

ARTEMIS

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Sunday, April 28th | 3:00pm
Trinity Episcopal Church
Highland Park, IL



art by Harriet Lawless

WELCOME

Dear Friends,

Welcome back to another beautiful concert, our final one of the season! I am so grateful to share the stage with Artemis' extremely talented musicians once again to offer our music to you.

I would love to let you in on my process of programming for our concerts. Often, I go down the rabbit hole of finding suitable chamber music for ACO to perform and come out some hours later with about 10 pieces added to my list. Currently the list is 99 pieces long. Then, the task is to discover which of these go well together.

For this concert, the main event is Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence*, a piece for strings. Finding music to pair with Tchaikovsky, an extremely passionate and eccentric composer, requires either an equal amount of fervor or something mellow and sweet to balance it out. Ari Fisher's *Springtime in my Hometown* and Sibelius' *Suite Mignonne* are both such pieces, absolutely delectable and pleasant, compared to the intensity and harmonic conflict in the two Tchaikovsky pieces.

I hope to have succeeded in making the program balanced and that you enjoy it as much as we enjoy performing,
Diana Economou
Music Director





Spring Concert

Sunday, April 28, 2024

3:00pm

Trinity Episcopal Church

Highland Park, IL

Diana Economou, Conductor

Ari Fisher (1991)

Springtime in my Hometown

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)

Suite mignonne, Op. 98a

I. Petite scène, Allegretto

II. Polka, Animoso

III. Épilogue, Vivace

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)**

Largo und Allegro

Souvenir de Florence, Op. 70

I. Allegro con spirito

II. Adagio cantabile e con moto

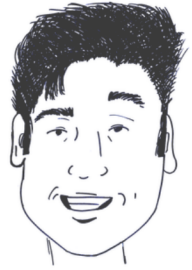
III. Allegretto moderato

IV. Allegro con brio e vivace

PROGRAM NOTES

Springtime in my Hometown

Springtime in my Hometown, a Korean folk song with lyrics by Won-Su Lee and music by Nan-Pa Hong, was composed between 1927-1929 during Japan's occupation of Korea. The song's lyrics and melody describe the feelings of the independence fighters during that period.



While a graduate student at Indiana University, I was commissioned to compose an encore piece based on the song for Jorja Fleezanis' chamber orchestra's tour of Seoul, South Korea. After studying the background and learning of the nostalgic message Nan-Pa Hong and Won-Su Lee wove into their song, I found a story to tell.

The piece begins as a simple lullaby with lyrics that describe the pure and beautiful country side of Korea, "old home deep in the flowery mountains of peach blossoms, apricots, and baby azaleas". As the music swells, one can feel the Korean's pride and imagine the bravery needed to fight for their country at a time when it was ruled by a foreign power.

Program note by Ari Fisher

Suite Mignonne, Op 98a

Describing Sibelius' fascination with nature, biographer Erik Tawaststjerna wrote, "even by Nordic standards, Sibelius responded with exceptional intensity to the moods of nature and the changes in the seasons: he scanned the skies with his binoculars for the geese flying over the lake ice, listened to the screech of the cranes, and heard the cries of the curlew echo over the marshy grounds just below Ainola." This sentiment is easily heard in Sibelius' *Suite Mignonne*, scored for two flutes and string orchestra.



Traditionally in western music, flutes represent birds, and here a strong connection can be heard. The first movement of the suite, "Petite Scene", opens with what one could imagine being a flock of birds descending, landing, and flitting and hopping their way through patches of a grove in search of seeds to eat. The birds then waltz together in perfect harmony with each other and their environment.

"Mignonne" in French means "daintily small" or "delicate", a perfect description for the work and particularly the second movement, a polka. Continuing our bird analogy, the pizzicato strings and staccato flutes liken the chirping and chattering of little birds in the early morning.

In the final movement, the birds take to the sky, one by one, and chase each other on the light breeze. Perhaps the slower legato B section represents the coming of dusk and the birds settling down for the night with the return of the A section evoking the birds' memory of their happy day in the sun.

Largo und Allegro

In contrast with *Souvenir de Florence*, which he wrote near the end of his life, Tchaikovsky wrote *Largo und Allegro* as a student at the St. Petersburg

Conservatory in 1863 or 1864. The Conservatory, the first in Russia, only opened in 1862. Russia does not have the same history in classical music as western European countries. The concept of a professional musician, let alone a professional composer, was unheard of. The Russian Five, amateur composers who met regularly to discuss what "Russian" music should sound like, paved the way for the opening of a conservatory in St. Petersburg, making it possible for Tchaikovsky to make a career as a composer.

The Russian Five were anti-Germanic music, so at first the conservatory's curriculum did not center around music theory in the traditional sense. This is evident in Tchaikovsky's student works, and even his later ones, not necessarily following the structure and harmony found in other western classical music, but still extremely creative and interesting.

Souvenir de Florence, Op. 70



In reading Anthony Holden's biography of Tchaikovsky, there is one main takeaway: Tchaikovsky was an eccentric man. Sensitive from childhood, his governess went so far as to call him a "child of glass" due to his frequent crying. As a mature composer, he frequently fled Russia after the first performance of any large-scale work which would be judged by his peers, critics, and the public. It was in one of these moments in 1890, fleeing the premiere of *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet, when he ended up in Florence.

During his stay, in a typical compositional craze, he sketched the entirety of his opera *The Queen of Spades* in 45 days. He wrote to his friend at this time,

"Something is going on deep within me... a distinct weariness with life, a sense of disillusion, at times a crazed anxiety, - no, something more hopeless, final, and, as is the way of finales, anticlimactic... at the same time, nonetheless, I still have a powerful urge to write [music]... One day I seem to feel that my song is sung, the next I wake up with an irresistible impulse to carry on with it - or, even better, write a new song."

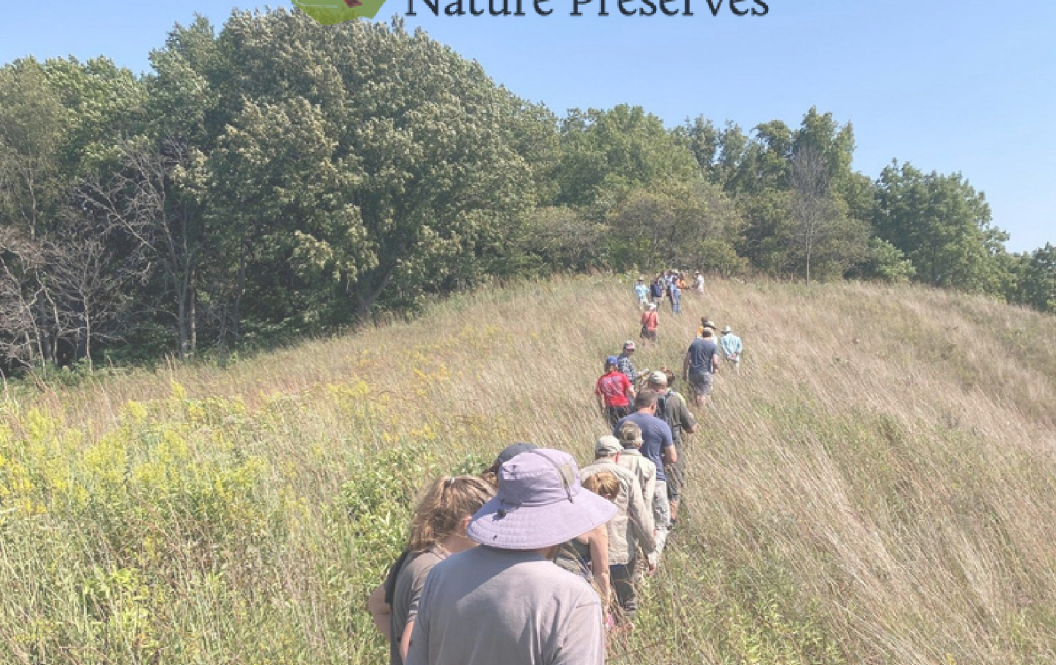
Also around this time, his wife, Antonia, whom he married in an attempt to put his homosexuality to rest (failing miserably), wrote again with more demands in exchange for keeping silent about his secret, infuriating and upsetting him terribly.

Once back in Russia he composed *Souvenir de Florence*, and from its first moments the psychological angst of his stay there is palpable. Historians of composers seldom like to use concurrent events in a composer's life to explain why they may have written a piece any given way, but most do with Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky himself made explicit reference to his music communicating his innermost emotions, saying, "The only music capable of moving and touching us is that which flows from the depths of a composer's soul when he is stirred by inspiration," and, "It is a musical confession of the soul, which unburdens itself through sounds just as a lyric poet expresses himself through poetry." It is safe to take his music at face value, and let his intense passion and emotion that he brought to everything he did in life wash over and move us.

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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 which not only engages and inspires us, but transforms 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.

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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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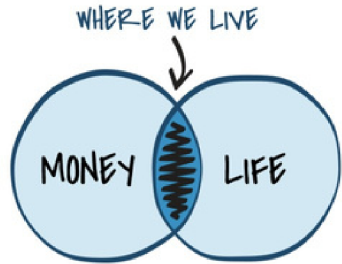


Image inspired by the work of Carl Richards

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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 donate what you can!

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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.



"Playing next to a professional made me realize what I could be one day if I stuck with my instrument, and that gave me hope that I would get better and continue to develop my talents."