
WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Symphony Orchestra's Family Concert Recognized with 2020 Programming of the Year Award by the Illinois Council of Orchestras

Waukegan, Illinois (March 26, 2021) – The Waukegan Symphony Orchestra's "Storytelling & Music" / "Narración y Musica" Young People's Family Concert held at the Waukegan Public Library was recognized with the 2020 Programming of the Year Award by the Illinois Council of Orchestras. The Programming of the Year Award honors programs with innovative musical choices, soloists, and themes.

In 2020, the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra partnered with the Waukegan Public Library, Waukegan to College, and Waukegan Band Foundation to reimagine the free interactive concert that has been a long-standing tradition in the community. The partnerships led to a unique musical experience with Sergei Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" narrated in both English and Spanish, making the concert accessible to more families in Waukegan where over 50% of the population speaks Spanish at home. The narrator was Gabriela Serna, a bilingual student at Waukegan High School. As always, the concert closed with an opportunity for children and families to meet the musicians and learn about the instruments hands on.

The Waukegan Symphony Orchestra was established in 1974 and is led by Music Director Alexander Platt. The orchestra, which is part of the Waukegan Park District, provides a unique opportunity for over fifty devoted musicians of varying ages and levels of musical experience.

The Illinois Council of Orchestras was founded in 1974 with a mission to encourage, promote, and assist orchestras throughout the State of Illinois, promote an exchange of information among members, providing consultants and speakers, and hosting educational conferences for member organizations, including musicians, staff, boards, volunteers, and audiences. A panel of judges drawn from the Illinois Council of Orchestras Board of Directors and independent professional conductors and musicians reviewed award nominations representing orchestras, youth orchestras, and chamber ensembles from throughout Illinois.

Alexander Platt, Music Director of the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra, stated, "I am so thrilled to be part of the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra. Our Young People's Concert was a wonderful and innovative step in reaching out to more communities in our city, in a family-friendly setting at the outstanding Waukegan Public Library. Performing "Peter and the Wolf" in both English and Spanish was not only an effective tool in our outreach efforts, it was actually artistically invigorating as well, bringing a new color and spirit to this tried-and-true work for children. It was a great thing for us to do, and I had a great time doing it."

About the Waukegan Park District

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 50 properties and more than 740 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the district include the Field House Sports, Fitness and Aquatics Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan's Greg Petry SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, disc golf course, dog exercise area and agility course, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, splash pads, and sports courts including basketball, tennis and pickleball. A full range of programs and services are offered year-round for all ages, from infants to seniors as well as special needs populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The District employs 63 full-time and over 230 part-time, seasonal, and temporary employees and is recognized by the IPRA as an Exceptional Workplace. Accreditation is maintained from the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) Distinguished Agency Accreditation and Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA). The District has received Government Finance Officer Association awards for Distinguished Budget Presentation and Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting for eight consecutive years. The District was awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013 and named a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012, 2013, and 2019.

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