



HIGHLAND PARK STRINGS

35th Season ~ 2013-2014

Francesco Milioto, Conductor

A Season to Celebrate



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**Our 35th Season
Four Community Concerts
Sundays at 3 pm**

Following our final concert last May, Bob Levi, writing in the *Highland Park Patch*, said: "Another reason Highland Park is unique. The ...Strings represent a cultural benefit to its concertgoers that results in having a devoted following. One wonders what next season will bring. It's going to be tough to top the recent one." No need to wonder! This season marks the 35th anniversary of an acknowledged treasure in our city. It is difficult to believe that so many years of joyous music making have passed since the Strings were founded in 1979 as a performance medium for accomplished chamber musicians and musical enrichment for an appreciative family audience. Each year, initially under the baton of Francis Akos and currently under the leadership of Francesco Milioto, the Strings have presented a roster of world-class artists and an ever enlarging exploration of the repertoire of classical music—nearly 350 pieces for string, chamber, and full orchestra. That these programs are provided free to the public makes the Strings unique among community orchestras and is made possible primarily through sponsorship of the Park District of Highland Park, YEA! Highland Park, an annual benefit, and corporate and individual contributions.



"To have this group playing classical music with such seriousness and offering free concerts to the community becomes more and more amazing every year. It is a tribute to the sponsorship of the Park District of Highland Park and the donors who turn out for the annual benefit concert. To say nothing of the determination of Larry Block, founder and co-principal cello."

– Dorothy Andries, Pioneer Press

In addition to celebrating our 35th anniversary, this year we observe the bicentennials of two titans of music—Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi—as well as the 100th birthday of Benjamin Britten. In November, we will perform the *Siegfried Idyll* by Wagner together with Verdi's only piece of chamber music, his String Quartet in the version for string orchestra. Completing the program will be the *Sinfonia Concertante for Winds and Orchestra* by Mozart, with young members of the New Millennium Orchestra as soloists on oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn. Our December concert contains the *Simple Symphony* of Britten and the *Unfinished Symphony* of Schubert. The soloist will be the newly appointed Associate Concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony, Stephanie Jeong, performing the *Violin Concerto* by Sibelius. Starring in our Benefit Concert at Ravinia in February will be the world-renowned Israeli pianist, Alon Goldstein. He will play the beloved *Concerto No. 2* by Brahms and the orchestra will play the *Symphony No. 8* by Beethoven. The closing concert in May will complete the transformation of the Strings to a full fledged symphony orchestra with the appearance of Mikhail Yanovitsky, Russian-born pianist in *Rach 3* (the Third Concerto of Rachmaninov) together with the *Symphony No. 8* of Dvořák. This will truly be a season to top all others!

We look forward to your continued support. On behalf of the Strings, I am deeply grateful.

Lawrence Block
Founder and General Manager

Call 847.831.3622

Visit www.hpstrings.org



Francesco Milioto, Conductor



This season marks Mr. Milioto's seventh as Conductor of the Highland Park Strings. Since coming to Chicago just over a decade ago, he has become an integral member of the city's musical scene, balancing a career as both a conductor and pianist. In addition to his work with the Strings, this fall he will make his debut with the Chicago Opera Theater in a production of Verdi's rarely produced *Giovanna d'Arco*, done in collaboration with the New Millennium Orchestra of which he is Co-founder and Conductor. Mr. Milioto will also join the staff of Lyric Opera of Chicago for the first time, as cover conductor for a new production of *La Traviata*. Maestro Milioto's work with the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra,

where he serves as Music Director, will break new ground by using multimedia and innovative collaborations. As Artistic Director/Conductor of Access Contemporary Music, he travels to Brazil as part of the Composer ALIVE project and will return to New York City with the Sound of Film Festival following their successful debut there last spring. In May, Mr. Milioto will return to his native Canada for two concerts with Orchestra London Canada. Please visit www.francescomilioto.com for more information about Maestro Milioto.

"Once again, the spark plug was the vigorous conducting of Francesco Milioto, around whose fine instrumental ensemble the...action cavorted, danced and tumbled. He keeps everything moving at full throttle..."

– John von Rhein, Chicago Tribune



Stephanie Ettelson presents
"The Art of Listening to Today's Concert"
prior to each program at 2 pm.

November 3

Wagner and Verdi

3 pm ~ Free Admission ~ Highland Park High School ~ 433 Vine Avenue
Sponsored by Rotary Club of Highland Park/Highwood

WAGNER

Siegfried Idyll

MOZART

Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon and Horn in E flat major, K.297b
Anna Velzo, Oboe, Elizandro Garcia, Clarinet, Karl Rzasa, Bassoon and Matthew Oliphant, Horn

VERDI

String Quartet in E minor



Born two hundred years ago—just five months apart, in May and October of 1813—Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi dominated the world of nineteenth-century opera. They never met, or even saw each other at a distance. They both burst on the scene in the early 1840s, Verdi with *Nabucco*, Wagner with *The Flying Dutchman*, their premieres just nine months apart. Today, the Strings honor these two musical titans in a way most suitable to our chamber orchestra—not with operatic selections but with intimate and personal pieces. The *Siegfried Idyll* is the only orchestral composition of Wagner, not intended for the stage, written by him in his full maturity (1870). He wrote it as a birthday gift for his wife Cosima. Its first performance took place at their

home near Lucerne on Christmas morning. A small orchestra was grouped on the stairway, leading to Cosima's bedroom. Verdi's *String Quartet* was written in the spring of 1873 during a production of *Aida* in Naples. It is the only surviving chamber music in Verdi's catalogue. It is valued among the great classical chamber works of the 19th century.

Completing the program is the *Sinfonia Concertante* for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon and Horn by Mozart. The four young soloists (Anna Velzo, oboe, Elizandro Garcia, clarinet, Karl Rzasa, bassoon, and Matthew Oliphant, horn) are members of the New Millennium Orchestra and often serve as part of the professional wind section of the Strings. The New Millennium, founded and conducted by Maestro Milioto, has been hailed by *Time Out Chicago* as "one of the best additions to the city's scene." The musicians of the New Millennium are as versatile as they are virtuosic and they are heard today in a work about which questions exist. And yet not even the most persistent of doubts as to the work's authenticity can impair the listener's pleasure in this delightful piece.

December 8

Sibelius Violin Concerto

3 pm ~ Free Admission ~ Highland Park High School ~ 433 Vine Avenue
Sponsored by First Bank of Highland Park

BRITTEN

Simple Symphony

SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 8 in B minor (the "Unfinished")

SIBELIUS

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

Stephanie Jeong, Violin

Stephanie Jeong was named Associate Concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony in the fall of 2011 by Maestro Riccardo Muti, his first hire as Music Director. Prior to joining the CSO, she was a member of the New York Philharmonic, which was her first job out of Juilliard, where she'd just completed a master's degree. When she took her seat next to concertmaster Robert Chen on the CSO stage last September, she was 24 years old. The stage was familiar, however. Jeong had been on it as a child, playing a pint-size instrument in the annual Orchestra Hall concert by students of the Betty Haag Academy of Music. And she'd made her debut there as a soloist with the CSO at the age of 12. By then, she was based in Philadelphia, studying at the Curtis Institute, where she had been admitted as one of its youngest students ever, at the age of nine. The top prize winner and recipient of the Best Paganini Concerto Prize of the 2008 Paganini Violin Competition in Italy, she has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Aspen Concert Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, Royal Philharmonic and Kansas City Symphony, among others. Jeong will play the Concerto in D minor by Sibelius, an acknowledged masterpiece of the violin concerto repertoire and the piece she played for her CSO audition. The Strings will play the *Simple Symphony* of Benjamin Britten, honoring the centennial of his birth and the *Unfinished Symphony* of Schubert, surely his most popular symphony. It is "unfinished" because it has only two of the usual four movements.



"Stephanie Jeong is a far better player than I am. She will play the stuffing out of the Sibelius."

– Robert Chen
Concertmaster,
Chicago Symphony

February 9 Annual Benefit Beethoven and Brahms

Sponsored by YEA! Highland Park

3 pm ~ \$40 General Admission ~ Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia

For tickets, call 847.831.3622.

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

BRAHMS

Concerto No. 2 for Piano in B-flat Major, Op. 83

Alon Goldstein, Piano

The Strings' annual benefit concert in the intimate and acoustically perfect Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia is the highlight of the season. Appearing as soloist is the Israeli pianist, Alon Goldstein. Considered one of the most original and sensitive pianists of his generation, Goldstein is admired for his musical intelligence, dynamic personality, artistic vision, and innovative programming. His orchestral debut took place when he was 18 with the Israel Philharmonic under Maestro Zubin Mehta; in April of 2008 he returned with Maestro Herbert Blomstedt. Since then, Alon has performed in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Baltimore, St. Louis, Houston, Vancouver, and Kansas City. Abroad, Alon has performed with orchestras in Paris, Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria as well as touring Central and South America with the Israel Chamber Orchestra. This past summer he appeared at Ravinia with the CSO performing both the *Double and Triple Concertos* of Mozart, reprising his Carnegie Hall debut appearance in the *Mozart Triple*. As a member of the Tempest Trio (together with Amit Peled and Ilya Kaler) Alon has performed with the Strings in the *Beethoven Triple Concerto*. He honors the Strings with this return performance in the fabled *Concerto No. 2* by Brahms. It is a work of such spacious dimensions, and so monumental in concept, that it is sometimes called a symphony with piano. The Strings will also play the *Symphony No. 8* by Beethoven, "a slender maiden between two giants." The Brahms is the first performance by the Strings.



"Alon Goldstein. Simply profound."

– Washington Post

Bonus for Major Contributors

Show how important Strings concerts are to you and our community by considering a donation of \$100 or more. You will be eligible for a minimum of two tickets, preferred seating, listing in the Program Book and free tickets to a Donor Appreciation Chamber Music Concert at 3 pm on April 6 at the Highland Park Community House.

May 18

Rach 3

3 pm ~ Free Admission ~ Highland Park High School ~ 433 Vine Avenue

Dvořák

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op.88

RACHMANINOV

Concerto No. 3 for Piano in D minor, Op. 30

Mikhail Yanovitsky, Piano



"...Mikhail Yanovitsky is a pianist in the big style, a player whose hands seem to devour the keyboard while piling up masses of sound and color."

– Philadelphia Inquirer

The season concludes with the first performance by the Strings of a concerto by Rachmaninov—the *Concerto No. 3 in D minor* ("Rach 3") which became well known by the general public through the 1996 movie *Shine*. Generally regarded as one of the most technically challenging piano concertos in the standard classical repertoire, it was the favorite of the composer. However, it was not until the 1930s, largely thanks to the advocacy of Vladimir Horowitz, that Rach 3 became popular. Who better to perform this concerto than Leningrad (St. Petersburg) born Mikhail Yanovitsky. After graduating from the Leningrad Special School of Music, he continued studies at the Moscow State Conservatory and made his debuts with the Leningrad Chamber Orchestra, the Moscow Philharmonic, and the Leningrad Philharmonic. After emigrating to the USA, Mr. Yanovitsky won the Young Artists Competition and became their most frequently reengaged artist. At that time he made his debuts with the New York Chamber Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas. He has since performed in 34 states in the USA, fifteen countries in Europe, as well as Mexico, South Africa, South America, Australia, Israel, Japan, South Korea, and China. Previously having played Mozart and Chopin Concertos with the Strings, Dr. Yanovitsky currently teaches at Temple University. Completing the program will be the first performance by the Strings of the glorious *Symphony No. 8* by Antonin Dvořák.



*The Highland Park Strings,
1979-1980 Season*



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Sibelius Violin Concerto
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Rach 3
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Free admission sponsored by the Park District of Highland Park