



EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Lawrence Eckerling, Music Director

2024-2025 Annual Review



Evanston Symphony Orchestra's 2024-25 concert series was themed *Soul & Inspiration*. We delivered on these themes through diverse performances rooted in jazz, soul, opera, ballet-suite, and inspired by African-American art. All this was in addition to our core classical focus. No matter what the genre... the music was *Inspirational!*



Our season began with ESO's annual Lakeside Pops Concert, a family favorite in a typically outdoor setting at Wilmette's Gillson Park. But our 2024 concert was *anything but typical*. The skies opened up on our concert date – and on the rain date as well – moving the performance indoors to Evanston Township High School. With the crowd relocated, ESO played a rousing pops program; everyone in attendance "moved and grooved" enthusiastically to the music. Our thanks to our audience for your flexibility. We're hoping Mother Nature will cooperate on August 19th – 2025's concert date.

Our four series concerts highlighted time-honored masterworks coupled with more modern compositions. We again welcomed violinist Maya Anjali Buchanan, who had debuted with ESO two years ago. She wowed the audience with her energy and skill on Korngold's Violin Concerto.



Among ESO's other repertoire: We rose to the challenge of Shostakovich's powerful 5th Symphony and Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations with virtuoso cello soloist Christine Lamprea. Joined by North Shore Choral Society and soloists Josefien Stoppelenburg and Evan Bravos, we performed the monumental Brahms' *German Requiem* and two exhilarating Mozart compositions.



On a more modern note, the 2024-25 season highlighted magnificent works of *Soulful & Inspiring* composers Jessie Montgomery, George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Claude Debussy, William Grant Still, and Maurice Ravel (his Piano Concerto in G Major featured rising soloist Ko-Eun Yi). The diversity was magnetic and energizing!

A very special, local pleasure was ESO's performance of *Motor City Dance Mix* composed by NU's Jonathan Bailey Holland. A vibrant musical collage created in homage to Holland's home city of Detroit, the work featured classical, hip-hop, jazz, and other musical genres. We were delighted that Dr. Holland was in attendance to hear it live on stage!



Not to be forgotten (or missed, when it next comes 'round on December 14, 2025) was ESO's sold-out annual Holiday Concert! With a host of local performing arts partners, ESO again presented a true extravaganza of family entertainment to launch the 2024 holiday season. North Shore Choral Society, Chicago Ballet Arts, Evanston Dance Ensemble, ESO's Gospel Choir, Evanston Children's Choir, and the Evanston Township High School Choir all took center stage to ring in the festivities! The 350+ performers were exuberant! The excitement was electric! The program was *Soulful and Inspiring!*

Last May, we presented yet another first: ESO & All That Jazz!, a concert featuring ESO's Music Director Lawrence



Eckerling and Principal Trumpet Don Cagen, in a fundraiser to support ESO's programming. Thanks to our enthusiastic audience who came out and enjoyed the vibes of live jazz and pop! Because arts organizations face an especially challenging fundraising landscape, ESO is deeply grateful for our steadfast supporters. More on that on the next page.

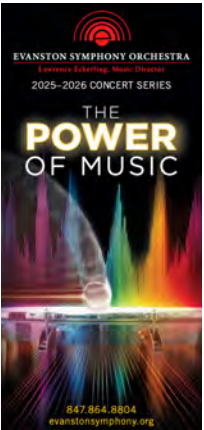
Community Outreach



Our community outreach efforts during the 2024-25 season were central to ESO's mission. We funded and presented music education and enrichment to a variety

of audiences, ranging from Head Start preschoolers in Evanston's District 65 to older adults who enjoyed our pre-concert lectures at The Merion in downtown Evanston. *HighNotes* and *KidNotes* continued as special publications for our concerts, to better reach specific audiences, young and old, demonstrating that *Soul & Inspiration* in fine music knows no age boundaries!

2025-26 Season: The POWER of Music



As the 2024-25 season draws to a close, all of us at ESO thank you for your loyalty. We look excitedly and bravely forward to ESO's continuing success next year. Our performances will emphasize a new theme: The POWER of Music! To all of our subscribers, sponsors, musicians, board members, and community partners: We are deeply grateful for the key role you play in ESO's success. We

encourage your involvement and your support next season as we make and spread fine music together throughout Evanston and beyond!

A Big Thank You to our Valued Sponsors

We would like to thank all of our individual donors and valued business sponsors for the 2024-25 season. We couldn't do it without you!



THE MERION

The Merion continues as the ESO's Musical Insights host and

sponsor. The beautiful Crystal Ballroom at The Merion is a superb setting for this excellent concert preview series. Musical Insights remains free of charge and open to the public.



Optima Verdana sponsored the 2024 Lakeside Pops summer concert.

Evanston Arts Council supported the BIPOC soloists in the 2024-25 season.



HAGERTY



EVANSTON/SKOKIE SCHOOL DISTRICT 65



Research Institutes



Standards & Engagement



Evanston Arts Council, Hagerty Consulting, District 65, UL Standards & Engagement and UL Research Institutes, and The Kiwanis Club sponsored Music In Your World.



Illinois Arts Council, Evanston Community Bank and Trust, the John R. Halligan Charitable Fund, and The Generations Fund provided general operating support.

Thank You to our Concert Sponsors

ESO Board of Directors: November 2024 concert
 Todd Wiener and Paula Jacobi: February 2025 concert and April 2025 concert soloists
 Linda and Tom Keller: April 2025 concert
 Trulee Evanston: June 2025 concert



If you or your business is interested in enriching the community through ESO sponsorship, we'd love to explore this with you! Please reach out at (847) 864-8804 or esomusic@evanstonsymphony.org.

Suzanne W. Nelson

Suzanne W. Nelson
 President, Evanston Symphony Orchestra