

# ARTEMIS

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



**Sunday, February 18th | 3:00pm**  
**Trinity Episcopal Church**  
**Highland Park, IL**

# WELCOME

Dear Friends,

Welcome and thank you for joining us at our first public concert of the year! Yesterday we held a Partner Concert with the Waukegan Middle School Honors Orchestra, sharing the stage with almost 30 middle school students. Partner Concerts are an ACO initiative formed to give underprivileged students the opportunity to see up close and personal how a professional musician plays their instrument, an opportunity they otherwise would not normally have. Their excitement was palpable. I sincerely thank our donors for helping fund Partner Concerts like this!

Today we share with you a program featuring Norwegian Edvard Grieg and Swede Dag Wirén, two composers whose music is steeped in the Scandinavian folk style and blended perfectly with the western classical tradition. We are also playing one of my all-time favorite pieces, *Adagio for Strings*, by American composer Samuel Barber. It is an incredibly moving slow movement from his first string quartet.

Enjoy,  
Diana Economou





## Winter Concert

Sunday, February 18, 2024

3:00pm

Trinity Episcopal Church

Highland Park, IL

Diana Economou, Conductor

**Dag Wirén** (1905-1986)

*Serenade for Strings, Op. 11*

*I. Preludium*

*II. Andante espressivo*

*III. Scherzo*

*IV. Marcia*

**Samuel Barber** (1910-1981)

*Adagio for Strings, Op. 11*

**Edvard Grieg** (1843-1907)

*From Holberg's Time, Op. 40*

*I. Præludium*

*II. Sarabande*

*III. Gavotte*

*IV. Air*

*V. Rigaudon*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Serenade for Strings, Op. 11**

Dag Ivar Wirén was born in 1905 in Striberg, Sweden, a tiny village about 200 miles west of Stockholm. While not an internationally known composer, within Sweden he is considered a national treasure. At age 21 he entered the Stockholm Conservatory and three years later won a scholarship to study in Paris where he came to know the music of French avant-garde composers such as Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Poulenc, and Milhaud.




Upon moving back to Sweden to a northern suburb of Stockholm called Danderyd, he composed his first two symphonies and his most famous work, today's selection, *Serenade for Strings*. He later went on to play piano for the Swedish Radio and sit on the boards of the Society of Swedish Composers and the Royal Swedish Opera.

Wirén once commented that his aim was to entertain and please, and to compose listener-friendly "modern" music, which he does absolutely brilliantly in the *Serenade for Strings*. It opens brightly and cheerfully with chattering violins under a soaring melody. It certainly is easy listening, though with surprising harmonic shifts characteristic of early 20th century music. This *Preludium* and Grieg's *Præludium* share quite a few features, suggesting that Wirén was well exposed to his music and may even have referenced Grieg's dance suite while writing this piece.

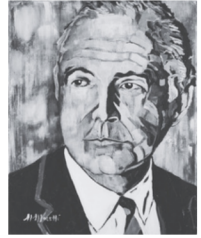
The second movement marked, *Andante espressivo*, is a fun, simple piece defined by pizzicato which run through the entire movement. Pizzicato is a string technique where the strings are plucked instead of bowed. By having all the musicians pluck, a particular atmosphere is created over which the bowed melody can float while still being supported and grounded.

Next comes a scherzo in which Wirén takes full advantage of the agility and charm of a smaller ensemble. Scherzo in Italian means "joke". In a classical musical context, it is a type of movement Beethoven made up by speeding the Minuet and Trio dance form to an un-danceable speed (therein lies the joke). The tradition by 1937, when Wirén was writing this piece and to which he stuck, was to add rhythmic unexpectedness such as putting emphasis in a two pattern instead of the normal three pattern. He ends the movement with an adorable pizzicato cadence after a short coda.

Usually a march, *marcia* in Italian, ought to have drums of some sort, but in a string piece, the composer needs a bit of creativity. In Wirén's case, the players start off with short bow strokes simulating drum strokes. In some ways this is advantageous because he can add harmony to a part that would normally be un-pitched. He also uses a classic drum rhythm starting in the second violin:  (long-short-short). This movement contains the most dissonant 20th century harmonies in the piece, but overall is a friendly, cheerful, triumphant march. It ends unassumingly, in a way that might make you guess whether the piece is really over.

## ***Adagio for Strings, Op. 11***

How can one describe music so ineffable as the *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber? Any description or analysis simply does not suffice, nor is it necessary. Only in the experience of the work can one understand. It immediately captures the attention and moves the heart. It is timeless.



## ***From Holberg's Time, Op. 40***



In 1884, the city of Bergen was commemorating the 200 year anniversary of distinguished Baron of Holberg's birthday. Ludvig Holberg was a writer, philosopher, and historian born in Bergen, Grieg's hometown. Bergen is on the west coast of Norway among mountains and fjords. One of its ports is depicted on the cover of today's program.

Grieg's contribution to the celebrations was a piano suite of baroque dances titled *From Holberg's Time, suite in olden style* which he arranged for string orchestra the next year. By 1884, composers had been reckoning with how to write music post-Beethoven for about sixty years. Retrospectively called the Late Romantic era, composers of this time turned to their country's national folk music as inspiration and to put a personal stamp on their music. Grieg was no exception, even taking it a step further, claiming, "My material has been drawn from the whole of the surroundings of Bergen. Its natural beauty, the life of its people, the city's achievements and activities of every kind have been an inspiration to me. I find the odour of the German Quay, exciting; in fact, I am sure my music has a taste of codfish in it."

Scandinavian Romanticism in Norway took off with Grieg at the forefront of Norwegian composers trying to establish a culture separate from Denmark's, on which Norway had depended in many ways for over 400 years. Norwegian Holberg, for example, moved to Copenhagen, Denmark and stayed until his death. Now, Bergen was reclaiming its lost son in the process of attempting to constitute an independent Norwegian cultural identity.

Grieg's suite opens with an introductory, bustling *Præludium*, followed by a slow and somber *Sarabande*, a dance of Spanish origin in three. The *Gavotte* that follows perfectly supports the dance's steps in which dancers leap on beat one and land heavily on beat two. A short *Musette* provides some diversion in the middle of the *Gavotte*, identified by the allusion to bagpipe drones in the bass. After comes an extensive, doleful *Air* followed by a *Rigaudon* that ends the suite in a bright, bubbling fashion. In many ways this is a precursor to 20th century neoclassical works. Grieg succeeded in adding a fresh, Norwegian flavor to the baroque suite through means of phrase lengths, melodic shape, and chromatic harmonies which never would have been written during the Baroque era.



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## ABOUT ACO

Music is capable of affecting its listeners in profound ways. Perhaps more than any other art, music is able to enter our souls directly and alter us for the better. Live music brings people together to share in a momentary but beautiful and unique communal experience, something sorely needed these days.

Artemis Chamber Orchestra was formed to provide this experience to the people of the North Shore. We seek to perform masterworks of the orchestral chamber music repertoire at the highest level to provide our audience with the experience of beautiful music, something capable not only of engaging and inspiring, but transforming lives.

There is a surprising absence of chamber music in our community. By staying local and accessible to our audience, hiring from the abundance of highly qualified local musicians, and commissioning local composers, we are actively working to grow the classical music scene in the North Shore.

Additionally, ACO holds Partner Concerts with underprivileged schools in order to provide outstanding musical experiences to students who otherwise would not have the opportunity to play with and hear professional orchestras.



## Violin I

Jinty McTavish, *concertmaster*  
Queenie Edwards  
Olga Kossovich  
Alec Tonno

## Violin II

Gereltuya Tumur  
Ari Fisher  
Ethan Epple

## Viola

Robert Hasspacher  
Annika Sundberg  
Jay Pike

## Cello

Christopher Ferrer  
Josh Zajac

## Bass

Sara Neilson

Markand Thakar; *Music Director, BCO*  
Elaine Jaharis  
Vangelis Economou; *Economou IP Law*  
Mark B. Burka; *CFA*  
Arnim Whisler III; *Private Equity*  
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## MUSIC DIRECTOR, FOUNDER



Diana Economou is a conductor from Chicago's north suburbs whose passion and talent for music has led her to perform around the world including in the Chicago Symphony Center, the Sydney Opera House, and in Sofia, Bulgaria. She's trained with leading conductors such as Markand Thakar, Larry Rachleff, Gary Lewis, and Donald Schleicher and has conducted professional orchestras such as the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and the Bulgarian New Symphony Orchestra. In 2019 Diana founded Artemis Chamber Orchestra and proudly serves

as music director. After obtaining her music education degree from the University of Illinois U-C, she now works as a passionate and beloved orchestra teacher in Waukegan, Illinois.



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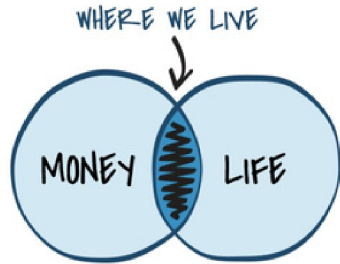


Image inspired by the work of Carl Richards

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Donor support is integral in allowing us to pursue our mission of performing the classical chamber repertoire at the highest level. We could not put on our concerts without generous donations; any sized gift will help ACO thrive for many seasons to come – please consider donating!

The Artemis Chamber Orchestra is a federally registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and donations are 100% tax deductible.



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Being the North Shore's community bank means doing our part to give back to the local charities and social organizations that unite and strengthen our communities.

We are particularly proud to support the Artemis Chamber Orchestra and its mission of providing professional musical experiences to students.



*"Something I learned from this experience is that with time, we will improve and be more confident in playing."*