

A collaboration on pointe



The Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra collaborated with the School of Homer Bryant/Chicago Multi-Cultural Dance Center for "Let the Music Move You" on March 21 in Frankfort. (Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, HANDOUT) - Original Credit: Handout (HANDOUT)

By **Jessi Virtusio**Daily Southtown

What started as a conversation between state Sen. Toi Hutchinson, D-Olympia Fields, and Andrew Bradford, former Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra executive director, resulted in the world premiere of two dance pieces.

IPO and the School of Homer Bryant/Chicago Multi-Cultural Dance Center present "Let the Music Move You" on March 21 at Lincoln-Way North Performing Arts Center in Frankfort.

"This is actually one of the highlights of our whole season," IPO executive director Eska Koester said.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to really find arts organizations and do something together, which is rare. We all kind of live in our own silos. Once in

a while we come together and put different art forms together and create something really special and memorable for the people," Koester said.

CMDC founder and artistic director Homer Hans Bryant said Hutchinson, whose daughter Camryn trains at his school, and Bradford were looking to bring more diversity to IPO. That goal meshed with the drive for diversity at CMDC, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary throughout 2015.

Bryant assisted CMDC teacher Nina-Rose Wardanian in choreographing numbers to John Adams' "The Chairman Dances" and Lee Actor's "Dance Rhapsody."

"We have some ladies on pointe, on the tips of their toes. It's a feel-good piece, which has a bit of drama to it," Bryant said of the latter number.

"The Chairman Dances' is like East Side meets West Side," Bryant said. "The way she put it together is two guys vying for the affection of a girl. It's amazing who wins out in the end."

The winners may be Southland audiences who can take in dance numbers by Bryant Youth Professional Company's 13- to 18-year-olds and IPO's performance of Dmitri Shostakovich's "Symphony No. 12" conducted by IPO music director David Danzmayr.

The Shostakovich piece features reflections on the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and Bolshevik Revolution leader Vladimir Lenin.

"It's really going to be a visual treat as well as an aural treat for our senses. The pieces really complement each other," said Koester, who started playing violin at age 7 and has worked with orchestras ever since.

"I find this art form, it really speaks to our soul in a way nothing else can," she said. "Music can determine what we feel and who we are as human beings."

Bryant, who said he fell in love with dance at age 11, has taught first daughters Malia and Sasha Obama as well as pop star Lady Gaga and constantly seeks financial support for his 501(c)(3) school and its students.

"We are Chicago's best-kept secret, but the next 25 years should be better," he said. "These kids are underserved. We're in need of help. We need to give more kids the opportunity."

Jessi Virtusio is a freelance writer

"Let the Music Move You"

When: 8 p.m. March 21

Where: Lincoln-Way North Performing Arts Center, 19900 S. Harlem Ave., Frankfort

Tickets: \$35, \$45 or \$55

Information: 708-481-7774 or ipomusic.org

Etc.: This Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra show repeats at 3 p.m. March 22 at Rialto Square Theatre, 102 N. Chicago St., Joliet

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