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October 25 Concert Features Pianist Silvan Negrutiu

Romanian pianist and Millikin faculty member Silvan Negrutiu will perform Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, which he performed for his professional solo debut with the Dublin Symphony Orchestra (Ireland) in 2010.

Mr. Negrutiu holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance, under the tutelage of John O'Connor, amongst others. He has performed at the Kennedy Center, the International Keyboard Institute and Festival, Mannes College of Music (NY), and the Aspen Music Festival (CO) to name a few.

He is quoted as saying, "At first I chose music from a childlike unconsciousness, then a romantic desire to change the world for the better, and many other reasons more elaborate, but always balanced by the first two!"

We encourage you to come see the master at work on the Steinway at Kirkland Fine Arts Center October 25, first as he discusses the works on the program at the Concert Preview held at 6:45 in the Kirkland Lecture Room, followed by the evening's symphony performance in the great hall.



Silvan Negrutiu



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA GUILD OF DECATUR

2014-2015 Season, Issue 2

October 2014

From The Podium

*Michael Luxner,
Music Director and Conductor*



The new symphony season has barely begun, yet it already feels like we're having a particularly rich and productive year. First the thrilling Labor Day concert, which, thanks to the capricious late summer weather, allowed us to enjoy both a beautiful evening and the great sound of the Pavillion at Nelson Park, proving that at least every once in a while, the law of unintended consequences can work out for the best! And then our Opening Night in Kirkland, with the compelling artistry of Tai Murray and a fine-sounding MDSO in a feast of lush Romantic music. (We did have to contend with the noise from the football game, but at least Millikin won!) And after the concert, another splendid social event brought to you by the Symphony Guild, which in addition to making MDSO possible as a performing ensemble, does so much to sustain the thriving, cohesive artistic *community* we all enjoy, as they have for forty years and counting. Are we on a roll, or what?

And now we're ready to take the stage again. As you know, MDSO is focusing on core repertoire this Fall, and our October concert features two of the great pillars of the symphonic canon, Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto and Dvořák's "New World" Symphony. These towering works, as beloved as they are admired, epitomize what generations of listeners have come to hear in their minds when they imagine what great orchestral music can be. And even the overture to this concert, the one Mozart wrote for his comedy-drama *Don Giovanni*, is a special one, combining the spooky, supernatural music of a statue that comes to life with the spritely elegance of the opera's more light-hearted scenes.

In the Beethoven, we'll be joined by Millikin's newest artist-faculty performer, Silvan Negrutiu, who in one short year has made an overwhelming impression—and a real difference—in the musical life of Decatur. If you heard his acclaimed solo recital last year in Kirkland, or playing chamber music with other faculty in Kaeuper Hall or around town, you know that Silvan is the real deal, a pianist of commanding presence and technique along with exquisite aesthetic sense. And behind the scenes, he has brought new energy and vision to every facet of the School of Music's activities, from pedagogy and the curriculum to Millikin's place in the wider musical world. Ever since the great José Echániz became artist-in-residence back in the 1930's (the first artist-in-residence, by the way, in *any* American university), Millikin has had a distinguished history of pianism and keyboard studies. If you haven't heard Silvan Negrutiu yet, come on October 25, and experience the promise of our great tradition as a new generation carries it into the future.

October 25 Concert Preview

Silvan Negrutiu will host the pre-concert conversation, providing artistic insights into the music to be performed.

Join Silvan at 6:45 pm in the Kirkland Lecture Room.



Georgia Hornbacker

Tell Me More...

The MDSO is full of talented musicians with years of musical experience who also have fascinating experiences off stage. We would like to introduce you to some of those personalities, beginning with our principal violinist and Concertmaster, Georgia Hornbacker.

Sitting on a gymnasium floor as a third grader listening to the local high school orchestra conductor demonstrate various string instruments, Georgia set her sights on playing the violin. Her parents, eager to support her on both piano and violin, started her on the familiar path of summer string programs and private violin lessons.

In the Chicago area Georgia was surrounded by a variety of musical experiences, including playing in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, serving as its Concertmaster her senior year of high school. She was a three time member and Concertmaster of the Illinois All-State Festival Orchestra, then chosen to be Concertmaster of the prestigious American Youth Performs orchestra first in Chicago, which led to a performance with the National AYP orchestra in New York City's Carnegie Hall.

Georgia received both her Bachelors and Masters degrees in Violin Performance from the acclaimed Indiana University. Upon moving to the Springfield area for her husband's employment, Georgia received an offer from Millikin University to teach violin. She has played continuously in the MDSO since 1975, as well as playing with the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, even performing her duties as Concertmaster just days after the birth of her second child.

In her role as Concertmaster Mrs. Hornbacker has helped Dr. Luxner mold the MDSO into a more professional ensemble, following the model for smaller regional, yet sustainable orchestras. Besides her responsibility for tuning the orchestra upon entering the stage (having the oboist to play an A for each section), her position requires her to synchronize the bowings for the string sections and work with the conductor to achieve his musical vision for the particular piece.

While Georgia chose music and teaching as her profession, she had difficulty juggling interests in chemistry, literature, horsemanship, and swimming. She has continued to pursue her passions as an equestrienne and avid swimmer, while enjoying time with her grandchildren. Georgia Hornbacker truly is a woman of many talents.

For more, visit Georgia's professional biography at <https://www.millikin.edu/academics/cfa/som/Pages/FacultyandStaff.aspx>

Holiday Gala

Join us at the Decatur Club November 21 for a fabulous evening of live music and great food celebrating the beginning of the holiday season. Entertainment throughout the night will be provided by Michael Scherer and friends. The silent auction and social hour with appetizers begins at 6:00 pm, followed by dinner featuring a variety of serving stations. Steamship round of beef, pork, and salmon highlight the entrees, but leave room for the dessert and coffee bar.

Corky Nicholson will be our auctioneer for the live auction offering beautiful jewelry and gifts. Black tie is optional. Call 217-423-3189 for more information and tickets.

Proceeds support musical education and programs funded by the Symphony Guild of Decatur.

From The President

Shirley Swarthout

MDSO's Sept. 27 opening night concert is fresh in memory as I write, and what an evening! In the season brochure prepared several months ago Dr. Michael Luxner said "opening night will sizzle with sumptuous Romanticism," and guest soloist Tia Murray's violin did sizzle indeed. A thrilling performance!

Also at this concert the guild officially presented our annual gift to Millikin – a contribution of \$65,000 to help fund the symphony.

And in a pleasant bit of serendipity, we learned that opening night was the actual date of the guild's 40th anniversary, with the Symphony Orchestra Guild of Decatur having been incorporated on Sept. 27, 1974.

Over those 40 years of partnership with Millikin, the guild's gift to the university has grown from its earliest grant of \$1,800 in 1974 to this season's substantial contribution. These funds from the guild provide the orchestra's music and enable Dr. Luxner to hire faculty and freelance professional musicians and guest artists.

Of course our biggest commitment is to the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra, but that is not all the guild does. Scholarships for music camps and lessons, music presentations in schools, funding for the youth symphony orchestra, and more, are among the ways the guild supports young musicians.

All these programs are possible thanks to the generosity of many people and organizations across the Decatur area. Some individuals fund a scholarship, corporate sponsors provide substantial gifts, individuals support the guild with their membership contributions, businesses and organizations support the guild with their advertising in the concert program.

Another way to show your support is coming up Nov. 21, when our Ways and Means committee hosts the Holiday Gala – our big annual fundraising event. You'll find more details about the gala inside this newsletter.

Why attend the gala? Because it promises to be a thoroughly enjoyable evening! And in case that isn't reason enough, come because you know that proceeds from the event will go toward the many music and education programs funded by the guild.

In whatever way you support the symphony guild, please know that your contribution helps make a difference! Together we are able to do things that truly do have an impact in the life of our community.

Shirley Swarthout
President, Symphony Orchestra Guild of Decatur



OUR MISSION:

To promote and support
symphonic music,
to encourage
educational opportunities
that include all segments
of our population,
and to provide an ever-increasing level of
artistry
and audience appreciation.



Symphony
Orchestra
Guild of
Decatur

Dates to Remember

October 25 MDSO Concert
Kirkland Fine Arts Center
7:30 pm

November 21 Holiday Gala
Decatur Club
6:00 pm

November 24 Decatur Youth
Symphony
Central Christian Church
7:00 pm