



For Immediate Release

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Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra to Present the Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee Award at the October 20 Opening Night Post-Concert Celebration

PARK FOREST, October 18, 2018

Merit School of Music will be honored as the 2018 recipient of the Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee Award in the Arts Award by the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra on Saturday October 20, 2018. Charles Grode, president and executive director of Merit School of Music, will receive the award on behalf of the school during IPO's Post-Concert Dinner Celebration at Midlothian Country Club.

The award is given to individuals and/or organizations who go above and beyond in supporting, promoting, and encouraging the arts as cultural lifeblood.

Dr. Richard Moutvic M.D., a current IPO board member said this about the woman in whose honor the award is named, "Ruth Davee was a true and loyal patron of the IPO, supporting the orchestra financially while attending and enjoying the concerts personally."

Throughout its history, the Merit School of Music, located in Chicago, has strived to perfect a comprehensive continuum of programming that provides a clear path to musical achievement.

On this year's honoree, Dr. Moutvic remarks, "The Merit School of Music has promoted the teaching and performance of music to children for over 38 years, starting after the Chicago Public Schools stopped music education in its schools. Many of these children would not have been able to afford opportunities to perform and to achieve levels of musical excellence without the scholarships offered by the Merit School."

Alice Pfaelzer and Emma Endres-Kountz founded Merit School of Music in 1979 in response to the elimination of music education from Chicago's public elementary schools. The pair devoted themselves to helping young people realize their musical talents, use their musical skills to gain access to college, and become productive, compassionate, and responsible members of society.

President Grode, relates "Merit was founded based on concern for and commitment to diversity and inclusion."

Merit first opened its doors at Roosevelt University with the establishment of its cornerstone program, the Alice S. Pfaelzer Tuition-free Conservatory. In 1983, Merit produced its first "Performathon" event--an all-day classical and jazz concert featuring Merit's Conservatory students. The event has grown to feature hundreds of students and almost 18 hours of performances.

Grode explains, "Merit's founders liked to say, 'Talent is equally distributed; opportunity is not,' and they made it their lives' work, and Merit's mission, to redress that imbalance through music."

In 1984, Merit responded to requests from Chicago Public Schools to create an in-school music education program with the introduction of its Bridges: Partners in Music Program. In 1990, Merit instituted the Regenstein Scholarship Program to provide children living in Chicago public housing with instruments, full scholarships to Merit programs, transportation to and from classes, and mentoring opportunities. Now home to nearly 5,000 students on-site and off, Merit continues to provide vital access to music training.

President Grode comments on what this award means to the Merit School as a whole, "The board, staff, faculty, and students of the Merit School of Music appreciate this award and consider it a ringing endorsement of our mission and impact in transforming the lives of Chicago-area youth by removing barriers to high-quality music education."

The Merit School of Music will receive the award on Saturday, October 20th, at 7:30 PM during Act II Post-Concert Celebration dinner celebrating the opening night of IPO's 41st season. The dinner at Midlothian Country Club will immediately follow the concert at 5:30pm at Ozinga Chapel at Trinity College featuring works by Berstein, Korngold, IPO's Composer-in-Residence Ben Ash, and Gershwin. Tickets are available for the concert and dinner at ipomusic.org or 708.481.7774.

Previous Davee Award winners include Larry Johnson (Chicago Classical Review and The Classical Review), James Ginsburg (Cedille Records), 98.7 WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network, and Thomas Zoells (PianoForte Chicago and PianoForte Foundation).



The Merit School of Music will receive the Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee Award given by the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra at their October 20 Act II Post-Concert Dinner Celebration at Midlothian Country Club.

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is celebrating its 41th Season in 2018-19. From its community orchestra roots in Park Forest, the 69-member orchestra has grown into a critically acclaimed professional regional orchestra.

Under the leadership of Music Director Stilian Kirov and Executive Director Christina Salerno, the mission of IPO is to provide concerts of compelling professional symphonic music, support music education, and expand audience awareness of musical excellence for the diverse communities of the greater Chicago region.

During the 2018-19 season, IPO will perform seven classical concerts at their venue, Ozinga Chapel at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights. In addition, the orchestra performs four educational youth concerts each year, serving over 4,000 students in the Chicago Southland and a summer chamber series, IPO @ Ravisloe Golf Club.

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is supported in part by: Bimba/IMI Precision Engineering, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, Ozinga Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

For more information, visit ipomusic.org or call 708.481.7774.

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