



Highland Park Strings

30th Anniversary ~ 2008 - 2009



A Season to Celebrate

**Francesco Milioto
Principal Conductor**

Save the Dates!

Five Family Concerts
"Sundays at 3 pm"

Preconcert
Conversations
at 2 pm

Free Admission
(except benefit)

Please note multiple
concert venues in
Highland Park.

October 12, 2008

Elm Place School
2031 Sheridan Road

December 14, 2008

Highland Park
High School
433 Vine Avenue

February 8, 2009

Benefit Concert
Bennett-Gordon Hall
at Ravinia

March 29, 2009

Highland Park
High School
433 Vine Avenue

May 10, 2009

Elm Place School
2031 Sheridan Road

www.hpstrings.org

Design by Valerie Lorimer

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Strings photography by
Michael Metzger

30th Anniversary

A Season to Celebrate

1979-2009



Lawrence Block

To be universally revered 200 years after one's birth (Mendelssohn) or death (Haydn) is clearly a cause for musical celebration. That auspicious year was 1809. But from my perspective, it also is impressive and somewhat daunting that the Highland Park Strings are alive and well and still thriving as a cultural and community treasure after only 30 years!

I am continually amazed and humbled by the loyalty of our audience as listeners and contributors, the steadfastness of the Park District in its support, the reputation of our little band that attracts internationally and locally renowned artists as soloists and, mostly, our players, nearly half of whom hail from Highland Park. These wonderful musicians consistently reach for the stars under the new leadership of **Francesco Milioto**, sharing their joy of making music together in rehearsal and performance. They are the heart of the Strings fulfilling our mission as we turn 30.

We begin another star-studded season with adventurous and exciting repertoire, including many works for full symphony orchestra. Two collaborations will triple and double your pleasure. Returning cellist **Amit Peled** and violinist **Ilya Kaler** are joined by pianist **Alon Goldstein** in Beethoven's Triple Concerto. Violinist **Rachel Barton Pine** in a record seventh appearance needs no introduction, but her partnership with cellist **Wendy Warner** in a Strings premiere, the Brahms Double Concerto, for our February benefit is noteworthy. The same program marks another 1809 milestone with **Welz Kauffman**, Ravinia's Executive Director, narrating Copland's "Lincoln Portrait" to commemorate the birth of our 16th President.

It is hard to believe that 10 years have passed since CSO principal flute **Mathieu Dufour** made his American solo debut with the Strings in his first season downtown. He honors us this anniversary year for the third time performing concerti of Vivaldi and C.P.E. Bach. And more than a decade ago, we introduced Ukrainian pianist **Inna Faliks**, then just 18, as our young artist. Now with a critically acclaimed international career, she returns to perform Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1. This season our rising star is Russian-born violinist **Elina Lev**, a 22-year-old award-winning wunderkind who will play Mendelssohn's E Minor Violin Concerto for the composer's birthday celebration.

Our programs round out with two Haydn symphonies paying homage to his enduring genius, works by Telemann and Mozart, more Beethoven ("Egmont" Overture, also 1809) and Mendelssohn, and two Strings signatures – Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 and Dvorak's Serenade.

To everything there is a season; this is the time to celebrate our 30 years together making music.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lawrence Block".

Lawrence Block

"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



Francesco Milioto, Principal Conductor

Francesco Milioto, born in Toronto of Italian parentage, begins his second full season with the Highland Park Strings as principal conductor. Previously, he was assistant conductor for two years under Francis Akos, who was Strings music director and conductor until becoming emeritus at the conclusion of the 2006-2007 season. A bright star in the musical community acclaimed by the Chicago Tribune as “one of the best young conductors working in the Chicago area,” Milioto is active as an opera and symphonic conductor, as well as pianist and vocal coach.



Francesco Milioto

In addition to the Strings, Milioto is music director of the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra, co-founder and conductor of the New Millennium Orchestra and in his eighth year as music director of the Chicago Cultural Center Summer Opera, a venue where he often performs as a chamber musician and accompanist. Other appearances include Opera Elgin and Opera on the James.

Since 2003 he has been engaged as a regular rehearsal pianist and assistant conductor at the Ravinia Festival where he works closely

with Maestro James Conlon and the CSO, which this past summer included such projects as the Gala Benefit Concert with Kiri Te Kanawa, Mahler’s “*Symphony of a Thousand*,” and productions of Mozart’s “*Don Giovanni*” and “*Abduction from the Seraglio*” in the Martin Theatre. As a teacher and performer, he is committed to bringing music to students all over Chicagoland with such companies as Opera Theater North, Urban Gateways, Chicago Opera Theater, Gallery 37 and the Kraft Kids Series at Ravinia.

“Once again, the spark plug was the vigorous conducting of Francesco Milioto, around whose fine instrumental ensemble the...action cavorted, danced and tumbled (“Love for Three Oranges”). He kept everything moving at full throttle...”

– John von Rhein, Chicago Tribune



“From the first sweep of the violins at the beginning of Bach’s Suite No. 1, it was apparent that the conductor was calling out the best in his players. The ensemble was silky, yet packed with vitality...the orchestra segued into Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 4 (“Italian”) with such grace and energy that it was difficult not to applaud after the first movement.”

– Dorothy Andries,
Pioneer Press

History & Mission

Founded in 1979 by Lawrence Block, an attorney who serves as co-principal cellist and general manager, the mission of the Highland Park Strings remains to provide community concerts free of charge where families, friends and North Shore neighbors can gather for an afternoon of musical enjoyment at the highest level featuring top-notch soloists, many from the Chicago Symphony, others from the world stage and gifted rising stars who are given the opportunity to shine. But it is the extraordinary commitment of accomplished amateur chamber musicians now blended with a smattering of professionals who have established the ensemble’s reputation as a cultural institution on the North Shore called the “*little miracle in Highland Park*” by the Chicago Tribune. For 28 years, the esteemed **Francis Akos** was at the helm as music director and conductor until becoming emeritus in May 2007. Now the baton has passed to his talented successor, Francesco Milioto.



Celebrating Our Uniqueness

Thirty years ago, the Park District of Highland Park assumed the unlikely role of sponsoring a classical ensemble. Its ongoing support, augmented by funds raised from an annual benefit concert, *Y.E.A!* Highland Park and the generosity of individual donors have sustained the unique policy of free admission for Strings concerts.



Preconcert Conversations
with Stephanie Ettelson
Musicologist, Critic, Violinist
promptly at 2 pm

All are welcome to attend!



October 12, 2008

3 pm • Free Admission • Elm Place School • 2031 Sheridan Road

Recently formed as the Goldstein – Kaler – Peled Trio, the “Three Virtuosi” -- pianist Alon Goldstein, violinist Ilya Kaler and cellist Amit Peled -- have quickly catapulted to one of the most promising young trios on the international scene. Their exceptional synergy will be heard in the Beethoven Triple Concerto, essentially a concerto for piano trio, the only concerto Beethoven ever wrote for more than one solo instrument.

🎷 Mozart

Divertimento in D Major,
K. 136

🎷 Stutschewsky

Hassidic Suite for
Cello and Strings
Amit Peled, Cello

🎷 Vivaldi

Concerto for Violin and
Orchestra in F Major,
Op. 8, No. 3 (“Autumn”)
from The Four Seasons
Ilya Kaler, Violin

🎷 Mendelssohn

Sinfonia for Strings No. 1
in C Major

🎷 Beethoven

Concerto for Piano,
Violin and Orchestra,
in C Major, Op. 56
Alon Goldstein, Piano
Ilya Kaler, Violin
Amit Peled, Cello



Alon Goldstein



Ilya Kaler



Amit Peled

Alon Goldstein, a native of Israel and a 10-time winner of America-Israel Cultural Foundation scholarships, studied with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Conservatory. He has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the symphonies of San Francisco, Houston, Saint Louis, Dallas, Baltimore and Vancouver. He has played with all the major orchestras in Israel, including the Israeli Philharmonic under the batons of Zubin Mehta, Yoel Levi and Herbert Blomstedt. An alumnus of Ravinia’s Rising Stars, recital performances have taken him to venues throughout the U.S. and Europe. This is his first appearance with the Strings.

Ilya Kaler, who made his Strings debut in 2005, is the only violinist ever to win Gold Medals at all three of the world’s most prestigious

competitions -- the Tchaikovsky, Sibelius and Paganini. He studied in his homeland at the Moscow Conservatory with Leonid Kogan and Viktor Tretyakov, earning his doctorate and Gold Medal Award. He has concertized with distinguished orchestras in Russia, Europe, Canada, Israel, Korea, South America, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and the United States. His discography includes the Schumann sonatas, the concerti of Shostakovich, Dvorak, Glazunov and Paganini. His recordings of the Paganini concerti and caprices were hailed by the American Record Guide to be “in a class by themselves.”

Amit Peled, born in Israel, returns for his second Strings appearance. He attended the New England Conservatory of Music, augmenting his studies with Bernard Greenhouse. He was described by The American Record Guide as “having the flair of the young Rostropovich.” With his appointment to the Peabody Conservatory in 2003, he became one of the youngest cello professors in the United States. He has performed in major recital venues, including Wigmore Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, Konzerthaus in Berlin and Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv. He has recorded the Elgar Cello Concerto with pieces by Bloch and Rachmaninov, as well as works by contemporary Israeli composers. Peled performs on a rare Andrea Guarneri cello ca. 1689.

“Such performances take a kind of courage so seldom heard these days you want to hear him (Alon Goldstein) at every possible opportunity.”

– Philadelphia Inquirer

“You will never hear the violin (Ilya Kaler) played more perfectly.”

– The Los Angeles Times

“Amit Peled is one of the most gifted cellists of the new generation.”

– Bernard Greenhouse

Mendelssohn Bicentennial (1809-1847) – The remarkable Sinfonia for Strings No. 1, part of a 13-work series, was written when the child prodigy was 12 in 1821, setting the stage for his teenage masterpieces, the Octet and Overture to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, composed at 16 and 17, respectively.

December 14, 2008

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



Rising star **Elina Lev**, age 22, was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. Invited to attend the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University in 2007 where she studied with Vadim Gluzman, she has played the violin since she was five. In her homeland, she attended the Secondary Special School of Music for Gifted Children at the St. Petersburg State Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory and in 2004 entered the Conservatory itself. Her studies have included master classes with such artists as Ida Haendel, Ruggiero Ricci and Shlomo Mintz.

She has garnered numerous prizes at competitions, including winner of the International Youth "Virtuoso 2000" Competition in St. Petersburg in 1997 and awards in the International Youth Composers Competition where she was chosen as the best performer of contemporary music. In 2001 she took first prize in the prestigious Glazunov International Violin Competition in Paris.

Following her debut with the St. Petersburg State Philharmonic Orchestra in 2002 playing the Mendelssohn E Minor Violin Concerto, Lev was invited to perform at the International Mravinsky Anniversary Festival in Tallinn, Estonia, in memory of the great Russian conductor. For two years, she was a member of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra directed by Claudio Abbado. Since coming to Chicago, she has won scholarships from the North Shore Music Club, the Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation and the Evanston Music Club. In 2008, she joined the New World Symphony in Miami Beach.

Mendelssohn Bicentennial (1809-1847) ~ Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto was his last large orchestral work, completed two years before his death and composed for his intimate friend and violinist, Ferdinand David. It summarizes the essence of Mendelssohnian style and is probably the most popular and frequently performed violin concerto of all time.

Haydn Bicentennial (1732-1809) ~ Many of Haydn's 104 symphonies have a programmatic description in the title of historic or picturesque interest. In 1794 he composed the Minuet to Symphony 101 as a tune to be played by a tiny organ in a musical clock invented for his patron, Prince Esterhazy. The famous "ticktock" accompaniment of the *Andante* was composed to "explain" the mechanical implications of the music to his audience.



Full House



Bach

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3
in G Major

Haydn

Symphony No. 101 in D Major
(*"Clock"*)

Mendelssohn

Concerto for Violin and
Orchestra in E Minor, Op. 64
Elina Lev, Violin



February 8, 2009

Benefit Concert Sponsored by Y.E.A.! Highland Park

3 pm • \$40 General Admission • Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia (limited seating)

Preferred seating for all contributors of \$100 and above. Call Park District for tickets at 847.831.3810.

Violinist Rachel Barton Pine and lifelong friend, cellist Wendy Warner, recently recorded “Double Play: Twentieth Century Duos for Violin and Cello” for Cedille Records, capping their musical collaborations and prodigious accomplishments begun in 1985 as members of the Diller String Quartet in Winnetka.

Mendelssohn

Hebrides Overture
("Fingal's Cave")

Copland

Lincoln Portrait
Welz Kauffman, Narrator

Haydn

Symphony No. 85 in B-Flat
Major ("La Reine")

Brahms

Concerto for Violin, Cello
and Orchestra in A Minor,
Op. 102

Rachel Barton Pine, Violin
Wendy Warner, Cello

"Rachel Barton Pine... is an exciting, boundary-defying performer, soloing in the Brahms Concerto one day, jamming with members of Black Sabbath the next. In an adventurous, virtually flawless performance Sunday night at the National Gallery of Art, Pine showed she's a major talent."

—Washington Post

"Her playing (Wendy Warner's) is urbane, delicately nuanced — even exquisite would not be too poetic a word."

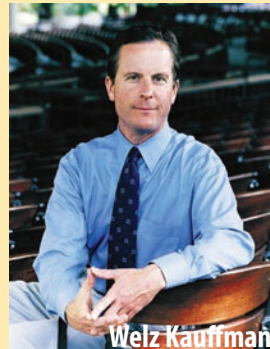
— The New York Post



Rachel Barton Pine



Wendy Warner



Welz Kauffman

Rachel Barton Pine seems to be part of the life's blood of the Strings as she returns to center stage for the seventh time. Considered "Chicago's own," she has performed all over the world, including the Chicago, Baltimore, Dallas, Montreal, Vienna, New Zealand and Iceland Symphonies, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Israel and Scottish Chamber Orchestras. Her festival appearances include Ravinia, Marlboro and Salzburg. She holds top prizes from the J.S. Bach, Queen Elisabeth, Paganini, Kreisler, Szigeti and Montreal international competitions and has 13 critically acclaimed albums for the Cedille, Forian and Cacophony labels. She performs on the "ex-Soldat" Guarneri del Gesu 1742.

Wendy Warner emerged on the world stage in 1990 when she won First Prize in the Fourth International Rostropovich Competition in Paris, followed by her debut with the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rostropovich and subsequent tour of North America. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, she studied with Nell Novak from age 6 at the Music Center of the North Shore (now Music Institute of Chicago) until joining Rostropovich at Curtis. In 1991 she was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career grant and debuted at New York's Carnegie Hall. Major orchestral appearances have included the symphonies of Chicago, Boston, Dallas, San Francisco and Philadelphia in the U.S., and London, Berlin, Hong Kong and the Moscow Virtuosi abroad. This marks her second appearance with the Strings.

Welz Kauffman, president and CEO of the Ravinia Festival since 2000, brings a new dimension to his position as one of the leading arts administrators in the United States with his innovations in programming, audience development and professional education for young artists. A talented pianist who studied music at California's Occidental College and Tanglewood, he will narrate "Lincoln Portrait," following in the footsteps of many celebrities attracted to the role such as Henry Fonda, Katharine Hepburn, Charlton Heston, Paul Newman, Gregory Peck and Carl Sandburg.

Haydn Bicentennial (1732-1809) - Haydn's Symphony No. 85, "La Reine," also known as "The Queen of France," was the fourth of six symphonies he wrote in 1785-1786 for Parisian musical society, which included patroness Marie Antoinette, formerly an Austrian princess who took particular delight in this work.

Mendelssohn Bicentennial (1809-1847) - Often influenced by his travels, Mendelssohn visited Fingal's Cave, a huge sea grotto on the island of Staffa in the Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland in 1829. The locale inspired him to suggest its atmosphere in an overture by "pure" musical means, entirely without benefit of special effects. It stands as one of the most successful pieces of its kind in the literature.

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial (1809-1865) - In "Lincoln Portrait," for full orchestra composed in 1942 as part of the WWII patriotic war effort, Copland (1900-1990) excerpts material from speeches and letters of our 16th President as a narrative with original folk songs as the moving backdrop.

March 29, 2009

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



Mathieu Dufour

Mathieu Dufour, principal flute of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1999, made his American solo debut with the Strings that same season and now returns for the third time to perform on this strings only concert. He has endeared himself to Chicago audiences as soloist on CSO subscription concerts under the baton of Daniel Barenboim and at the Ravinia Festival with Christoph Eschenbach. He also is a member of the Chicago Chamber Musicians.

Dufour came to Chicago from the National Orchestra of the Paris Opera where he was *Supersoliste* (principal solo flute) for three years. At age 20, he was named principal flute of the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, a position he held from 1993 to 1996, establishing his reputation for “purity of sound, intelligent musicality and a real sense of the collective experience of music-making.”

Born in Paris where he began flute studies at age 8 with Madeleine Chassang at the National Regional Conservatory of Paris, he received the school’s Gold Medal by unanimous vote at 14, followed by another unanimous first prize at the National Conservatory of Music of Lyon in 1990 as a student of Maxence Larrieu. Many other prestigious awards followed.

As a member of the Georges Cziffra and Juventus Foundations, he has concertized around the world as part of their Young European Soloists Ensemble. In great demand as a coach and teacher, he is on the faculty of Roosevelt University. His discography includes a recently released solo recital of sonatas by Prokofiev, Martinu, and Hindemith; Poulenc’s complete chamber music; and the complete works for flute by Roussel.

May 10, 2009

3 pm • Free Admission • Elm Place School • 2031 Sheridan Road



Inna Faliks

Since performing with the Strings in 1996 following her Chicago Symphony debut at age 15 and prior to her Carnegie Hall debut, Ukrainian-born American pianist **Inna Faliks** has amassed a concert career of the first magnitude performing recitals and concerti in prestigious venues here and abroad, and under the baton of conductors such as Leonard Slatkin, Keith Lockhart and Edward Polochick.

Among her many competitive triumphs are first prize in the International Hilton Head Piano Competition, National Federation of Music Clubs Competition, Yale Gordon Competition at Peabody Conservatory and the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition.

In 2007 Faliks received her Artist Diploma from the Accademia Pianistica Internazionale in Imola, Italy, and completed her doctorate with Gilbert Kalish at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. Previously, she studied with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Conservatory where she earned her master’s degree. After immigrating to the U.S. at age 10, she became a student of Emilio del Rosario at the Music Institute of Chicago where her mother Irene, also on the Institute’s faculty, was her first teacher. She often performs live on WFMT in-studio and on the Dame Myra Hess series. The piano prodigy also has been composing since age 6; her opera based on a Russian folk tale “*The Cat’s House*” was performed on Ukrainian television and won a Young Composer’s Competition Award.

Mendelssohn Bicentennial (1809-1847) ~ Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto No. 1 dates from 1830, just a year before his Fourth Symphony (“*Italian*”). It is an early example of the Romantic Period concerto with the solo instrument plunging in almost at the onset and themes from the first movement appearing “cyclically” in the rondo finale. His Third Symphony (“*Scottish*”) begun in 1829 but not completed until 1842 paints a tonal landscape, which Schumann described erroneously with great enthusiasm as “beautiful Italian pictures.”

🎷 Vivaldi

Concerto for Flute in G Minor (“*La Notte*”)

🎷 C.P.E. Bach

Concerto in D Minor
Mathieu Dufour, Flute

🎷 Telemann

Don Quixote Suite

🎷 Dvorak

Serenade for Strings in E Minor,
Op. 22

“Dufour at 35 is at the top of his game, one of the finest orchestral flute players in the world. What a rare pleasure to hear Dufour in a recital setting on his home stage.”

– Andrew Patner,
Chicago Sun-Times

🎷 Beethoven

Egmont Overture, Op. 84a
(1809)

🎷 Mendelssohn

Concerto for Piano and
Orchestra No. 1 in G Minor,
Op. 25
Inna Faliks, Piano

🎷 Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 3 in A Minor,
 (“*Scottish*”), Op. 56

“A delight to hear... Riveting ... passion and playfulness, warmly poetic.”

– Baltimore Sun

Highland Park Strings



www.hpstrings.org



Photo by Bill Shonfeld

Alice Anson, Sylvia Arden, Hugh (Bud) Block, Lawrence Block, Laura Brodsky, Dennis Burg, Lucy Colman, Jane Conway, Iris Cosnow, Stephanie Ettelson, Rachel Fisher, Elaine Fohrman, Igor Gersh, Betty Hill, Olena Hirna, Gregory Jacobson, Munkbagt Jihd, Dominic Johnson, Barbara Julis, Joseph Krzysiak, Stephanie Goldman Meis, Francesco Milioto, Joan Noven, Stephanie Quinn, Joanne Ross, Francine Sherman, Marilyn Shonfeld, Susan Silverstone, Arnold Sklar, Margarita Solomensky, Mary Stoltz, Jerry Taxy, Lorraine Wallace, Ronna Warshauer, Karen Weismehl, Nora Williams, Marylou Witz



Park District of Highland Park
636 Ridge Road
Highland Park, Illinois 60035

Five Family Concerts

"Sundays at 3 pm"

October 12

Alon Goldstein, Ilya Kaler & Amit Peled

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Elina Lev

February 8 (Benefit)

Rachel Barton Pine
& Wendy Warner
Welz Kauffman

May 10

Mathieu Dufour

May 10

Inna Faliks

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