

A NOTE FROM *Johnstone-Music*

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SPECIAL FEATURE on OSCAR EILER

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Birth: 8th September 1883 - Wisconsin, U.S.A.

Death: not known

Full Name: Oscar {John} Eiler

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Oscar Eiler was born in Wisconsin, but studied cello in Germany with Carl Schroeder (1848-1935). Returning to Wisconsin, Oscar Eiler was in 1905 a music teacher in Appleton in central Wisconsin.

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In 1910, Eiler played in the orchestra of Cleveland's Statler Hotel. Then for two seasons, 1912-1914, Oscar Eiler played in the cello section of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski. From 1917-1928, Oscar Eiler was active in the Philharmonic Quartet, a group which changed membership several times during its lifespan of 1886-1928, but which at the time of our featured artist was consisting of Sol Marcossion first violin, Charles Rychlik second violin, Johann Beck on viola, and Oscar Eiler on cello.

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In the first season of the Cleveland Orchestra 1918-1919, Nikolai Sokoloff appointed Oscar Eiler as Principal cello of the Cleveland Orchestra. After serving in the first chair during this inaugural season of the Cleveland Orchestra, in June, 1919, Oscar Eiler moved to what we would today call the Associate Principal cello position. When Victor de Gomez was appointed Principal cello, Oscar Eiler continued in the Cleveland Orchestra for two more seasons, 1919-1921.

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Information on later years is hard to come by. In the 1930s, Oscar Eiler was a theatre orchestra musician in Chicago. In those years Oscar Eiler was also active in the 'Russian Trio', whose members were Ninia Mesirov piano, Michel Wilkomlrsky violin and Oscar Eiler cello. Eiler also played in the Civic Opera Company of Chicago.

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Oscar Eiler played cello in the Cincinnati Orchestra and the Nashville Symphony, but the years of his performances with these orchestra are not (as yet) documented. Returning to his native Wisconsin, Oscar Eiler also helped train the Oshkosh Youth Orchestra just before the Second World War (documented as 1939).

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Little more from then is known, but I have uncovered this: Velma R. Smith (1910-2009) was the niece of Euler's wife Bessie. Unfortunately Velma's mother Annette died when the baby was just three weeks old, and Oscar and Bessie raised her as their own child (Velma didn't even know this until she was 47 years old!). Velma was highly talented too: a composer, performer, author, handwriting expert, bell collector, tap dancer, Russian language expert, giving classes in music theory, organ and piano - finally just to mention she composed over 70 pieces for piano and organ!

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‘documenting the cello’

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Also both general musical and cello based articles, directories of famous historical cellists, and many other items of interest

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FREE PUBLICITY - If you care to inform us of any public performance (no matter how formal or informal the event is), recording or other uses of the original music or arrangements of David Johnstone or of other musical colleagues included in this web, we are happy to give your event free publicity on the *Johnstone-Music* web.

To take advantage of this, try to write to us three weeks or more in advance with any information. Last-minute entries are certainly better than not writing at all - however, understandably, once we have past the calendar month of the event it is not usually possible to add old items to the calendar. It is very interesting for the promoters of *Johnstone-Music* to have knowledge of your activity - and so in return for your information you will be entitled to a free gift of a work/s for every diary addition you tell us about. To find out more about this, please visit the “*Cello Club*” section in the web!