



# HIGHLAND PARK STRINGS

*Highland Park's Got Talent*



**40th Anniversary Season 2018-2019**

**Dr. Robert G. Hasty, Principal Conductor**

**FREE COMMUNITY CONCERTS**

# Highland Park's Got Talent

## Our 40th Anniversary Season Four Community Concerts Sundays at 3pm

As we set to begin our 40th Anniversary Season, the mission of the Strings remains the same: 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. This unique policy of free admission is made possible by the Park District of Highland Park, YEA! Highland Park, the Negaunee Foundation and the generosity of other supportive foundations and individual donors.

We are also pleased this season to join in the celebration of the sesquicentennial of the City of Highland Park which was organized in 1869. To help observe this special year-long event—titled “HP150”, ALL of the soloists at our concerts will be residents of Highland Park. It is not an overstatement to say: “Highland Park’s Got Talent”.

Our opening concert in October will present the acclaimed pianist **SUSAN MERDINGER**. Making her second appearance with the Strings, Merdinger will perform the great *Piano Concerto No. 1* by Tchaikovsky—a first for the Strings in celebration of our 40th Anniversary. The holiday concert in December will feature husband and wife, **DAVID CUNLIFFE AND DESIREE RUHSTRAT**. Comprising two-thirds of the Grammy nominated Lincoln Trio ( which this summer made it’s 11th appearance at Ravinia), David and Desiree will perform *The Muse and the Poet* by Saint-Saens. I will also be joined by **LUCY COLMAN** ( my stand partner for 40 years) in the *Concerto for Two Cellos* by Vivaldi—a reprise of our first performance 28 years ago.

For our Gala Benefit Concert in the intimate and acoustically perfect Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia on February 10, we are fortunate to have back for his second appearance with the Strings, world-class pianist **JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO**. In this celebratory all Beethoven concert, Osorio will perform the *Piano Concerto No. 4* and the Strings will add the *Coriolanus Overture* and the famed *Fifth Symphony*.

The final concert in May features Highland Park High School graduate, cellist **BEN FRIED**, who will perform the extraordinarily difficult *Concerto No. 1* by Shostakovich. The Strings will close the season with the *New World Symphony* by Dvorak.

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



Lawrence Block  
Founder and General Manager



“Congratulations and thank you to Larry Block and the incredibly talented members of the Highland Park Strings! May they continue to provide a cultural focal point for our city and beyond.”

– Nancy Rotering  
Mayor of Highland Park



Photo: Bruce Powell



Photo: Yawen Wu

## Dr. Robert G. Hasty, Principal Conductor

Dr. Hasty begins his second full year as Principal Conductor of the Strings, having quickly become beloved by the orchestra and the audience. Dr. Hasty is the conductor of the Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia of the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University where he also serves as the Associate Director of Orchestras. He is also the Music Director of the Kenosha and the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestras and Artistic Director of the International Schools Choral Music Society. Dr. Hasty

began his career teaching music in the public schools in Southern California. A noted researcher in music cognition, Dr. Hasty is the author of two publications delivered at the 7th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition in Sydney, Australia. As a conductor, Dr. Hasty has appeared with the All-American College Orchestra at Walt Disney World, Beijing Youth Orchestra, and the Elmhurst and Grant Park Symphonies, among many others. He also continues to perform as a freelance violinist and violist. These days, you will find him fiddling in several Chicagoland clubs and venues with various local bands, most notably performing and recording with his wife, singer-songwriter Christina Trullio.



Photo: Yawen Wu



The Highland Park Strings, 1979-1980 Season

"The Highland Park Strings is loved as much as it was...when a group of musicians first played classical string music for the community"

- Hilary Anderson,  
Highland Park Landmark

"I think the...Strings is great. It's one of the things that makes the fabric of Highland Park special."

- Ken Henry, YEA! Highland Park



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

# OCTOBER 21

## TCHAIKOVSKY PIANO CONCERTO

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

*Sponsored by YEA! Highland Park and First Bank of Highland Park*

### TCHAIKOVSKY

Polonaise from Eugene Onegin

### SCHUMANN

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major ("Spring")

### TCHAIKOVSKY

Concerto for Piano No. 1 in B-flat minor, Op. 23  
*Susan Merdinger, Piano*

A resident of Highland Park since 2003, Steinway Artist **SUSAN MERDINGER** has been acclaimed for her stunning performances. Among her many honors, Merdinger is a two-time First Prize winner of the Bradshaw and Bueno International Piano Competition, Gold Medalist of the Global Music Awards, and winner of the Dewar's Young Artists Award, the Artist's International Young Musicians Competition and the Artist's International Distinguished Alumni Winners Prize. Having made her debut at Carnegie Recital Hall, her live performances and recordings have been broadcast on radio and television throughout the USA, Canada and Europe. She has been a Guest Artist on the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chamber Series, Live from WFMT and the Chicago Latino Music Festival, and has soloed with the Chicago Philharmonic, Lake County and Tahoe Symphonies and the Orchestra Sinfonica del Estado de Mexico. Merdinger studied at Yale University, the Yale School of Music, and the Manhattan School of Music. She is an Artist Faculty of the Summit Music Festival in New York and Artistic Director and Founder of Sheridan Music Studio. She will perform the lyrical and virtuosic *Concerto No. 1* by Tchaikovsky and the Strings will add the *Polonaise* from Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin and the "Spring" *Symphony* of Schumann.



"Merdinger has the magic touch...I was spellbound from the first note to the last"

- Lynn Rene Bayley, Fanfare Magazine

"Truly amazing...Great insight...Breathtaking...Refreshing. Cries of bravo and enthusiastic applause were the thanks ...received for her generously endowed gifts."

- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany

# DECEMBER 2

## DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE

3pm | Free Admission/Highland Park High School

433 Vine Avenue

Sponsored by YEA!Highland Park

### BACH

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G Major (BWV 1048)

### VIVALDI

Concerto for Two Cellos in G Minor, RV 531

Lucy Colman, Larry Block, Cellos

### SAINT-SAENS

La Muse et le Poete for Violin and Cello. Op. 132

Desiree Ruhstrat, Violin, David Cunliffe, Cello

### SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 3 in D Major, D. 200

**DESIREE RUHSTRAT** made her professional

debut at age 12 with Lukas Foss and the Milwaukee Symphony and at age 16, she was invited by Sir Georg Solti to perform Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in Chicago's Orchestra Hall. Ruhstrat has appeared as soloist with orchestras throughout the world, including the Berlin Radio Symphony, Radio Suisse Romande, Gottingen Symphony, and the Colorado, Oregon and Utah Symphonies, among many others. A highly regarded

teacher, Ruhstrat is currently on the faculty at Northwestern University. Her husband,

**DAVID CUNLIFFE**, has performed with the BBC Philharmonic, BBC Scottish and Royal Scottish Symphony Orchestras and the Balancscu Quartet with whom he toured extensively in Australia, Europe and the United States. Cunliffe is currently on the faculty of the Music Institute of Chicago. As founding members of the Grammy nominated Lincoln Trio ( which this past summer performed for the 11th time at Ravinia), Ruhstrat and Cunliffe have performed throughout the United States including appearances at Carnegie's Weill Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Bryant Park Festival , Barge Music, Poisson Rouge, and in Springfield, Illinois, where the Trio was chosen to celebrate the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial with President Barack Obama. They will perform *La Muse et le Poete* by Saint-Saens. To add to the festive nature of the Holiday Concert, **LARRY BLOCK AND LUCY COLMAN**, stand partners in the Strings for 40 years, will reprise the *Concerto for Two Cellos* by Vivaldi, first performed by them in December, 1990. The Strings will add the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3* of Bach and the *Symphony No. 3* of Schubert.



"Many many thanks to you and the Strings for all the years of truly wonderful concerts. The Strings are a real gem and true asset to the area. Every single concert has always been...of downtown caliber."

- Philip Bechen

# February 10 Annual Benefit

## Beethoven Spectacular

3pm | \$40 General Admission

Bennett-Gordon Hall, Ravinia

Call 847.831.3622 for tickets

Sponsored by *The Negaunee Foundation*

### BEETHOVEN

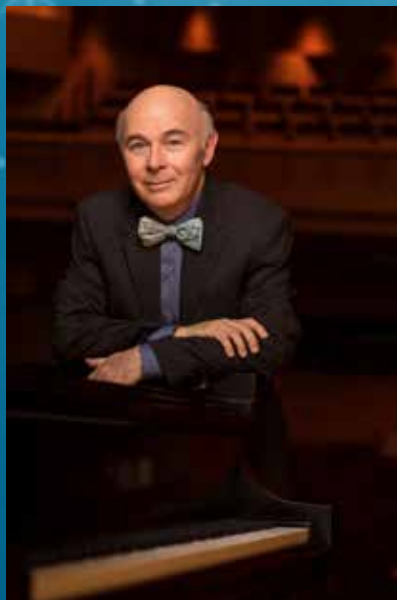
Coriolanus Overture, Op. 62

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op.58

*Jorge Federico Osorio, Piano*

Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67

Highly revered in his native Mexico, **JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO**, who has lived in Highland Park for twenty years, has been lauded throughout the world for his superb musicianship, powerful technique, vibrant imagination, and deep passion. He is the recipient of several international prizes and awards, including the prestigious Medal Bellas Artes, the highest honor granted by Mexico's National Institute of Fine Arts. Osorio has performed with the world's leading ensembles, including the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Seattle, the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, and the Israel, Warsaw and Royal Philharmonics. He has collaborated with such distinguished conductors as Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos, James Conlon, Bernard Haitink, Manfred Honeck, Mariss Jansons, Lorin Maazel and Jaap van Zweden, among many others. An avid chamber music performer, he has performed with Yo-Yo Ma, Ani Kavafian, Elmar Oliveira, Henryk Szeryng, and the the Moscow Quartet. He began studying the piano at age five with his mother and later attended the conservatories of Mexico, Paris and Moscow. He currently serves on the faculty of Roosevelt University's College of Performing Arts. Mr. Osorio will perform *Beethoven's Concerto No. 4* and the Strings will add the *Coriolanus Overture* and the beloved *Symphony No. 5*.



"An imaginative interpreter with a powerful technique"

- New York Times

"One of the more elegant and accomplished pianists on the planet"

- Los Angeles Times

"A serious and cultivated Beethoven player"

- Chicago Tribune

### Bonus for Major Contributors

Show how important Strings concerts are to you and the community by making a donation of \$100 or more. You will receive a minimum of two tickets, preferred seating, listing in the Program Book, and free tickets to a Donor Appreciation Chamber Music Concert at 3pm on Sunday, April 7, at the Highland Park Community House. The Strings is exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

# MAY 19

## The New World Symphony

3pm | Free Admission /Highland Park High School  
433 Vine Avenue

Sponsored by the:  Rotary Club of Highland Park/Highwood

### SHOSTAKOVICH

Concerto for Cello No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op.107

### DVORAK

Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")

Born in Highland Park, cellist **BEN FRIED**, is carving out a versatile career as a soloist, chamber musician, and composer. He has performed several times on WFMT, and twice on National Public Radio. While a student at Eastman School of Music, he was chosen to receive the prestigious Performer's Certificate, and went on to win the school's concerto competition. He is a prize winner of the Grand Prize Virtuoso Competition, the Eastman Honor's Music Competition, and the St. Paul String Quartet Competition. He performs regularly on tour for the Heifetz International Music Institute, and is a 2018 "artist in residence" at the Festival. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in cello performance at the University of Southern California under the tutelage of Andrew Shulman. Previous cello teachers include Timothy Eddy, Steven Doane and Hans Jensen. Also a dedicated composer, he studies composition under Morten Lauridsen at USC and frequently performs his own works internationally.

Ben will perform the *First Concerto* of Shostakovich, widely considered to be one of the most difficult concerted works for cello. The Strings will conclude the season with Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, one of the most popular of all symphonies.



The recent concert with the young violinist, Joshua Brown, was marvelous. We took my 8 year old grandson...and he loved it. Just had to tell you how wonderful it is to have HP Strings. Thank you for starting such an important resource."

– Judith Levy

"The audience gave the ...orchestra standing ovations throughout the performance, but once the concert ended, they wanted more."

– Gail Tzipporah Saunders, Highland Park Landmark

"The seeds you planted all those years ago continue to blossom and flourish"

– Barbara Render

"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... 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



**Park District of Highland Park**

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# HIGHLAND PARK STRINGS

40th Season | 2018-2019 | Dr. Robert G. Hasty, Principal Conductor

October 21 – Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto/Highland Park High School

December 2 – Double Your Pleasure | Highland Park High School

February 10 (Benefit) – Beethoven Spectacular | Jorge Federico Osorio | Bennett-Gordon Hall, Ravinia

May 19 – The New World Symphony | Highland Park High School

Call 847.831.3622

Visit [hpstrings.org](http://hpstrings.org)

*Free Admission*