor and bass from *Aida* for later performances of the Requiem, showing that the “Verdi’s greatest opera” description of the Requiem may be supportable. 

—David Ellis



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### MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2014

1:30 PM

1611 CHICAGO AVENUE,  
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The  
**North Shore**  
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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. 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@evanston\\_symphony.org](mailto:esomusic@evanston_symphony.org). Visit our website [evanston\\_symphony.org](http://evanston_symphony.org).

# BEHIND THE SCENES



## The Difference between Choral and Orchestral Conducting

As I became interested in music, the progression of my interest was piano, then chorus, then musical theater, and then symphonic music and opera. Having experience as a choir member and studying voice as a student has supplied a firm foundation for choral conducting.

When asked what is the difference between conducting chorus vs. orchestra, my first instinctive answer is, "There is no difference. Music is music, and conducting is conducting." And then I actually have to think about that answer. Is it really true?

What about the conductor's gestures? Are the beats the same? They should be! 4/4 time is 4/4 time no matter who you are conducting. One might ask, "Aren't the conductor's physical gestures different when conducting singers vs. instrumentalists?" Yes they are. But a conductor's physical gesture is also different conducting a string section vs. conducting a wind or brass section. Because conductors need to make slight alterations in their technical approach all the time, the small changes required for a chorus simply fit in with the other alterations.

What about the attack and release of a note? A clarinet, trumpet, violin, and chorus member all have a specific way that a note must start and a note must end.

What about the conductor's personality? Does the conductor's demeanor change in front of an orchestra vs. being in front of a chorus? Sometimes it is different, but it is not necessary to be different.

What about the kind of verbal instructions that a conductor gives? Just like there are gestures unique to each instrument (and unique to a singer), there are also verbal instructions unique to each instrument or singer. The conductor won't talk about bowings to a chorus, but the conductor won't talk about bowings to a percussionist either.

Everything I have written above does support the position of my first instinct, that conducting is conducting. But there are a few areas which are truly different, and not just small differences between instruments.

The most important of these is text. Choruses are primarily singing words, and these words have a specific meaning which becomes married to the notes they are singing. Instrumental music has meaning too, but its meanings are

less obvious without the words, so frequently meaning is imagined by and implanted into the music by the performer. With singers, the meaning is literal, and undeniable. Conductors must understand the meaning of those words in order to understand and conduct the music properly. But more than just "meaning," words have vowel sounds. And vowel sounds are the sounds that singers sing their notes to. And each time a new vowel sound changes, so does the sound of the chorus. And those sounds change dramatically and constantly, much more dramatically than any instrument in the orchestra can.

I have just described most of the similarities, and one major difference between conducting instrumental music and choral music. But an equally important question is, "What about conducting a chorus AND an orchestra together?" This is an area which is extremely difficult even for the conductor to understand and get used to, but I will try to explain. The area has to do with "time." Most orchestras don't play exactly on the beat. Sometimes the players come in a little later than the beat, and sometimes a lot later than the beat. It's complicated because it can vary from orchestra to orchestra. It varies according to the conductor's beat. It can vary according to how loud or accented the beat is supposed to sound (the greater the accent, the closer to the beat they play). It's also complicated by the fact that the lowest instruments of the orchestra, such as trombones and tuba, and string basses, take a longer time for their sound to materialize after they "play their note." And because they are in the back of the orchestra, it can take even a longer time for the note to sound. On the other hand, choruses ALWAYS sing exactly and precisely ON THE BEAT. Always. And it never changes. Somehow, a conductor must give a single gesture which gets everyone to play and sing at exactly the same time, despite the tendencies described above. It's why conducting chorus and orchestra together is so difficult, and it's why conducting opera is the most difficult of all.

How is it possible then that all of those different elements come together? Because the single most important element in a musical performance that holds everything together is... (not the conductor!!!) but each performer's ability to listen! And through listening, they sing and play as an ensemble. And if a conductor can get his/her forces to listen to each other, it can be the most glorious and rewarding of performances. 🎵

—Lawrence Eckerling  
Music Director,  
Evanston Symphony Orchestra

### DON'T BE LATE! NO INTERMISSION!

Due to the special nature of the Verdi Requiem, the work will be performed without an intermission. In addition, the earliest point in the work which allows for late seating is at the end of the *Dies Irae*, which will occur about 50 minutes after the start of the music. Please arrive on time in order to avoid waiting in the lobby until the end of the *Dies Irae*.

# 69th Season Features Midwest Premiere of Weinberg *Rhapsody on Moldavian Themes*

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra's 69th season will feature four subscription concerts, all conducted by Music Director Lawrence Eckerling, who was recently named as "Conductor of the Year for 2014" by the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

The season opens on October 26, 2014 with a program titled *Russian Rhapsodies* highlighted by the Midwest premiere of the *Rhapsody on Moldavian Themes* by the Russian-Polish composer Mieczyslaw Weinberg. Weinberg composed this **exciting, folk infused** work just after World War II to honor his Moldavian-Jewish heritage. The program also features local pianist Kate Liu as soloist in Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. The concert will conclude with the Fifth Symphony of Prokofiev, which reflects the optimism felt near the end of World War II as well as Prokofiev's intention to "glorify the human spirit."

The February 1, 2015 *German Favorites* program features renowned soprano Michelle Areyzaga singing her first ever performance of Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, his tribute to the soprano voice. This concert also includes Brahms' Third Symphony and the sonorous and brassy Overture to *Tannhäuser* by Wagner.

The *American Romantics* program on March 15 includes the Symphony No. 2 "Romantic" by Howard Hanson (familiar as the film score for *Alien*), and the Violin Concerto of Samuel Barber, as well as Copland's *El Salón México*. Local favorite violinist Desirée Ruhstrat will play the solos in both the Barber Concerto and in Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*, in its version for solo violin, strings and percussion.

An all-orchestral concert will end the season on April 26 with the Symphony No. 40 in G Minor of Mozart and a Symphonic Suite of extended excerpts from Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake*. All of the selections will be taken from Tchaikovsky's original 1877 score and will include more of this richly symphonic score than just the dances performed in the standard *Swan Lake Suite*.

All concerts are on Sunday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall in Evanston. 📶

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To learn more about Westminster Place or **choices** visit [www.presbyterianhomes.org/choices](http://www.presbyterianhomes.org/choices) or call (855) 607-8451. 📶

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## 2014-2015 CONCERT SERIES

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### Russian Rhapsodies

October 26, 2014

WEINBERG *Rhapsody on Moldavian Themes*

RACHMANINOFF *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*  
Kate Liu, Piano

PROKOFIEV *Symphony No. 5 in Bb Major*



### German Favorites

February 1, 2015

BRAHMS *Symphony No. 3 in F Major*

R. STRAUSS *Four Last Songs*  
Michelle Areyzaga, Soprano

WAGNER *Overture to Tannhäuser*



### American Romantics

March 15, 2015

COPLAND *El Salón México*

PÄRT *Fratres for Violin and Orchestra*  
Desiree Ruhstrat, Violin

BARBER *Violin Concerto*  
Desiree Ruhstrat, Violin

HANSON *Symphony No. 2 "Romantic"*



### Swan Lake & Mozart

April 26, 2015

MOZART *Symphony No. 40 in G Minor*

TCHAIKOVSKY *Swan Lake Symphonic Suite*



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Preferred Seating \*second price shown is Preferred Seating area price  
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