



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Shostakovich 5th!

Our February 2 concert celebrates Dmitri Shostakovich in the year marking the 50th anniversary of his death with his Symphony No. 5, a work in which many listeners hear despair beneath the glorious melodies. Also on the program are Jonathan Bailey Holland's *Motor City Dance Mix* and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* with cello soloist Christine Lamprea.

Jonathan Bailey Holland (b. 1974) is the dean of Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music and the Kay Davis Professor of Music. A strong advocate for authenticity in composition, Holland encourages his students to embrace their unique identities in their art, a philosophy reflected in his own work.

His *Motor City Dance Mix* was commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the grand reopening of Detroit's historic Orchestra Hall and the addition of the Max M. Fisher Music Center in October 2003. The piece is a nod to the rhythm and joy found in the city's soul and pop heritage, blending these influences with the colors and textures of the orchestra.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was initially educated for a career as a civil servant, but when the opportunity to study music arose, he took full advantage and entered the newly formed Saint Petersburg Conservatory. A very well-known composer of the romantic era, Tchaikovsky wrote some of the most popular concert and theatrical music in the classical repertoire.

Variations on a Rococo Theme premiered in November 1877 in Moscow and opened to favorable reviews. Composed of a theme with eight elegant and playful variations, it provides a remarkable opportunity to show off the cello's wide range. The variations include dazzling trills and gleaming passages, a slow and beautiful waltz, and expressive melodies with romantic flare.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

— 2:30 PM


SHOSTAKOVICH 5TH!

CONCERT SPONSORED BY: PAULA JACOBI AND TODD WIENER



Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975) studied piano and composition as a child. He achieved more success as a composer, and therefore his public piano performances were often of his own pieces. As one of the most significant musical figures of the 20th century, his compositions widely varied in terms of style and emotion.

He composed his Symphony No. 5 when a fine line between censorship and artistic expression existed under Joseph Stalin's regime. His music was banned throughout the Soviet Union in 1936 when Stalin walked out before the final act of his opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Therefore, the symphony was pivotal in his career as it had to balance his artistic integrity with what the authorities would approve. Its premiere in November 1937 was considered a major success, and today, it is one of his most played symphonies.

Come hear these rousing, vibrant pieces at our February 2 concert! 



MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025

1:30 PM

FREE

MEET CHRISTINE LAMPREA

OPEN TO THE
PUBLIC

1611 CHICAGO AVE., EVANSTON
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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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BEHIND THE SCENES



IMAGE COURTESY OF MARC PERLUSH PHOTOGRAPHY

Dear ESO Subscribers,

2025 marks the 50th Anniversary of Dmitri Shostakovich's death. We will celebrate this monumental composer by performing his most famous work, his Fifth Symphony.

Shostakovich gives us very little information in his music. We have notes, dynamics, and metronome markings (to indicate how fast or slow something should be played). But there is very little other information. Any musical artist will tell you that the notes, how loud, and how fast are not where your work ends, but rather where it begins. And so there is a requirement of interpretation to bring that music to life. A performer must find a work's musical "truth."

Shostakovich was a monumental, prolific composer trapped in the confines of the Russian political and cultural system. In Solomon Volkov's book from 1984 entitled "Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich," he wrote an introduction that is eye opening. He discusses the uniquely Russian word *yurodivy*, which in practice means that a person's actions, or words (or music!) mean one thing on the surface, but when probing deeper, can mean something entirely different. Almost "in code." One example would be some of the military references in his Fifth Symphony, which appeased Stalin, but probing deeper, for those receptive to it, could be viewed as actually mocking the military or creating a caricature of the same.

Volkov's book is controversial because it is unclear how much of the memoirs were actually what Shostakovich said, or meant, and how much was interpreted by Volkov. And because of that, it sheds at least some doubt as to whether *yurodivy* applies to Shostakovich's music, or to what degree. And whether a conductor buys into that or not is going to completely influence how those notes are brought to life. It is our job to bring out the music's truth, through the conductor's lens, which is ultimately what we call "interpretation."

I'll come clean and say that I fully believe that *yurodivy* applies to Shostakovich and his music, and it has fully influenced all of my musical choices as a conductor as it pertains to his music. One obvious decision that needs to be made is the very ending of the symphony, where the earliest editions of the music have a metronome marking that is very slow and probing, but a later edition has the metronome marking as extremely fast, with a "big bang ending." I happen to follow the original (slower) ending, which certainly influences how the listener perceives the entire work.

I hope you all enjoy this magnificent symphony! 🎵

—Lawrence Eckerling

Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

ESO Depends On Your Support!

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra is a treasure. Every year the ESO relies on the generosity of donors like you to support our musical performances and community outreach programs. More than half of our annual revenue comes from donations and grants. We intentionally keep ticket prices low to make them accessible to the widest possible audiences. If you can cover more than your cost of admission, we would be very grateful to accept any donation that is within your budget.

This year, we have also introduced opportunities to make a larger impact through sponsorships.

- Sponsor a Concert: \$5,000
- Sponsor a Soloist: \$3,000
- Sponsor One Piece of Music: \$2,500

If you would like explore these opportunities, or a sponsorship idea of your own, please contact Michelle Pranger at manager@evanstonsymphony.org or call Michelle on 847-864-8804. 🎵

Our Thanks to February Concert Sponsors

Longtime Evanston residents and ESO subscribers, **Todd Wiener and Paula Jacobi**, are generously sponsoring our February concert. They recently shared their passion for the ESO.

"The ESO is a treasure for all of us," said Wiener. "Our entire community benefits from the Evanston Symphony Orchestra's exquisite concerts in our own backyard," added Jacobi. "We chose to sponsor February's concert to make sure that we all get to enjoy ESO's performance of world class music from Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky, and Holland. Maestro Lawrence Eckerling and his Evanston Symphony Orchestra earn our support every concert, year after year," they said, "Thank you, ESO." 🎵

*The ESO uses
the power of music
to lift the
human spirit.*



Christine Lamprea, Cellist by Default!



Christine Lamprea started life as a New Yorker, the child of Colombian immigrants, then became a Texan at age seven. She started cello lessons in fifth grade with members of the San Antonio Symphony in an after-school program — but if her parents had had a bigger car, Christine wouldn't be a cellist at all! The cello was not Christine's first choice of instrument; she wanted to play the bass, that wonderfully deep-voiced string instrument that can dwarf its player. But even a half-size bass can be over five feet tall and that was the problem: the large instrument in its even larger case wouldn't fit in her parents' car. A cello, however, would...

Despite the initial setback, Christine soon came to love the cello; it felt easy to relate to and came to her intuitively. By eighth grade she was taking private lessons and by 15 she was hooked. She distinctly remembers the moment in youth orchestra when she played Tchaikovsky's 4th Symphony for the first time and understood "how it all fit together." She attended Tanglewood the summer before her senior year and discovered she loved being in music 24/7. She came home and told her teacher she wanted to audition for conservatories, to which he drolly replied that she needed lessons twice a week, not just once.

Those extra lessons helped Christine gain admission to Juilliard. She then received a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans, which supported her MA at the New

England Conservatory. Christine is now on the faculty at the Longy School of Music of Bard College and serves as substitute faculty at Juilliard. She told us she enjoys teaching because of the element of community. A musician's life on the road can be quite solitary, with affirmation coming from actions to a single performance. In teaching, however, you can see the results of your efforts in a large number of students. Furthermore, "you get better at your own playing by listening to the students because you have to be able to articulate on the cello everything you're teaching them."

Spanish is Christine's second language but she didn't want to speak it as a child in NYC. Now, however, she's working on upping her game for teaching in Central and South America. She thinks her own accent is somewhat Mexican, no doubt a result of her years in Texas! None of this matters when she's teaching in Spanish-speaking countries, however, because of the unanimity of musical terms — and because students are politely listening to her as *la profesora!*

Christine will speak to us in the universal language of music on February 2 and we are delighted to welcome her to our stage! 🎻

Jonathan Bailey Holland, Dean and Composer



Jonathan Bailey Holland, current Dean and Professor of Music at Northwestern's Bienen School of Music, was raised in Flint, Michigan, by music-loving parents who worked for the Flint schools. Music was always playing in their home, either on the radio or from his father's extensive record collection of everything from jazz to classical. Jonathan says that all styles excited him from an early age and he responded to "any kind of music that made you move!"

Jonathan began taking piano lessons at ten, then added trumpet a year later, a choice inspired in part by his dad's recordings of Cliff Brown, Miles Davis and other jazz greats. Then an excellent middle school band teacher inspired him to take music seriously. In fact, the first public performance of a Jonathan Bailey Holland composition was a fanfare for trumpets in that same middle school. When he was in eighth grade, a poster for Interlochen Arts Academy piqued his interest and, in those pre-Internet days, he sent away a postcard for a catalogue. The very idea of Interlochen excited him because it was a place where everyone was focused on music and the arts; he convinced his parents that Interlochen was the best place for him to spend his high school years.

Jonathan played the trumpet seriously during his four years at Interlochen and also began to focus more on composition, where he won a school-wide award for his very first piece. He recalls an assignment to compose a work for solo

violin but, when he sat down to write the piece, he'd just had an argument with a friend; that argument found its way into his composition!

Interlochen prepared Jonathan well for the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he earned his Bachelor of Music degree, and Curtis prepared him well for Harvard, where he earned his PhD in composition. And composing is one of his passions. He often sits down at the piano to try out ideas for a new composition and, when it's partially formed, will transfer what he's written to a notation program on his computer that plays back his draft and lets him make adjustments.

Once a piece is finished and ready for public performance, Jonathan says it's "always interesting to hear someone else play your music. It's a bit humbling and amazing to watch someone spend so much of their time and energy on something you've composed!"

We asked Jonathan what his reaction is if a performance doesn't quite hit it? Someone will do something different that's not quite what he wrote, he said, "but that can be okay, even interesting. Other times a conductor may make changes. You have to let the current performance happen and wait for another performance in the future. If something isn't quite what you'd like it to be, you can't do anything about it!"

We hope the ESO's performance of Jonathan Bailey Holland's *Motor City Dance Mix* on February 2 lives up to his expectations! 🎻

—Kelly Brest van Kempen



HOLIDAY CONCERT PHOTOS BY LAURA BENNETT

Evanston Children's Choir, accompanied by North Shore Choral Society and the ESO

A Joyous Evanston Symphony Orchestra Holiday Concert

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra celebrated the holidays with festive music, dance and song under the baton of Maestro Eckerling along with long-time partners and collaborators, Evanston Dance Ensemble, Chicago Ballet Arts, North Shore Choral Society, Evanston Children's Choir, and our very own Gospel Choir led by Rev. Ken Cherry. We were also joined by singers from the various choirs at Evanston Township High School. These young singers also entertained our sell-out audience with carols during the intermission. The ESO's three bassoonists soloed with the orchestra in a piece called 'BaSOON it will be Christmas.' Santa and some of his elves also turned up and helped with the raffle. Thank you to everyone who played, danced, sang, organized the front of house, bought raffle tickets (thank you Christopher Duquet Fine Jewelry), donated prizes, or came along to enjoy the afternoon. 🎵



Phoebe Peterson, Peter Schmeiser, and Walter van Gieson playing 'BaSOON it will be Christmas.'



Chicago Ballet Arts danced "The Bells of Christmas" accompanied by the ESO



Musical Insights

A free pre-concert event at The Merion
Friday, January 31, 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 Christine Lamprea, who will be playing *Variations on a Rococo Theme* in our concert on February 2. 🎵



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