



# KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

## Enigma Variations

We open our 78th season with a highly varied program including Beethoven's Overture to *King Stephen*, Jessie Montgomery's penetrating and stirring *Soul Force*, and Korngold's Violin Concerto, and Edward Elgar's Variations on an Original Theme, commonly known as "Enigma Variations."

While Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) only composed one opera, he was known for numerous overtures of renown. The Overture to *King Stephen* may be overshadowed by others, but many consider it to be a masterwork that deserves recognition. King Stephen I, who was crowned in the year 1000, is considered Hungary's first king and a national hero for creating a central unified power. The piece was commissioned in 1811 by Emperor Francis I of Hungary to celebrate the opening of the German Theater in Pest, then capital of Hungary.

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981), composer, violinist and educator, began a 3-year appointment as the Mead Composer-In-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in July 2021. Montgomery was recently appointed to the Bienen School of Music faculty, where she is a lecturer in Composition and Music Technology.

From Montgomery's own words: The music takes on the form of a march which begins with a single voice and gains mass as it rises to a triumphant goal. I have drawn the work's title from Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech in which he states: "We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force."

Before the Austrian composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957) became one of Hollywood's most influential film composers, he was a child piano prodigy. Growing up in a musical family, he began composing at age 7. During his career, he composed a total of 16 Hollywood films and is best known for his scores to *Anthony Adverse*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

— 2:30 PM

ENIGMA  
VARIATIONS

CONCERT SPONSORED BY: ESO BOARD OF DIRECTORS



(1936) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), which both won Oscars.

Putting film music aside, Korngold began to focus on "serious" compositions during his later years, including his Violin Concerto. The piece premiered in 1947 with the St. Louis Symphony, and it not only hints at several themes from Korngold's film scores, but Jascha Heifetz's performances of the work quickly made it his most popular piece.

English composer Edward Elgar (1857–1934) was a self-taught composer; however, Elgar did not achieve musical success until his 40s with his "Enigma Variations" in 1899.

Enigma Variations has been described by some as a "musical portrait gallery" of the composer's friends. Elgar dedicated the piece to "my friends pictured within," and in the score, each variation is prefaced with the initials, name, or nickname of the friend depicted. Each movement conveys an impression of its subject's personality.

Join us November 3 at the first concert of our 78th season! 🎶

—Jennifer McGeary



MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2024

1:30 PM

FREE

MEET MAYA ANJALI BUCHANAN

OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC

1611 CHICAGO AVE., EVANSTON  
PLEASE RSVP TO 847-570-7815

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This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council through federal funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.



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THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA USES THE POWER OF MUSIC TO LIFT THE HUMAN SPIRIT. WE ENGAGE AND ENRICH THE COMMUNITY BY COMING TOGETHER TO PERFORM, INSPIRE AND EDUCATE. For more information on ESO concerts and events, please contact Michelle Pranger, General Manager, at (847) 864-8804. Write us at Evanston Symphony Orchestra, 1555 Sherman Avenue, Suite 318, Evanston, IL 60201. Email us at [esomusic@evanstonsymphony.org](mailto:esomusic@evanstonsymphony.org). Visit our website [evanstonsymphony.org](http://evanstonsymphony.org).

# BEHIND THE SCENES



IMAGE COURTESY OF MARC PERUSH PHOTOGRAPHY

## Dear ESO Subscribers,

After our very successful Summer Concert, my attention turns to our 2024–25 season, which we have titled “Soul & Inspiration.” Great composers and performing musicians need inspiration to create and perform music. Their inspiration comes from their vast and varied experiences, and listeners are in turn inspired by the music they hear performed. The word “soul” is a difficult word to define, but we all know what it means. It describes a place well beyond what words can portray. It is where our deepest feelings reside, and is often both spiritual and personal. Again, this is true not only for composers and musicians, but also for listeners. And if it’s a great performance, the soul of the composer touches the soul of the performer, which in turn touches the soul of the listener. When that happens, it is magic!

Our “Soul & Inspiration” season begins in November with the return of violinist and rising star Maya Anjali Buchanan performing Korngold’s Violin Concerto. The ESO will be playing Jessie Montgomery’s *Soul Force*, Elgar’s monumental *Enigma Variations* and Beethoven’s “Overture to *King Stephen*.”

In February, we’ll perform Shostakovich’s powerful 5th Symphony in honor of the 50th Anniversary of his death.

Also on the program is *Motor City Dance Mix* by Jonathan Bailey Holland, and cellist Christine Lamprea will perform Tchaikovsky’s beloved *Variations on a Rococo Theme*.

In April, you can’t get more spiritual than with Brahms’ German Requiem, featuring frequent collaborating partner North Shore Choral Society and soloists soprano Josefien Stoppelenburg and bass-baritone Evan Bravos; this duo will also perform some Mozart works in the first part of the concert.

At our final concert in June, we have a combination of French and American music. On the American side, we will perform Gershwin’s *Cuban Overture*, William Grant Still’s *Mother and Child*, and Copland’s suite from *Billy the Kid*. On the French side we have Debussy’s beloved *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, and virtuoso pianist Ko-Eun Yi performs Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G Major. It should be noted that the lines of American characteristics and French characteristics are often blurred, which I think makes this a particularly fascinating program.

The cliché is that “we have something for everyone,” but I really believe we have SO many things that will inspire every audience member. I hope to see you there beginning with our first concert on November 3rd! See you then! 🎻

—Lawrence Eckerling

Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

## 2024–2025 CONCERT SERIES

# Soul & Inspiration

### NOVEMBER 3, 2024

#### ENIGMA VARIATIONS

BEETHOVEN  
*Overture to King Stephen*

MONTGOMERY  
*Soul Force*

KORNGOLD  
*Violin Concerto*

Maya Anjali Buchanan,  
*violin*

ELGAR  
*Variations on an Original Theme*  
 (“Enigma Variations”)

CONCERT SPONSORED BY  
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### FEBRUARY 2, 2025

#### SHOSTAKOVICH 5TH!

HOLLAND  
*Motor City Dance Mix*

TCHAIKOVSKY  
*Variations on a Rococo Theme*  
Christine Lamprea, *cello*

SHOSTAKOVICH  
*Symphony No. 5*  
in D Minor

### APRIL 6, 2025

#### BRAHMS’ GERMAN REQUIEM

MOZART  
*Exsultate Jubilate*

MOZART  
“La ci darem la mano”  
from *Don Giovanni*

BRAHMS  
*German Requiem*

### JUNE 8, 2025

#### THE AMERICAN-FRENCH CONNECTION

GERSHWIN  
*Cuban Overture*

STILL  
*Mother and Child*

RAVEL  
*Piano Concerto in G Major*  
Ko-Eun Yi, *piano*

DEBUSSY  
*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*

COPLAND  
*Billy the Kid Suite*

CONCERT SPONSORED BY  
PAULA JACOBI  
AND TODD WIENER

All performances take place at 2:30 p.m. at Pick Stalger Concert Hall.

# Meet Maya Anjali Buchanan, Violinist Extraordinaire



How lucky can one orchestra be?! Maya Anjali Buchanan, our soloist in May, 2023, so delighted our audience that she's coming back to open our 2024–25 season. (See our [website for a much longer, more detailed version of this interview.](#))

Maya and her two older siblings were born and raised in Rapid City, South Dakota, where her parents are physicians. While her family wasn't particularly musical, her mother thought training in classical music important for her children. In a 2021 interview, Maya said she was enrolled in Kindermusik at age two and started playing the violin with the Suzuki method at age four. "Living in rural America and pursuing a classical music life has always presented many challenges. So, when I was eight, my parents began to fly my siblings and me to another state for music lessons. After five years, I enrolled in a pre-college program, the Music Institute of Chicago Academy."

By the time Maya was 13, music had "clicked" and she knew she wanted to become a professional musician. At 16 she began winning a number of important competitions, including the 2017 Crain-Maling Foundation Chicago Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition. She made her solo debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which she counts as one of the biggest thrills of her life.

A special treat this past summer was a month in France at the Fontainebleau Music Festival, where she played a lot of chamber and classical French music (and very much enjoyed the food!) She said that many of the teachers she studied with had connections through their own parents or teachers to Debussy, Ravel and other famous French musicians, and regaled her with interesting anecdotes. After her month in France, Maya went back to Rapid City to participate in the Chamber Music Festival of the Black Hills, a non-profit organization promoting classical music and music education in the Rapid City and Pine Ridge areas. Maya's mother is from India and Maya has always had a love of Indian music. In an effort to broaden Western classical music traditions, Maya likes to present pieces unique to her Indian ancestry, bridging her Eastern roots with her Western roots and classical training. She enjoys

showcasing works of Indian influence that reflect the form and improvisational quality of Eastern music, blending techniques of both cultures.

Maya loves classical music but admits that she felt somewhat boxed in by it and wishes she had delved more into fiddle, jazz and lesser known composers sooner, especially women composers. Now, she makes a conscious effort to program women composers whose works are not often heard. *Darshan* by prominent Indian-American composer Reena Ismail and *Romance* by early 20th-century composer Amy Beach are two favorites.

In fact, Maya says that little of her free time is spent listening to classical music. "I spend my entire day with classical music," she said, "so I want to listen to something different!" Among those choices are old Beatles, Elton John, John Denver, and Queen. She's also listening to a lot of younger pop and jazz and, of course, Indian music, especially younger Indian composers like Nina Shekhar.

Currently, Maya is studying with Ida Kavafian at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. After receiving her bachelor's degree last year, she is continuing her studies at Curtis for her master's. Her seven years there have given her a deep love for the city, which she describes as delightfully walkable, with historic architecture and museums around almost every corner.

Maya will be performing the Korngold Violin Concerto in our November 3rd concert and describes the piece as her "favorite of all time." It was a piece she played many times when she was younger but has not performed in public since her Curtis audition in 2018; she is excited to bring it back for this concert. "It sounds like a film score!" she said, referring to another type of music she loves. "I first heard it when I was nine years old and it was magic. After working on other concertos, like the Sibelius, they lost a bit of the initial magic—but the Korngold still gives goose bumps!"

What's next for this talented young violinist? Maya has no definitive plans but she does have a world of possibilities in performing, teaching, or studying in Europe. "You never knows what's going to happen," she said but she has options in mind and would be "happy doing anything." Whatever her direction, we know this extraordinarily talented young violinist will shine! 🎻

—Kelly Brest van Kempen



## Musical Insights

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

Enhance your concert experience with a sneak preview. Composers come alive and their passions take center stage when Maestro Lawrence Eckerling takes you on an insider's tour of the history and highlights behind the music. Meet Maya Anjali Buchanan, violin, who will be playing Korngold's Violin Concerto in our concert on November 3. 🎻



Merion's Crystal Ballroom at  
1611 Chicago Ave. at Davis St., Evanston.  
FREE and open to the public.  
Please RSVP to 847-570-7815.



The Evanston Symphony Orchestra performs a free concert at ETHS

## ESO Summer Pops Concert

The ESO presented its Summer Pops Concert to a delighted audience of several hundred, even with the date and venue change from Thursday, August 15th at the Wallace Bowl in Gillson Park to the 16th at ETHS—a decision that proved to be spot-on.

The casual vibe that the summer concert is known for was maintained indoors by holding the instrument petting zoo by Baker Demonstration School in the lobby and keeping the auditorium doors open for folks to come and go as they please.

Optima Verdana, who generously sponsored the concert, greeted guests in the lobby, shared information about their properties, and offered delicious treats!

Maestro Eckerling led the orchestra in the most upbeat, varied, and exciting concert that drove the audience to its feet. The smorgasbord of instruments and sounds kept concert-goers cheering at every twist and turn. From *Mission: Impossible* to “A Fifth of Beethoven,” the orchestra showed its breadth and created a fabulous evening! 🎵



## The Evanston Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concert Sunday December 15th, 3:00 pm at Evanston Township High School

Put this date on your calendar today! This most wonderful afternoon of music brings you many of your holiday favorites in song, dance, and music. Our full orchestra will be joined by Evanston Dance Ensemble, Chicago Ballet Arts, Evanston Children’s Choir, North Shore Choral Society, the Evanston Symphony Orchestra Gospel Choir, led by the Rev. Ken Cherry, and, of course, Santa with his reindeer and elves. ETHS students will serenade you in the lobby. Share this magical concert with friends and family. **All welcome. But reserve your tickets early. This concert sells out!** You can order your tickets by calling 847-864-8804, online at our website, or by filling out the form in this KeyNotes. 🎵



A visit from the big man himself, Santa!

HOLIDAY CONCERT PHOTOS BY LAURA BENNETT



HOLIDAY CONCERT PHOTOS BY LAURA BENNETT

Chicago Ballet Arts danced selections of “The Nutcracker” accompanied by the ESO

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### INDIVIDUAL CONCERT TICKETS

*Purchase tickets in advance and save.*

Box office prices are \$40, seniors \$35. Full-time students with ID are \$5.

| Concert | #1    | #2    | #3    | #4    |                             |                |
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| _____   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Adults @ \$35 each...       | = \$ _____     |
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| _____   | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Children 12 & under-free... | = \$ No Charge |

### EVANSTON SYMPHONY HOLIDAY CONCERT

#### PREFERRED SEATING AREA

\_\_\_\_ Adult \$60 \_\_\_\_ Child \$25\* \_\_\_\_ Family Pack \$150\*\* = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### GENERAL ADMISSION SEATS

\_\_\_\_ Adult \$30 \_\_\_\_ Child \$15\* \_\_\_\_ Family Pack \$85\*\* = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Under the age of 18 years old \*\*Family package special includes tickets for 2 adults and 3 children\*

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**Mail form to: Evanston Symphony Orchestra, 1555 Sherman Avenue, Suite 318, Evanston, IL 60201**

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 [evanstonsymphony.org](http://evanstonsymphony.org).