

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**A Musical Tribute to the Life and Times of Abraham Lincoln
Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra Celebrates Lincoln's 200th Birthday**

Elgin, IL February, 2009 – On Sunday, March 15th, 2009, the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO) and EYSO Music Director and Youth Symphony conductor Randal Swiggum, will perform the third concert of its 33rd season: “*Lincoln Portrait – A Bicentennial Musical Tribute: 1809-2009*”. The theme of the 2008-09 season is “Americans We.”

Illinois Circuit Court Chief Judge F. Keith Brown will narrate during the performance of *Lincoln Portrait* by Aaron Copland at both concerts. *Lincoln Portrait* is the classic American musical tribute to Lincoln, with stirring words by Lincoln himself. Tom Moroz, Flute soloist and 2008-09 EYSO Philharmonia Young Artists Concerto Award winner, will perform Stamitz's *G Major* flute concerto at the 4:00 pm concert.

Both concerts will open with a performance of Brahms' String Quartet, Op. 51, No. 1, movement I. Allegro by the Maud Powell String Quartet. The 2008-09 season of the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra marks the second season of the Maud Powell String Quartet, named in honor of violinist Maud Powell (Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame inductee who grew up in Aurora IL).

Powell was America's first classical music superstar who believed that everyone deserved to experience great music performed at the highest level. Along with the Sterling Brass Quintet, the Maud Powell Quartet is an honors ensemble of the EYSO Chamber Music Institute, selected by audition and offered on full scholarship. The chamber ensembles offer an unparalleled opportunity for top-level string and brass musicians (high school and college age) to play chamber music at the highest level and work with some of the finest artist teachers and chamber music coaches in the world.

The Quartet studies with such renowned coaches as Midori, Rachel Barton Pine, as well as members of the Pacifica Quartet and Pro Arte Quartet, and Isabella Lippi, Concertmaster of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. The 2008-09 members are Colin Clark, Elgin, Karen Darling, St. Charles, Berit Goodman, Woodstock, and Gabi Pittsford, Wheaton.

Two performances are scheduled: 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the Blizzard Theatre in the Elgin Community College Arts Center located at 1700 Spartan Drive, Elgin, Illinois. To learn more about EYSO and the many opportunities for student musicians throughout the Chicagoland area, visit www.eyso.org, or call the EYSO office at 847-841-7700.

Tickets can be purchased at the ECC box office located in the Arts Center, by phone (847) 622-0300, or online at www.elgin.edu/arts: \$21, \$16 for seniors, and \$12 for students. Tickets should be purchased in advance since concerts often sell out. Box office hours are noon to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday; and noon to 5:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express and cash are accepted for payment.

4:00 p.m. – Prelude Orchestra, Philharmonia and the Youth Symphony Orchestra

The second youngest EYSO ensemble, the Prelude Orchestra, will open the concert playing *Ashokan Farewell* (theme song from Ken Burns' television mini-series *The Civil War*), *Kentucky 1800* and *Songs of the South*. The concert will continue with the Philharmonia and will end with a performance by the Youth Symphony.

“The Philharmonia will feature the civil war tune "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" within the stunning series of variations of Morton Gould's *American Salute*. They will also explore Smetana's Three Dances from *The Bartered Bride*, which was composed during the decade of the civil war. Also included on the program is flutist Thomas Moroz playing the Stamitz G Major flute concerto,” stated Conductor David Anderson.

Thomas Moroz, the '08-'09 EYSO Philharmonia Young Artists Concerto winner, resides in Algonquin. He will be playing the first movement of the *Flute Concerto in G Major* by Carl Stamitz. Tom started playing the flute when he was 16. He currently attends ECC and plans to attend Roosevelt University in the fall as a music performance major. Tom studies flute with Scott Metlicka. Scott, an alum of the EYSO, plays flute with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra and the Rockford Symphony Orchestra, as well as many other ensembles in the Midwest.

Illinois Circuit Court Chief F. Keith Brown, the first black judge in the Northwest suburbs, will close the concert as the narrator for the performance of *Lincoln Portrait*. He is the son of Floyd and Betty Brown from Elgin. Judge Brown played string bass and piano in high school under Maestro Douglas Steensland, founding conductor of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra.

7:00 p.m. – Youth Symphony Orchestra and Brass Choir

The Brass Choir will perform *Awakening* by composer Torstein Aagaard-Nilsen. Brass Choir conductor Jason Flaks worked directly with the composer to prepare the musicians for their performance.

“As I began to prepare for this performance I realized that my only CD recording (now out of print) had been lost. On a lark, I wrote to Mr. Aagaard-Nilsen and he took a great interest in our performance. He mailed recordings from Norway and provided notes on rehearsal recordings made by the Brass Choir. Not only is he a talented composer, but he has also proved a caring, thoughtful resource in the education of our musicians,” said Flaks.

Additionally, five movements relating to Lincoln will be explored during the evening concert. Each movement was selected by EYSO Music Director and Youth Symphony conductor Randal Swiggum for its power and suggestion as it related to Abraham Lincoln, his life, his character and the times in which he lived:

“Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*: although it was not written specifically about Lincoln , its noble and heroic theme captures Lincoln 's mythic status, and his humble origins.

Verdi: Overture to *La Forza del Destino* (The Power of Fate): the only opera Lincoln ever saw was by Verdi. This dramatic overture transports the listener to the 1860s, when it was written.

Jerry Bilik's *American Civil War Fantasy*: this piece combines more than a dozen melodies from the Civil War and Antebellum South into a tone poem about the Civil War itself.

Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*: the classic American musical tribute to our 16th President, with stirring words by Lincoln himself.”

Head Kane County Judge F. Keith Brown, the first black judge in the Northwest suburbs, will close the concert as the narrator for the performance of *Lincoln Portrait*. His parents are Floyd and Betty Brown from Elgin. Judge Brown played string bass and piano in high school under Maestro Douglas Steensland, founding conductor of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra.

EYSO is more than great concerts. It's a life-changing opportunity.

About Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra

The Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO), an In-Residence Ensemble in the Arts Center at Elgin Community College, is home to four orchestras and a brass choir with nearly 300 students from over 60 communities. Founded in 1976, the mission of the EYSO is to create a community of young musicians, enriching their lives and the lives of their families, schools, communities and beyond, through the study and performance of excellent music. This program is partially supported by grants from the Palmer Foundation, the Elgin Cultural Arts Commission, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Palmer Foundation.