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Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra presents the Midwest premiere of
The Bowmakers

a new documentary that explores the world of the bow
and the extraordinary masters who make them

Opens Thanksgiving Day, November 26, for 11 days only through December 6
Early bird tickets now on sale
FREE virtual Q&A with filmmakers on Friday, December 4th

CHICAGO (NOVEMBER 10, 2020)— Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) presents the Midwest premiere of the new, feature-length documentary ***The Bowmakers***, debuting Thanksgiving Day for 11 days only, November 26 – December 6, 2020. A live Zoom conversation featuring the film’s director **Ward Serrill** and other filmmakers takes place Friday, December 4 at 6:30 p.m. and is free to the public with advance registration required. Early bird tickets for the film are \$15 and are now available for purchase at ipomusic.org. The price increases to \$18 on Thanksgiving. Those who wish to elevate their cinematic experience and live in the Chicago Southland region have the option to purchase a dinner delivery package as well. Proceeds for the “Dinner and a Movie” package provide much needed funds to make future events, broadcasts, and concerts possible.

The Bowmakers follows the journey of the “Cinderella” of the orchestra, the bow—the overworked and overshadowed ally to its more glamorous instrumental partners. The film is an artful exploration of one of the most esoteric corners of the music world, the art of bowmaking, as unknown to the public as it is essential to professional musicians.

The Bowmakers made its theatrical release just as the COVID-19 pandemic forced several theaters to close their doors. In response, the filmmakers partnered with dynamic music organizations to present

the film nation-wide. This means that Chicago audiences can only experience the Midwest Premiere directly through IPO.

“When Illinois Philharmonic was approached to host the Midwest Premiere of *The Bowmakers* as part of our reimagined virtual season, the answer was a resounding ‘yes,’” said **Christina Salerno**, Executive Director of Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. “Our orchestra can think of no better way to mark Thanksgiving than to provide this heartwarming opportunity for music lovers of all ages to appreciate this artful, untold story of the instrument so crucial to expressing the soul of music, the bow.”

To complement the Midwest premiere of *The Bowmakers*, IPO will host a free Q&A with the filmmakers on December 4 at 6:30 p.m., live via Zoom. The program will be moderated by **Salerno** and will feature **Ward**, IPO principal cellist **Jacob Hanegan**, and one of the film’s bowmakers and featured musicians. Advance registration is required at ipomusic.org.

During the making of the film, award-winning Director **Ward Serrill** followed Charles Espey—considered the most important bowmaker of his generation—to experience the making of the bow from start to completion. From there, the journey follows the bows from master bowmakers like Espey out to the musicians who use them, then on to France where the modern bow originated, and finally to Brazil where the imperiled wood, Pernambuco, originates.

“I became fascinated by the nature of a handmade art that was essentially unchanged for two hundred years, and the value of that tradition in our age of technology and speed,” said **Serrill**. “During times of social and environmental upheaval, beauty and art is central to life. I love the artistic journey this film took me on, and I am certain Chicagoland audiences will feel the same.”

The Midwest Premiere of *The Bowmakers* is supported by Dunnings Market, Prairie State College and Samuel’s Hairstyling.

About Ward Serrill

Ward Serrill is the award-winning director of *The Heart of the Game*, released by Miramax to wide critical acclaim. He has created more than ninety short films including *Building One House* with Robert Redford and *Wild America* with Sissy Spacek. He wrote and directed *Something in the Water* for PBS and the feature documentary *Song of the New Earth* as well as *TreeStory*, a series of short films designed to inspire our relationship to trees.

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.

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.

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