



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### **HONORING THE 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 7, 2021 EVANSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA DAY IN COOK COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, on November 7, 2021, the Evanston Symphony Orchestra (ESO) will perform a concert to celebrate its 75th anniversary. ESO's Mission statement affirms that "The Evanston Symphony Orchestra uses the power of music to lift the human spirit. We engage and enrich the community by coming together to perform, inspire and educate." The ESO works to provide diverse, enjoyable, and accessible musical entertainment that enriches the audience, orchestra, and community. It encourages development, diversity and wider participation of audiences; and

**WHEREAS**, in a 2016 blogpost from the National Endowment for the Arts, Ann Meier Baker, NEA Director of Music and Opera, wrote about Community Orchestras in the United States. "Community music-making has long been a part of the arts-and-culture fabric in the United States. From the very earliest days of the country, amateur musicians have come together to form ensembles for the love of music. Community orchestras-ensembles of musicians who are not paid to play -are an important part of this community music-making ecosystem in the U.S. These are small-budget organizations with free or low-cost performances, whose members come from different professions, educational backgrounds, ages, and political and religious traditions. In addition to the benefits for those who play in the ensembles, community orchestras add to the richness of their communities as a whole;" and

**WHEREAS**, in community orchestras, members come together to create something of beauty with one another that no one individual can create on his/her own. Performances are very effective at what social scientists refer to as "bridging" between people of different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. In addition, playing in a community orchestra is strongly correlated with qualities that are associated with success throughout life. Greater discipline, teamwork, arts patronage, and civic involvement-from volunteering and donating to voting-are just a few of the attributes fostered by performing in a community orchestra. The Evanston Community Orchestra encompasses all of these values; and

**WHEREAS**, the Evanston Community Orchestra was established in 1945 as an offshoot of the Northwestern University Orchestra, when returning GIs and others looked for an outlet for their musical talents. Lucille and Jack Ryan, along with Timothy Fetler, as conductor, were the founders. The orchestra officially became the Evanston Symphony Orchestra in 1961 with its incorporation as an Illinois not-for-profit organization; and

**WHEREAS**, the ESO has seen a number of transitions in leadership. Mr. Ryan, associated with NBC in Chicago, persuaded the NBC radio organist, Elwyn Owen, to become the full-time conductor after Mr. Fetler graduated from Northwestern University. In 1962, Frank Miller, principal cellist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra became the ESO's conductor, bringing his expertise of working with the great Toscanini and Pablo Casals. He groomed the amateur musicians into the highly accomplished, community orchestra that it remains today. In 1985, Dr. Lynn Schornick succeeded Frank Miller whose health had declined. In 2003, Lawrence Eckerling succeeded Dr. Schornick. Maestro Eckerling was selected by popular vote after the orchestra tried out four different conductors. He has remained the Music Director since. In 2007 and 2014, he won the Illinois' Conductor of the Year award; and

**WHEREAS**, the 1960s saw the ESO become one of the main social fixtures of Evanston cultural life. Its centrality to the community has grown in the intervening years. The first Evanston Symphony Holiday concert was held in 1970. It has now become an annual tradition, performed in concert with many other wonderful music groups from Evanston. In 2015, the Evanston Symphony Holiday Concert debuted its very own Gospel Choir, under the direction of Reverend Ken

Cherry. The audience that year exceeded 1,000. The Gospel Choir has performed with the ESO every holiday since 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, the ESO is committed to sharing the joy and inspiration of music with young children. In 1996, the ESO introduced *KidNotes* at its performances, special program notes for young children, to encourage families to attend concerts. 'Play Me a Picture! Paint Me a Tune!' was introduced in 1997. This music-to-visual-art competition was held in conjunction with Evanston middle schools. In 2005, ESO began 'Music in Your World,' a free music education program for District 65 Head Start and Pre-K students. Some of these students have gone on to study music throughout their lives, as a result of these early classes. In 2018, 'Music In Your World' is expanded to include children 0 - 3 years from District 65's Family Center; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1972, the ESO hosted its first Youth Competition. In 1998, the Young Artists' Competition was won by the very talented young Julie Fischer, an Evanston resident who matured into a professional violinist and is now ESO's concertmaster. In 2019, the ESO played its first Young Persons concert with a side-by-side concert with students from Evanston's middle schools; and

**WHEREAS**, the ESO also creates a space for musician's creative output. In 1996, the ESO commissioned and performed its first world premiere, *Overture with Fanfares*, by Don Draganski, an Evanston resident and composer. In 2013, the ESO celebrated "Evanston 150" with another world premiere by composer Mark Gresham, called *Evanston Fanfare*; and

**WHEREAS**, the ESO is an award-winning orchestra, not just for its excellent quality musical performances, but also for its community engagement. In 2015, the ESO won the Evanston Mayor's Award for the Arts for the second time. The first time was in 2003. The ESO won Illinois Council of Orchestras' 'Orchestra of the Year Award' in years 1996, 2003, 2010, and most recently, in 2017. In 2020, the ESO won the Illinois Council of Orchestras' 'Community Relations of the Year' award. The Illinois Council of Orchestras is a statewide organization of 188 professional and community orchestras. On receiving these awards, Music Director, Lawrence Eckerling said: "It is always an honor to be recognized by one's peers in the arts community. This award belongs not only to our superb musicians but to our hundreds of loyal patrons."

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County hereby declares November 7, 2021 to be Evanston Symphony Orchestra Day throughout Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors the Evanston Symphony Orchestra and all of its members and the supporters who have kept it alive, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions they have made to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to the Evanston Symphony Orchestra.