



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Color My (Orchestral) World!

As the colors of spring on Mother's Day! Maestro Lawrence Eckerling and the Evanston Symphony Orchestra have a program of beautiful and exciting orchestral colors in store for you on Sunday, May 11. They will be joined by the young and talented percussionist, **Jordan Wirth**.

No symphony proclaims the wonders of spring and a walk in the woods better than **Ludwig van Beethoven's** *Symphony No. 6 in F Major*, subtitled the "*Pastorale*." Some people find it amazing that Beethoven (1770-1827) wrote the fiery 5th Symphony and the idyllic 6th at the same time. In fact, both symphonies premiered on December 22, 1808, as part of a concert that also included his 4th Piano Concerto, an aria, movements from the Mass in C and the Choral Fantasy. It is well known that Beethoven regularly walked in the woods wherever he was staying in order to inspire himself and restore his peace of mind. He wrote, "No one can love the country as much as I do. For surely woods, trees, and rocks produce the echo which man desires to hear." It is no wonder he put those feelings into this beautiful symphony.



JENNIFER HIGDON WITH INQUISITIVE 'BEAU'

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962) says she is the poster child for late-blooming musicians. She grew up listening to the Beatles and Bob Marley. One day in her early teen years, she found a flute in the attic that her mother had bought at a pawnshop. She started teaching herself to play from

some method books that she found and discovered she loved music. She joined her high school marching band and eventually went to Bowling Green State University as a flute performance major. However, she had to take a remedial course in Music Theory! Ms. Higdon's flute teacher had her write a 2-minute piece for a flute master class, and that got her hooked on composing. She switched to composition for her master's and doctoral degrees. The success of her first major orchestral



JORDAN WIRTH IN ACTION ON STAGE

composition, *blue cathedral*, has led to a large number of commissions and performances. Ms. Higdon demonstrates an uncanny knack for interesting color combinations in her works and her *Percussion Concerto* is a wonderful blend of singular percussion instrument combinations and unusual interplay between the soloist and the orchestra. You will be awed by the talents of percussionist **Jordan Wirth**, who joins us for this work.

Rounding out our concert will be *Capriccio espagnol* by **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff** (1844-1908). Although this piece may make you think the composer spent months absorbing the colors of Spanish folk music, the truth is that he had only a brief stopover in Spain while he was a young naval officer. The melodies of this piece come from a book of Spanish folk music, yet Rimsky-Korsakoff is such an innovative composer and brilliant orchestrator that you will think you have left the concert hall

MAY 11,
2008
2:30 PM

CONCERT PERFORMANCE

and landed in another country. Born into an aristocratic Russian family who did not appreciate his musical precocity, he undertook a naval career at his family's insistence. He took piano lessons and attended operas and symphonies. He started composing and was encouraged by teachers and by Balakirev, another Russian composer. Eventually, he completed his naval commission and became Professor of Practical Composition and Instrumentation at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He spent the rest of his career as a teacher and composer.

We hope you enjoy all these colorful works. Happy Mother's Day and Happy Spring! 🎵

—Julie Westbrook

FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Our May 11 concert provides a rare highlighting of the percussion instruments, both those within the ESO itself as well as the 32 different ones struck and shaken by Jordan Wirth as the virtuoso soloist of Jennifer Higdon's *Percussion Concerto*.

Although percussion instruments offer a very wide range of colorful sounds, from the crash of cymbals to the whack of a bass drum and the jingle of the triangle, most are limited by the fact that they are untuned, meaning that they can't

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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.

MEET OUR SOLOIST: JORDAN WIRTH



JORDAN WIRTH, PERCUSSIONIST

"I grew up in a very musical family," Jordan Wirth says, "my dad being a pianist and my mom a school music teacher. I always heard great music coming out of our basement where my Dad gave lessons. I started piano myself at the age of six, and moved to the other percussion instruments when I was 12." Percussionists face the special challenges of having to move around nimbly during performances, and Jordan has limited his studies to this group, but he maintains, "That concentration is chiefly why I am still somewhat sane."

He realized his calling was to be a percussionist his sophomore year in high school. Jordan's teacher, Terry Vermillion, introduced him to the marimba – an experience that inspired him to go for it.

Jordan adds, "While I have been fortunate to have a number of encouraging moments in my musical journey, a highlight certainly was winning the St. Cloud Symphony Orchestra's Concerto Competition when I was a senior in high school,

and when I first worked with Lawrence Eckerling. The thrill and satisfaction of performing with that orchestra was for me like a hole-in-one for a golfer. It made me want to do lots more. That's my most special moment as a musician – at least up to now." He's looking forward to performing with Maestro Eckerling again in our May 11th concert.

Given the number and size of his instruments, Jordan says his next vehicle will definitely be something big enough to haul all around of his gear. And, this summer he hopes to find more time to pursue his hobby of fishing. 🎣

—Lilias Circle

FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

...continued from front page

play specific pitches. So one of the key elements of music, melody, is unavailable to most of these instruments. (Exceptions are the xylophone, marimba, vibraphone and timpani.)

It has been fascinating to me to discover how Ms. Higdon makes this work so interesting, given the fact that melody is unavailable to so many percussion instruments! The answer lies in the fact that by tradition (if not by definition), a concerto "exploits" the characteristics of each instrument. And with percussion instruments, that means a variety of colors (given the vast number of different instruments used), and...rhythm!

This concerto, similar to most concertos, includes a cadenza for the soloist. But, unlike other concertos, this cadenza also features an orchestral quartet, consisting of the timpanist plus three percussionists, which collaborates with our soloist in a true extravaganza of rhythmic color.

We mustn't forget the visual aspects inherent in the percussion section. Although all instruments have visual interest, there is an extra special thrill in watching a soloist play so many different instruments and in matching up which unique sound is produced by which instrument.

The members of the ESO, Jordan Wirth, and I eagerly anticipate closing our season with this colorful program! 🎣



PENELOPE SACHS,
ESO BOARD PRESIDENT

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The Board of the Evanston Symphony Orchestra would like to thank all who support us for your donations. Thanks to your generosity we have just completed another successful Annual Fund Drive! Ticket sales provide about 45% of our annual income; the balance comes from our community business partners and donations.

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Thank you! 🎣



**MUSICAL
INSIGHTS**

SNEAK PREVIEW

at Presbyterian Homes
on May 9 at 1:30 pm

Percussionist Jordan Wirth joins ESO Music Director Lawrence Eckerling and music lecturer Julie Westbrook for a pre-concert lecture/recital in the Assembly Hall of Presbyterian Homes, One Calvin Circle at Grant and Ridgeway in Evanston at 1:30 pm on Friday, May 9, 2008.

Mr. Wirth will perform excerpts from Jennifer Higdon's exciting Percussion Concerto, and Julie Westbrook and Maestro Eckerling will provide stories and background on composers Beethoven and Rimsky-Korsakoff and their compositions from the May 11 program.

Admission is FREE and open to the public. Refreshments will be served compliments of Presbyterian Homes, sponsors of the 2007-2008 Musical Insights series.

For more information call 847-864-8804, email esomusic@evanstonsymphony.org or visit our website at www.evanstonsymphony.org. 🎣

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October 26, 2008

The Voluptuous Violin

Haydn *London Symphony*
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 Elgar *Enigma Variations*

February 8, 2009

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Fusion of the Fiddle

Ives *Variations on "America"*
 Barber *Adagio for Strings*
 Schwanter *Chasing Light*
 O'Connor *The Fiddle Concerto (finale)* — **Mark O'Connor**,
Appalachia Waltz classical violin/fiddle
Fanfare for the Volunteer

March 22, 2009


The Voice of the Viola

Mendelssohn *Hebrides*
 Wagner *Siegfried Idyll*
 Berlioz *Harold in Italy* — **Charles Pikler**, CSO principal violist

May 2, 2009

The Passionate Piano

Brahms *Symphony No. 4*
 Tchaikovsky *Piano Concerto No. 1* — **Cameron Smith**, piano

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Perhaps you're most familiar with the flowering gardens and splashing fountains of our Westminster Place community in Evanston on Golf Road. Westminster Place provides a range of residential options, and it features an elegant dining room, spacious living rooms, a brain fitness center, and the recreational opportunities of the Kimble Fitness Center.


Westminster Place residents can join The Highlands of Evanston's assisted living community, if their health needs change. The McGaw Care Center is home to those who need short or long-term care, and offers one of the most progressive rehabilitation programs for adults in the Chicago area. The Foster Pavilion has an environment specifically designed to meet the needs of those suffering memory loss.

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For more information on ESO concerts and events, please contact Sarah Buino, Business Manager, at (847) 864-8804. Write us at Evanston Symphony Orchestra, PO Box 778, Evanston, IL 60204. Email us at esomusic@evanstonsymphony.org. Visit our website evanstonsymphony.org.



PO BOX 778
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REMINDER!

MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2008, 1:30 PM

CONCERT PERFORMANCE

JORDAN WIRTH

SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2008, 2:30 PM

This concert is sponsored by

