



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[CLICK HERE](#) TO DOWNLOAD PHOTOS

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra Presents Opening Night Concert
IPO Reimagined

FREE to the public via livestream on October 24 at 7 p.m.

CHICAGO (OCTOBER 7, 2020) – **Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO)**, named 2020 Professional Orchestra of the Year by Illinois Council of Orchestras, has announced its virtual opening night concert, ***IPO Reimagined***, featuring 30 IPO string players performing George Walker’s *Lyric for Strings* followed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade*. The 45-minute program takes place Saturday, October 24 at 7 p.m., and is free to the public via livestream on IPO’s [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#), as well as on Palos Channel 4.

Due to the pandemic’s continued toll on performing arts, IPO has postponed its in-person fall concerts originally announced as part of its 43rd season, however, the orchestra based in the Chicago Southland region will continue to produce engaging music offerings that further elevate its mission.

Since becoming IPO’s Artistic Director in 2017, **Stilian Kirov** has enhanced the orchestra’s performance repertoire, which often includes highlighting the incredibly diverse musical genius of American composers. ***IPO Reimagined*** allows the orchestra to carry on its three-year-old tradition of presenting an opening night concert that spotlights an American composer, while also complementing IPO’s reinvigorated attention towards equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives. Walker, who passed away in 2018, was the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music, and his *Lyric for Strings* is one of the most frequently performed orchestral works by an American composer.

“IPO believes that the most genuine and powerful way we can work towards increasing equity, diversity and inclusion in the music world, is to reflect these attributes through our programming,” said **Kirov**, who will be conducting ***IPO Reimagined***. “Walker’s *Lyric for Strings* stands out as one of the most beautiful works for string orchestra and because of its romantic and intimate nature, we knew it would be a great companion to Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade* for string orchestra.”

“Virtual concerts are an opportunity to get to know the music on a more intimate level,” said IPO Executive Director **Christina Salerno**. “How often can you see a violinist’s fingerings from your seat? Or the conductor’s expression while conducting? IPO views this pandemic as a challenge to connect with more people in new ways.”

Plans for additional virtual offerings, socially distanced concerts, a Midwest film premiere, and other interactive programming will be unveiled throughout the fall.

About Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra

Named 2020 Professional Orchestra of the Year by Illinois Council of Orchestras, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is celebrating its 43rd Season in 2020-2021. From its community orchestra roots in Park Forest, the 69-member orchestra has grown into a critically acclaimed professional orchestra, with increasing attendance and incredible regional support. 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.

In June 2020, IPO was one of 28 U.S. orchestras to receive Catalyst Fund grants from League of American orchestras to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the organization. This is the second year IPO has received this award. IPO has initiated a 21-person cross-functional EDI Team to work with a consultant from Orchestrate Inclusion to help the orchestra on its path to fostering inclusion and equity across the organization and in partnership with the community.

During the Summer of 2020, IPO presented works by Price, Still, and Garrop alongside works by Dvorak, Beethoven, and Mozart during three, sold out socially-distanced concerts at Olympia Fields Country Club, plus a “pop-up” string trio concert at the Park Forest Farmer’s Market in September, which was attended by 100 people. Hundreds more have engaged in IPO’s livestream and virtual offerings produced over the course of the coronavirus pandemic.

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is supported in part by Ozinga Foundation, Gerhard Manufacturing and Designing, Michuda Construction, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, FnA Outdoors, and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

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

#

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

The Silverman Group, Inc.

Amanda Berrios/Elizabeth Neukirch

amanda@silvermangroupchicago.com

847-421-8517 (cell)