

Immediate Release

UMD News Service  
724-8801, Ext. 210  
March 20, 1968

Duluth--- The first American-born, American-trained conductor ever appointed by a major U.S. orchestra will be conducting the Chicago Little Symphony when it appears at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday (March 26) in UMD's Kirby Ballroom.

He is Thor Johnson, who for eleven years was music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra prior to becoming Director of Orchestra Activities at Northwestern University. He has been the director of the Interlochen Arts Academy of Interlochen, Mich. since 1964.

Johnson also has the distinction of being the organizer of the Chicago Little Symphony, sometimes described as America's finest chamber orchestra.

The Symphony has 20 virtuoso players, and nearly all will have solo parts in the Tuesday evening performance. Most of the musicians are artists-in-residence at the Interlochen Arts Academy.

Johnson has received the American Composer's Alliance's highest honor, the Laurel Leaf Award, for "distinguished achievement in fostering and encouraging American music." Several foreign governments have also decorated him for outstanding cultural services.

He has appeared as guest conductor with orchestras in New York, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and New Orleans. Johnson has also served extended assignments as conductor for the Japan Philharmonic of Tokyo, the Taiwan Provincial Symphony of Taipei, Taiwan and the National Symphony of Iceland.