



KEYNOTES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Scheherazade and Other Tales

Welcome to the opening concert of the ESO's 70th anniversary season, titled "Platinum Playing." Each of the three works on the program is built around the depiction of a story, and each includes a storm as part of the narrative.

Our season opens with the most famous overture by the master of the overture, Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868), that for his opera *William Tell*. Modern audiences probably do not realize the extent of Rossini's popularity and success during the 19th century. His only rival during his lifetime was Beethoven, with whom he was frequently coupled, as in the title "The Age of Beethoven and Rossini" for the final chapter in a scholarly history of music published in 1834. *William Tell* (1829) was the last of Rossini's 38 operas; he spent his remaining 39 years enjoying his fortune and composing only a few piano pieces and sacred works. This 12-minute overture is a miniature tone poem with a quiet introduction, a storm, a pastoral interlude, and the concluding *galop* made famous as the theme for the "Lone Ranger."

The first major success for Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was based on Shakespeare: the fantasy overture *Romeo and Juliet*. Three years after its 1869 premiere the powerful music critic Vladimir Stasov urged Tchaikovsky to compose another descriptive work, giving Tchaikovsky the choices of Gogol's *Taras Bulba*, Scott's *Ivanhoe*, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, for each of which Stasov supplied a detailed scenario for composition. Tchaikovsky chose Shakespeare, but enquired of Stasov whether *The Tempest* in fact required a tempest! Stasov insisted that it did, so Tchaikovsky dutifully followed this condensed "plot:" The sea. The boat approaches Prospero's island. The storm. First love music. Ariel. Caliban. Climactic love music. Setting sail. Prospero leaves the island. Please read Maestro Eckerling's Behind the Scenes column on the next page for some thoughts on *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2015 — 2:30 PM

Scheherazade and Other Tales



More music of the sea is featured in the major and concluding work on the program: *Scheherazade* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908). Rimsky was actually a naval officer before switching to music and allying himself with the Russian nationalist composers who were labeled the "Mighty Five" in a famous article by Vladimir Stasov (see above on Tchaikovsky). Other members of "The Five" included Mussorgsky and Borodin, but not Tchaikovsky, whom they viewed as too close to the Germanic and French schools of composition.

Scheherazade is the most famous of Rimsky's works, and depicts the world of the 1001 Nights in four movements that Rimsky titled a "symphonic suite." The principal themes recur throughout the suite: the grandiose brass opening depicting the Sultan, and the violin solo representing the tale-spinning Scheherazade. The theme of the sea is heard in the first movement and also in the climactic finale with a storm at sea and the crash of Sinbad's ship on a rock surmounted by a bronze horseman. The eminent musicologist Richard Taruskin has called Rimsky "the nineteenth century's premier orchestra colorist" and you'll be able to hear why at this concert! 🎻

—David Ellis



MUSICAL INSIGHTS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2015
1:30 PM

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BEHIND THE SCENES



Tchaikovsky's Unknown Masterpiece

There are some phrases and words in the music world which are used frequently, such as "musical genius." I think "musical genius" is essentially a meaningless phrase, because regardless of who is using the term, it

always applies to someone greater and smarter than they are. For example, I could easily tell someone that I think Leonard Bernstein was a genius. But Bernstein publicly declared that Mozart was a true genius. (I wonder what Mozart would have said?)

Another overused word is "masterpiece" or "masterwork." The word is often used by people (including musicians) to describe a work they personally feel is great. But just like "genius," "masterpiece" really is in the eyes of the beholder.

Now think of the scenario where a conductor performs a rarely played work by a composer of other pieces that are extremely well known and loved. Many conductors advocate these unknown "masterpieces."

Frequently I've been excited before hearing such a newly found and/or rarely heard piece, only to be disappointed when I actually hear it. Why? Well, for one thing, most people (musicians included) like music they are already familiar with. It's harder to listen to a work we have never heard before. It takes more concentration, and in most cases, multiple hearings and/or study to learn to love a given work. Another possible reason is that not every work of a great composer is a great composition.

I am guilty of presenting a work on our opening October 25 concert — *The Tempest* by Tchaikovsky — which I believe falls into the category of "unknown masterpiece." *The Tempest* satisfies my personal criteria for calling any composition a "masterwork:"

1. When I hear the work for the very first time, I become immediately engaged with it. And I don't have to "concentrate;" it makes me concentrate all by itself.
2. Every time I hear the piece, I hear more in it than I heard the last time.
3. Every time I finish hearing the piece, I want to hear it and study it MORE. And MORE!

Also, *The Tempest* was written very soon after Tchaikovsky's beloved *Romeo and Juliet*. Both are symphonic poems based on plays by Shakespeare and both feature prominent "love themes" of great beauty. But since *The Tempest* does not end with a loud bang like *Romeo and Juliet*, I can't help feeling that *Romeo* overshadows *The Tempest* simply because it ends louder.

If you'd like to preview *The Tempest* go to our website at www.evanstonsymphony.org and click on the October 25 concert. On the right hand side is a link to a complete performance by Claudio Abbado and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra. Watch it (it's the first 25 minutes of the Youtube clip) and then tell us what you think of *The Tempest* on the Evanston Symphony Facebook page. Or tell us after the October 25 concert! 🎧

—Lawrence Eckerling

Music Director, Evanston Symphony Orchestra

Chamber Music Benefit

June 28: Nichols Hall in Evanston was the location for our first chamber music benefit concert. ESO principal and co-principal players plus Music Director Lawrence Eckerling all donated their time and displayed their soloistic skills as members of three chamber quintets: brass, woodwinds, and strings with piano (in Schubert's "Trout" Quintet). The ESO deeply appreciates this contribution of their talents.



Woodwind Quintet (L to R): James Donohue, Richard von Holst, Ryan Sedgwick, Ralph Wilder, and Phoebe Peterson



Brass Quintet (L to R): Charles Roberts, Michael Papierniak, Emily Carter, Robert Holland, and Don Cagen



"Trout" Quintet (L to R): Julie Fischer, Lawrence Eckerling, Lois Del Vallee (page-turner), Terry Parisoli, Anna Helfman, and Rhea Davis

Rev. Cherry to Lead Gospel Choir at Holiday Concert



"I'm from the South Side of Chicago — just like *Bad, Bad Leroy Brown!*" said the Reverend Kenneth Cherry with his huge, infectious laugh. Unlike the protagonist of Jim Croce's 1973 hit, however, Ken Cherry was certainly not "the baddest man in the whole damned town!" because

his parents, his church, his school and his love of gospel music were the mainstays of his life growing up. Beautiful Zion Missionary Baptist Church at 64th and Loomis in the West Englewood neighborhood was the church home of the Cherry family — mother, father and six children.

Ken's aunt was the choir director at Beautiful Zion and from the age of five he travelled everywhere with the choir, describing himself as the choir's "mascot." Beautiful Zion was certainly a center of gospel music in Chicago. Ken's aunt and one of her friends were responsible for writing the gospel hymn "I'll Make it Alright," which was recorded by the Beautiful Zion Choir, also in 1973, and became the first gospel hymn ever to make it on to the R&B charts as a bestseller. Despite his musical background, Pastor Cherry describes himself as the "Michael Jackson" of his family. Why? Because, like the legendary late pop singer, he is the only one in his family who does not play an instrument! His brothers play drums and keyboard and his sister plays clarinet, but Pastor Cherry's instrument is his voice, whether singing or preaching.

Ken first heard the call to the ministry in the Missionary Baptist Church when he was 11. At age 12 he gave his first sermon before his congregation, which promptly granted him a license to preach. This call was a surprise to no one, however. "My fifth great grandfather established a church right out of slavery and there have been preachers in my family for five generations," he said. It was a given music would be part of his ministry. He sang with the classical choir in high school and later with a barbershop quartet.

While still a teen, Ken attended classes at the Chicago Baptist Institute to prepare for the ministry. He is currently

pastor at Christ Temple Missionary Baptist Church on Emerson St. in Evanston. When asked why people are drawn to this congregation of 300 and what makes it makes it special, Pastor Cherry's immediate response was, "Love. It's a very powerful, loving congregation. A strong congregation is one where people love one another."

It also comes as no surprise that Christ Temple has a strong gospel choir. When asked what drew him to gospel music, Pastor Cherry replied "The passion — and you can make any gospel song your own. You listen to a song and you start saying to yourself 'If I were singing this, I'd add something here and do that a bit differently.' Five people can start out with the same song and you'll end up with five completely different interpretations, but underneath it's still the same gospel song." The Christ Temple Choir is joining with the choirs of Evanston's Faith Temple Missionary Baptist Church and First Church of God to form an 80-voice gospel choir that, under Pastor Cherry's direction, will perform with the Evanston Symphony at our annual holiday concert on December 6. Look for the glorious *Hallelujah Chorus* from Quincy Jones' "Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration" on the program!

Just south of Church is the site of Ken Cherry's other full-time job: Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center, where he is its newly-appointed director. Fleetwood-Jourdain offers a comprehensive array of services to the community from after-school programs for kids to Wednesday lunch for seniors to sports programs to a respected community theatre to roller-skating. It is this last that is a special love of Ken Cherry. When we asked if he had any hobbies he immediately said "Roller-skating!"

"Four wheels or blades?" we asked.

"Definitely four wheels!" he exclaimed. "Blades are for long distance. Four wheels are for flair and style!"

And that pretty much sums up the Reverend Kenneth Cherry: a man who loves his church, his music and his community — and serves them all with flair and style! 🎵

—Kelly Brest van Kempen

A Perfect Way to Start the Holidays for the Whole Family: Celebrate with Music and Santa on December 6 at ETHS

The Evanston Symphony Orchestra's holiday concert again will delight audiences of all ages. Come for a magical afternoon of festive classical music, singing, and dance December 6, 3 p.m. at ETHS. A special highlight will be two performances of the "Hallelujah Chorus," first with the ESO and North Shore Choral Society in Handel's original and then in the popular Quincy Jones version in which the ESO and NSCS will be joined by a special gospel choir prepared by Kenneth Eugene Cherry. See the article above for much more about the gospel choir.



A visit from Santa

In addition, the Evanston Dance Ensemble will enchant with 20 minutes of favorite dances from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet, and the Evanston Children's Choir and the North Shore Choral Society will add their voices to the festivities. Join in with our carol sing-along and welcome a very special visitor from the North Pole.

Tickets are available on our website: www.evanstonsymphony.org, or simply use the ticket order form on the flap facing this page and mail it to P.O. Box 778 Evanston, IL 60204, or call (847) 864-8804. 🎵



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Scheherazade and Other Tales

- ROSSINI Overture to *William Tell*
TCHAIKOVSKY *The Tempest*; Fantasy Overture, Op. 18
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *Scheherazade*, Op. 35
Julie Fischer, Concertmaster



FEBRUARY 14, 2016

Harmonica Meets American Classics

- THEOFANIDIS *Dreamtime Ancestors*
ILLINOIS PREMIERE
HOWARD LEVY Concerto for Diatonic Harmonica
Howard Levy, Harmonica
COPLAND *The Red Pony Suite*
GERSHWIN Selections from *Porgy and Bess*
Howard Levy, Harmonica



APRIL 10, 2016

Heroic Beethoven

- BEETHOVEN Overture to *Egmont*
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37
Inna Faliks, Piano
BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67



JUNE 5, 2016

Brahms and Dvořák Doubled

- DVOŘÁK Slavonic Dance, Op. 46, No. 3 in A Flat
BRAHMS Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra
in A minor, Op. 102
Irina Muresanu, Violin
Wendy Warner, Cello
DVOŘÁK/MORAWETZ Slavonic Dance, Op. 72, No. 2 in E minor
Irina Muresanu, Violin
Wendy Warner, Cello
BRAHMS/SCHMELING Hungarian Dance, No. 6 in D Major
DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 7 in D Minor, Op. 70





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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25 — 2:30 PM

Scheherazade and Other Tales

LAWRENCE ECKERLING, CONDUCTOR
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Overture to *William Tell*

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RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

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Julie Fischer, *Concertmaster*



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