



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Brahms 4

Welcome to the opening concert of the ESO's renewed 75th season, unfortunately delayed by a full year due to the Covid-19 virus. The opposite side of this page provides a personal view from our Music Director, Maestro Lawrence Eckerling, of what it means to finally be returning to live performances. Our November 7 concert at Evanston Township High School will actually be our second concert since we were forced to suspend performances in March 2020; the ESO played a highly successful free outdoor concert on August 30 at the Wallace Bowl in Wimetette's Gillson Park (see inside for more details).

The pandemic has caused a number of new policies to be implemented in the interests of the health and safety of our attendees and our players. Please review these policies on the outside flap of this Keynotes. Also, please note that this first concert, on November 7, will be performed in the Auditorium of Evanston Township High School, 1600 Dodge Avenue. Parking is free to the east and to the west of the High School. Seating is unreserved (first come-first served) and the doors to the Auditorium will open at 2:00 PM.

If you have subscription tickets your seat locations for the three remaining concerts, all at Pick-Staiger Hall at Northwestern University, will also be printed on your November 7 tickets. However, November 7 seating is truly non-reserved.

The program selected by Maestro Eckerling for this concert of renewal features three masterpieces composed during the period 1844–1885.

The Overture to *Die Meistersinger* by Richard Wagner (1813–1883) opens our concert, just as it opened the first concert conducted by Maestro Eckerling in October 2003 after he was named Music Director. Alex Ross' recent book *Wagnerism* summarizes the impact of Wagner: "Wagner's effect on music was enormous, but it did not exceed that of Monteverdi, Bach, or Beethoven. His effect on neighboring arts was, however, unprecedented. And it has not been equaled since, even in the popular arena." *Die Meistersinger* is the only comedy of Wagner's ten mature

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7
— 2:30 PM

BRAHMS 4

**SPECIAL
CONCERT LOCATION**
Evanston Township
High School
Auditorium
Unassigned
Seating

operas, and its overture combines its principal themes in a masterful fashion.

The program continues with the 1844 Violin Concerto of Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847); see the profile of our superb soloist Arnaud Sussmann inside. This work is perhaps the most popular of all violin concerti, and its appeal was aptly summarized by the eminent Joseph Joachim in 1906: "The Germans have four violin concertos. The greatest, the most uncompromising, is Beethoven's. The one by Brahms vies with it in seriousness. The richest, the most seductive, was written by Max Bruch. But the most inward, the heart's jewel, is Mendelssohn's."

Our concert concludes with the Symphony No. 4 of Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), his final and for many commentators his greatest symphony. Brahms himself conducted the 1885 premiere of the Fourth with the superb orchestra of Meiningen, Germany. The orchestra was prepared by its Music Director, Hans von Bülow, who had conducted the premiere of *Die Meistersinger* 17 years previously. The Fourth Symphony was received rapturously throughout Germany in 1885, but perhaps its greatest ovation was in March 1897 in Vienna, when Brahms appeared in public for the last time. 📻

—David Ellis



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INSIGHTS

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2021
1:30 PM

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THE MERION



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BEHIND THE SCENES



It was Tuesday, March 10, 2020. Frequent guest artist and violinist Irina Muresanu was with the Evanston Symphony at Pick Staiger for our first rehearsal together in Prokofiev's G Minor Concerto (No. 2). It was a terrific rehearsal as usual. By Wednesday morning, there were rumblings that events all around us were being cancelled due to some virus that was making people sick. Ms. Muresanu and I had taken the posture that if the concert was happening, we were both "in." At the same time, I started hearing from orchestra players and ESO Board members. Some were extremely concerned, others wanted to play. They were all looking to me to make a decision, and I just couldn't make one alone, and felt completely torn. The ESO was ready for Sunday's concert, and naturally I wanted to play. Irina was of the same mindset. We decided to keep our one on one violin and piano rehearsal scheduled for Thursday. It was a fantastic rehearsal. So much fun. We both got completely on the same page with the music. By the time I got home from that late morning rehearsal, I no longer had the burden of making a decision, because I got the call that Pick Staiger would probably not be available, and Northwestern was shutting down so Saturday's dress rehearsal and Sunday's concert would not be taking place. We were hugely disappointed, but thought maybe Friday's Musical Insights program could still take place. But by Thursday night, that was cancelled as well. The effects of the shut down were in full force.

One of the reasons I chose to become a conductor was because of my love, my NEED, to interact with other people while I was making music. In what felt like an instant, it was stripped away. Sure, I could practice the piano. I could make videos and put them on Facebook. I could use some apps, record videos of my part first, and let other people record later. But there was no breathing

together with other musicians. There was no listening to someone else and reacting. There were no micro-adjustments in real time. These are all things that are constantly happening in music that we all take for granted. It became painfully obvious how necessary those elements are in performing music. It is all so necessary, and it was all taken away from me. From US. And these comments are just about interacting with other musicians. There is also of course the interaction with an audience too, and everything that goes with that. But that, too, was gone.

What followed from Thursday, March 12, 2020, through July 13, 2021, was 16 months of an emptiness. Of hoping. Of planning. Of replanning. And replanning again. And again. And finally, the Evanston Symphony convened for the first time on July 13th, (rehearsing for a summer pops concert in August.) At once, all of the things that were depleted in our lives were back once again. That night was magical. And we ALL felt it. The rehearsal cycle continued, each rehearsal as wonderful as the one before. Our concert took place on August 30th, the night after a rain postponement, at the beautiful Wallace Bowl in Wimetts's Gillson Park. That communication between the ESO and an audience was equally magical. We were back. Our upcoming season, our renewed 75th Anniversary season is taking place. We will take nothing for granted, and we are grateful for the opportunity to make music with each other, and for you, our loyal audience. Our first rehearsal just took place on September 28th. We are excited, and can't wait to perform for you again, starting on November 7th. We live in a different world now, but the necessity of making live music, and of hearing it performed live will never stop. It can't. It won't. 🎵

—Lawrence Eckerling
Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra



Musical Insights

A free pre-concert event at The Merion
Friday, November 5, 1:30 PM

Enhance your concert experience with a sneak preview. Composers come alive and their passions take center stage when ESO General Manager David Ellis and ESO Maestro Lawrence Eckerling take you on an insider's tour of the history and highlights behind the music. Arnaud Sussmann is the featured violin soloist at the upcoming concert.

He is a thrilling young musician capturing the attention of classical critics and audiences around the world. He will play excerpts from Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto as well as something special for this event.

The Merion provides refreshments at this free event. 🎵

 THE MERION



In Memoriam

Joshua Sachs

Joshua Sachs, a devoted member of the cello section since 2004, sadly passed away in late 2020, after the ESO had suspended performances due to Covid. Joshua was devoted to

the ESO and particularly loved playing the music of Mahler and Dvořák. He was also highly active with the Savoyaires, Evanston's Gilbert & Sullivan light opera company. 🎵

Meet our November Soloist, Arnaud Sussmann



Arnaud Sussmann was born in the historic French city of Strasbourg, but spent much of his childhood in Nice on the Mediterranean, where his parents moved when he was nine months old. Arnaud began piano lessons at five and violin at seven, eventually choosing the violin over the piano. "It was clearly more to my liking," he said, adding that the violin was a physical thing, almost an extension of himself—and he had talent and loved practicing! He counts himself fortunate that he "never had to think about choosing music over anything else. It was just there."

France has a special educational program for talented young musicians: mornings at a *lycée* (high school) for standard classes and afternoons at a conservatory for music. Because of his talent, Arnaud went from Nice to Lyon and then for a year at the Paris Conservatory to study with Russian violinist Boris Garlitsky, finally ending up at Juilliard, but more by serendipity than planning.

After his first year in Paris, Arnaud attended a summer session at the Perlman Music Program on Shelter Island, New York, where he studied with Itzhak Perlman. When Arnaud's father came to pick up his son in July, they were approached by Mr. and Mrs. Perlman and had a conversation that changed Arnaud's life. The next few weeks were a whirlwind of activity and events: Arnaud applied to and was promptly accepted at Juilliard, took leave from the Paris Conservatory, flew to New York, and had been enjoying his new city for a mere two weeks when

9/11 happened. He describes the entire summer and fall of 2001 as a "crazy time."


Arnaud studied at Juilliard with Itzhak Perlman and, in 2006, was named a Starling Fellow, an honor which allowed him to be Mr. Perlman's teaching assistant for two years. He was also winner of several major international competitions, including the Andrea Postacchini of Italy and Vatelot/Rampal of France.

Since his days at Juilliard, Arnaud Sussmann has had a robust career in performing and recording. He has performed with many of today's leading artists including Itzhak Perlman, Menahem Pressler, Gary Hoffman, Shmuel Ashkenazi, Wu Han, David Finckel, Jan Vogler and members of the Emerson String Quartet. He has worked with conductors such as Cristian Macelaru, Marcelo Lehninger, Rune Bergmann and Leon Botstein. A dedicated chamber musician, he has been a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center since 2006 and has regularly appeared with them in New York and on tour, including a recent concert at London's Wigmore Hall. Arnaud says that his chamber music colleagues are great teachers and mentors; he makes special mention of pianist Wu Han and cellist David Finckel at Lincoln Center and of violinist Pamela Frank, who teaches at Stony Brook University on Long Island, where Arnaud is currently Artist-in-Residence. For more on his performance and recording achievements, visit his website at arnaudsussmann.com.

Arnaud and his wife, a video producer who is also French, have made their home in New York City. When we asked him what he liked about living in New York, he said that he

loves the city—except for the noise, of course—because everything is so convenient; you can get anything you want within a few blocks. That being said, the early days of the pandemic in New York were a scary time. Arnaud came down with COVID as did his wife, who had the virus on the day in April of 2020 that she gave birth to their son, Nathan. If the lockdown can be said to have a positive side, however, Arnaud got to spend a year at home with his new baby, a luxury most first-time fathers don't have. In addition to being father to Nathan (who is "so funny! He cracks me up!"), Arnaud enjoys reading, running in Central Park and, of course, playing and listening to as much classical music as he can.

Arnaud is now able to resume his concert touring and his teaching position at Stony Brook, where he also counts pianist Gilbert Kalish as a mentor. He is Co-Artistic Director, along with Kalish, of Music@Menlo's International Music Program and was recently named Artistic Director of the Chamber Society of Palm Beach in Florida, where he enjoys being on the "presenter" side of performances. And, Arnaud Sussmann is apparently here to stay: he became an American citizen this year.

Minnesota's Pioneer Press wrote that "Sussmann has an old-school sound reminiscent of what you'll hear on vintage recordings by Jascha Heifetz or Fritz Kreisler, a rare combination of sweet and smooth that can hypnotize a listener. His clear tone [is] a thing of awe-inspiring beauty, his phrasing spellbinding." Come hear this exciting young artist in concert with the Evanston Symphony on November 7th at ETHS. 


—Kelly Brest van Kempen

Lakeside Pops Concert

The full Evanston Symphony Orchestra celebrated returning to performances this summer with a free outdoor concert at the Wallace Bowl in Wilmette's Gillson Park. On a beautiful Monday evening, the ESO played an hour of Summer Pops music of light classics, Broadway show tunes and movie soundtracks, highlighted by the beloved theme from *Schindler's List* performed by the ESO Concertmaster, Julie Fischer, and concluding with the ever-popular *1812 Overture* by Tchaikovsky.

Over 750 people turned up with picnics, families, and smiles to enjoy the live music and the lovely lakeside setting. The ESO would like to thank our sponsor, Byline



Bank, and also our community partner, Baker Demonstration School, who provided activities for children before and during the concert. 

Health & Safety

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra (ESO) has adopted protocols to protect your health and safety at performances. These policies are in effect as of September 2021 for 2021–2022 ESO subscription series concerts and will be reviewed regularly to follow the latest public health mandates and recommendations. Additional protocols will be developed for the ESO's holiday concert as soon as practicable.

- Proof of Vaccination Required
- Mask Requirement
- Distancing
- Risk Assumption
- Exchange Policy

Proof of Vaccination Required

ESO Patrons are required to show proof of full COVID-19 vaccination upon arrival at all performances. A negative COVID-19 test will NOT be accepted as a substitute for proof of full vaccination.

A physical vaccination card, photocopy, or photo of a vaccination card (such as a picture on your phone), or documentation from *Illinois Department of Public Health Vax Verify*, can be presented for entry. In addition, a valid photo ID must also be presented for verification.

We regret that children under 12 will not be allowed to attend subscription concerts at this time, as they are not eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. The ESO will update this restriction as more guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) becomes available regarding vaccination of children under 12.

Mask Requirement

Patrons are required to wear face coverings at all times, including while seated during the performance. Face coverings should be worn properly, covering the nose and mouth, and meet CDC standards. Neck gaiters and bandanas are not permitted. Patrons arriving without appropriate face coverings will be provided a disposable face mask.

Distancing

The 100% audience vaccination requirement allows the ESO to operate at full audience capacity at both the ETHS Auditorium and at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall. As such, there will not be physical distancing between parties in either venue.

Risk Assumption

All patrons understand that there is a risk of exposure to COVID-19 in any public place where people are present. Those purchasing tickets and attending ESO concerts voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.

Exchange Policy

Patrons who are not feeling well, are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms, or have had or been exposed to COVID-19 in the past 14 days, should not attend ESO performances. If you are unable to attend a performance, you are encouraged to contact the ESO at esomusic@evanstonSymphony.org or call (847) 864-8804 for exchange options. 📶



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

3:00 PM

**EVANSTON TOWNSHIP
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

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*Health & Safety Protocols for the
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The ESO thanks you for your support. All contributions are tax deductible and will be listed in the concert program.

For more information on ESO concerts and events, please contact us, at (847) 864-8804 or visit evanstonstringsymphony.org.