

“Maud Powell, An American Legend”

Maud Powell’s devotion to her violin, her art and humanity made her one of America’s most revered and beloved musicians. The great-hearted artist believed strongly that “nothing was ever accomplished without faith and enthusiasm.” As one of America’s foremost musicians, Maud Powell (1867-1920) pioneered the violin recital and blazed new concert circuits to reach people who had never heard a concert before.

The Elgin Symphony Orchestra’s concertmaster Isabella Lippi and Chicago Youth Symphony member Lauren Conroy team up with Maud Powell biographer Karen Shaffer for a special presentation, “Maud Powell, An American Legend” on March 29 at the Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin. The program begins at 2:00 p.m.

This presentation combines images and music with Maud Powell biographer Karen Shaffer’s narrative to recount the life and art of the legendary Maud Powell, the first American-born violinist to achieve international recognition and the first instrumentalist to record for the Victor Celebrity Artist Series (Red Seal label) in 1904. Powell was honored with the Recording Academy’s GRAMMY Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014.

The program highlights how Maud Powell began her studies as a child in Aurora, Illinois, the challenges she faced in her development and how she courageously overcame them to become a deeply admired and well-loved artist. The audience will gain important perspectives on the cultural atmosphere in the United States during that period and how Maud Powell became a pivotal force in the development of classical music in America. They will learn the important role women played in our cultural advancement and how female artists like Maud Powell broke down barriers to their participation in the music profession.

The program is richly illustrated with historic images of Maud Powell and her contemporaries, Maud Powell’s own recordings, and live performances by violinists Isabella Lippi and Lauren Conroy.

Karen A. Shaffer is the author of the critically acclaimed definitive biography of Maud Powell (1867– 1920), America’s first great master of the violin – *Maud Powell, Pioneer American Violinist*, (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988). The biography represents the first history ever written of the classical violin tradition in America. As founder and president of the Maud Powell Society for Music and Education (1986), she has restored the important musical legacy of Maud Powell through re-issuance of Powell’s recordings, publication of a children’s book and a collection of Maud Powell’s transcriptions, commemorative concerts and exhibits, presentations in schools and colleges, and through co-founding the annual Maud Powell Arts Celebration in Peru, Illinois. Karen is the co-founder and co-editor of *The Maud Powell Signature*, an online magazine devoted to the contributions and achievements of women in classical music, past and present (www.maudpowell.org/signature).