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## **The Elgin Symphony Orchestra Announces Its 2016-17 Season** *Be Connected. Experience ESO!*

Music Director of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra (ESO) Andrew Grams and Chief Executive Officer David Bearden announce the ESO's 66<sup>th</sup> season. The 2016/17 season marks Grams' fourth as music director, and he recently extended his contract through the 2020-21 season. The season features many beloved masterworks and lesser known pieces, and the ESO debuts of several up-and-coming guest artists.

Andrew Grams leads seven (7) weeks of subscription programs with the ESO during the 2016/17 season, and will present *Musically Speaking* pre-concert chats before each of these performances. In addition, he will host a new program *Inside the Music with Andrew Grams*, lively 90-minute presentations that use visuals and musical excerpts to explore in-depth two masterworks to be presented in upcoming concerts, Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1947) and Brahms' Symphony No. 4.

"This season is sure to please traditional classical music lovers since it features beloved works by Beethoven, Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky," says Grams. "Our *Inside the Music* programs are designed to lift the veil on how great orchestral music works its magic on us. In a relaxed and casual setting, the ESO and I will show audiences what makes a masterpiece tick and how all the small parts make up the greatest whole."

Grams' classical programs contain works by Beethoven, Brahms, Dukas, Liadov, Mahler, Mussorgsky, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Respighi, Saint-Saëns, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky and Vaughan Williams, and include many works that haven't been performed by the ESO before.

- Grams opens the ESO 2016/17 season on September 16 and 17 with Shostakovich's *Festive Overture*, Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances* and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, featuring violinist Simone Porter making her ESO debut.
- Concerts on November 5 and 6 feature an all-orchestral program with Grams conducting Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1947), and two works by Tchaikovsky, *Sleeping Beauty Suite* and *Swan Lake Suite*. Grams will host the first of two *Inside the Music with Andrew Grams* on Friday, November 4, providing insight and historical context for *Petrushka*. *Inside the Music* includes a reception before the presentation.
- Guest violinist Angelo Xiang Yu, making his ESO debut, will play Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1, led by Grams and performed for the first time by the ESO on January 7 and 8. The program also holds Stravinsky's Octet, another first for the orchestra, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 *Eroica*.

- Grams will conduct a program entitled *Fountains of Rome* on February 11 and 12 that includes two more first performances for the ESO, Liadov's *The Enchanted Lake* and Respighi's *Fountains of Rome*. The program also features Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3.
- Guest Artist and audience favorite Natasha Paremski, piano, returns this season to perform Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 on April 1 and 2. The program opens with Brahms Symphony No. 4. Grams will host an *Inside the Music* program analyzing and explaining the Brahms composition on Friday, March 31 at 8 pm. A reception precedes this event.
- The season finale on May 6 and 7, conducted by Grams and featuring the Elgin Master Chorale, holds the ESO premier performance of Vaughn Williams' *Serenade to Music*, Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

In addition, Grams will conduct an evening of music by George Gershwin on January 28 and 29 with pianist Yana Reznick appearing with the ESO for the first time. The program includes *Cuban Overture*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Lullaby for Strings*, *2nd Rhapsody* and *American in Paris*.

ESO Listener Clubs, hosted by music historian Jim Kendros, are offered before the classical series performances at the Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin and Greenfields in Geneva. Free and open to the public, Kendros discusses the composers and the music that will be presented in upcoming concerts.

And all Saturday night concertgoers are invited to "Mingle with the Musicians" after the show at the Elgin Public House, where they can meet Music Director Grams and ESO musicians.

Resident Conductor Stephen Squires will conduct three (3) programs during the 2016/17 season:

- On October 7 at the Schaumburg Prairie Center for the Arts, and October 8 and 9 at Hemmens Cultural Center, Squires and the orchestra will provide the music for the silent movie *City Lights*, starring Charlie Chaplin, and featuring the musical score Chaplin himself composed for the film.
- Squires conducts the *Magical Holiday* concerts, a seasonal favorite with ESO audiences, on December 10 and 11. The performances have become a holiday tradition, the highlight of which is a very special visitor from the North Pole.
- Clarinetist Alexander Fiterstein makes his ESO debut with Copland's Clarinet Concerto, conducted by Squires, on March 3 at the Schaumburg Prairie Center and March 4 and 5 at Hemmens. The program also includes Copland's *Billy the Kid* Suite and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4.

The ESO will also offer a variety of programming for young people and their families. Kids Konzerts will bring around 9,000 area students to Hemmens Cultural Center with the ESO providing teachers guides prior to the performances to enhance the concert experience. Master classes with visiting guest artists will be presented free and open to the public at the Gail Borden Public Library. Four (4) free Family Concerts will take place during the 2016/17 season, also hosted by the Library. And finally ESO Traveling Ensembles will visit area schools giving students the chance to hear classical music up close and personal.

In addition, the ESO will continue its collaborations in the community during the 2016/17 season with Advocate Sherman Hospital (*Musicians Care*), AMITA Health System (*Music Heals*) and with Elgin Development Group. (ESO Industry Night)

ESO subscription renewal materials for the 2016/17 season are now available. Grand, Classics, Pops & Schaumburg renewals are due April 30, 2016. (Ticket exchanges begin May 1, 2016) New subscription sales begin April 1, 2016 and *Build Your Own Series* subscriptions begin May 1, 2016. For more information, ESO patrons may call the ESO Box Office at 847-888-4000, Monday through Friday, 10:00 am-4:00 pm.

Patrons may also visit [ElginSymphony.Org](http://ElginSymphony.Org) to learn more about the ESO's many activities in the community, read program notes, find area restaurants, hotels and parking information, make a donation and find out how to sponsor a program or series.

Andrew Grams became music director of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra in June 2013 after an international search. A graduate of the Julliard School and the Curtis Institute of Music, he holds degrees in violin performance and conducting and has already appeared with many of the great orchestras of the world. Grams was a protégé of Franz Welser-Möst and served as assistant conductor for the Cleveland Orchestra for three years. Named the 2015 Conductor of the Year by the Illinois Council of Orchestras, his charismatic conducting and easy accessibility have made him a favorite with ESO audiences.

The Elgin Symphony Orchestra, now in its 66th season, offers programming unmatched for an entertaining, informative and relaxing cultural experience. Known for their high-quality performances, ESO musicians represent some of the most talented musical artists in the region. In addition to magnificent music, patrons can also enjoy a drink, spend time with friends and even shop in the lobby of the Hemmens Cultural Center. From start to finish, the ESO brings world class, big city entertainment without the hassles of the big city.

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