

APR
13
7:30PM

BOLOGNE, MOZART & HAYDN

Stilian Kirov, *Conductor*
Lee Shirer, *Horn, IPO Principal Horn*

HUỖNH (IPO Composer-in-Residence)
World Premiere

BOLOGNE Symphony No. 1

MOZART Horn Concerto No. 4

HAYDN Symphony No. 104



Bologna

MAY
18
7:30PM

JOYFUL VOICES: SHAW AND BEETHOVEN

Stilian Kirov, *Conductor*
Chicago Community Chorus
Dr. Keith Hampton, *Artistic Director/Founder*
Kimberly E. Jones, *Soprano*
Leah Dexter, *Mezzo-Soprano*
Ryan Townsend Strand, *Tenor*
Bill McMurray, *Baritone*

CAROLINE SHAW *Seven Joys*

BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9

200th Anniversary Performance
First performed in Vienna on May 7, 1824



Beethoven

200th
Anniversary
Performance

IPO

ILLINOIS
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

Stilian Kirov, Gibb Music Director

2023/24
SEASON



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Dear Friends of the IPO,

I hope you had wonderful holidays and a great beginning to 2024!

Our season continues with a beautiful mix of all-time favorites and some newer works to explore. We have some outstanding music by Gershwin, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Bologne and more. We also will be presenting some exciting works by Arlene Sierra, a preview of Wynton Marsalis's new Concerto for Orchestra, and our long-anticipated co-commission named *Gwendolyn Brooks Settings* by Augusta Read Thomas will finally premiere post-covid.

There is a lot of great music to celebrate, and we are so grateful for your support and for sharing these beautiful concert experiences with us.

Here's to a great second half of our 2023/24 Season, and thank you so much for being part of Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra's musical family.

Sincerely,

Stilian Kirov, IPO Gibb Music Director



Welcome back for the second half of the IPO's wonderful season! In the next few months, we will hear new music that it seems we've been waiting years to hear—because we have! In March, IPO will present the world premiere of Augusta Read Thomas' *Gwendolyn Brooks Settings* which was delayed by the pandemic. This work is a setting of poems from Brooks' *Bronzeville Boys and Girls* and will include the Anima-Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus as well as singers from ChiArts.

February includes a new commission by Arlene Sierra; April sees IPO's 5th annual Classical Evolve composer competition, and a World Premiere by last season's winner Oswald Huynh; May includes the preview of a new work for orchestra by Wynton Marsalis.

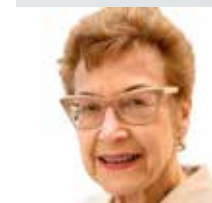
As further documentation that IPO is on the forefront of music in the Chicago area, *NewCity* magazine recently featured our Executive Director Christina Salerno and Maestro Stilian Kirov as people who keep Chicago in tune!

IPO is expanding our repertoire while not abandoning our classical mission. In addition to new works, the remainder of this season includes works by Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Haydn, and will be capped off by Beethoven's iconic Ninth Symphony.

Sit back and enjoy—and tell your friends about the wonderful music IPO has planned!

Sincerely,

Barbara Sturges, IPO Board President





Welcome to Trinity Christian College!

I am delighted you are here, and that IPO calls our Ozinga Chapel its concert home. Trinity is a Christian liberal arts college dedicated to preparing students for lives of purpose in their chosen vocation.

At Trinity, we care deeply about greater access to transformative education, and our Transformative Colleges Initiative embodies this approach. This initiative aims to 1) make higher education finances more transparent and more accessible to all people, 2) allow students the ability to work towards debt-free education, and 3) build meaningful relationships with businesses and organizations where we can build mutual partnerships.

If you are interested in learning more about this transformational approach, please email president@trnty.edu. Trinity graduates can be found throughout the world in nearly every discipline—all faithfully serving their organizations and their communities.

We invite you to walk around campus, meet members of our community and peruse Trinity's website at trnty.edu for more information about our mission.

Aaron J. Kuecker, Ph.D.
President, Trinity Christian College

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HISTORY OF IPO

Now in our 46th Anniversary Season, the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) is a leading performing arts organization in Chicago's Southland, providing professional orchestral music of beauty and excellence to the region. IPO's repertoire ranges from Baroque and Classical masterpieces to world premieres and modern favorites.

During our exciting 46th season, IPO will perform five Saturday evening classical concerts and two Saturday matinee performances, one being *IPO Holiday Festival: A Celebration of Voice & Music*, our annual holiday concert in December. All season concerts are held at Ozinga Chapel at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights. IPO will also present its sixth season of *IPO Summer @ Olympia Fields Country Club*, a series of IPO musician chamber music performances in Olympia Fields, Illinois.

IPO's history dates back to 1954. Then known as the Park Forest Orchestra, it was formed at the community level with volunteer musicians. In 1978, the orchestra was reformed into a professional chamber orchestra performing in Park Forest. In 1982, the orchestra was renamed to reflect its regional mission. Instrumental to IPO's growing success was the naming of Carmon DeLeone as Music Director in 1986. During DeLeone's 25-year tenure, IPO expanded its Artists-in-the-Schools Education Program to include interactive Youth Concerts. In the 1990s, IPO performed in residence at the Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University in University Park. In 2008, the orchestra began a new residency at the Lincoln-Way North Performing Arts Center in Frankfort, a regionally centralized location. Maestro

DeLeone became Conductor Laureate of the IPO in 2011. After an international search process, IPO appointed David Danzmayr as Music Director, serving from 2012–2016 and expanding IPO's programming to include an American work on every program. In 2017, following a search that attracted over 170 applicants from around the world, IPO's Board of Directors announced the hiring of Stilian Kirov as Music Director beginning with the 40th Anniversary Season. Kirov has expanded IPO's repertoire and developed *Classical Evolve*, the company's first Composer-in-Residence Competition.

IPO has a 46-year track record of expertly managing concerts and youth programming. Leadership, both Executive and Artistic, is bringing new vitality to the organization with an eye towards future programming growth, increased community partnerships, and strengthening the orchestra's fiscal foundation. In 2019, the orchestra unveiled an institutional commitment to address equity, diversity, and inclusion. IPO is led by a 28-member Board of Directors focused upon aligning the organization's goals to the needs of the Chicago Southland. IPO believes in the power of high-quality music and music education to transform lives.

IPO's Board of Directors and Senior staff are dedicated to utilizing their talents, connections and skillsets to broaden the quality of life in and around Chicago's Southland to include a vast array of musical offerings.

Named "Illinois Professional Orchestra of the Year" by the Illinois Council of Orchestras in 1991, 2010 and again in 2020, recognizing IPO's overall artistic excellence.

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The Rising Star Showcase offers performance ready high school students from Chicago's South Suburbs an incredible performance opportunity.

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MEET THE MUSICIAN



**THOMAS STARK,
TROMBONE**

How long have you been playing music?
43 years

What instruments

do you play, other than what you play in IPO? I play all the trombones as well as Euphonium, and sometimes bass trumpet.

How gratifying is it to be able to have a career as a professional musician? It's really amazing to be able to make music as a career and have such amazing colleagues, like those in IPO.

Who has been the most significant influence on your musical career? My teachers, Mark Fisher, from Lyric Opera, and Charles Vernon, from the Chicago Symphony have been instrumental for me. Other outside influences include, Joseph

Alessi, from New York Philharmonic, and Christian Lindeberg, International Trombone soloist and conductor.

What is your favorite thing about IPO?

Being able to perform great music with my amazing colleagues. IPO commissions new works and records them!

Please share one of your favorite IPO memories. Performing Schubert's Mass in Ab.

Do you perform outside of IPO and if so, where? I also perform with the Northwest Indiana Symphony, New Philharmonic, Elmhurst Symphony, Metropolis Symphony, IPO Brass Quintet, and as a substitute with many other ensembles.

Do you have a website and/or social media channels where patrons can follow you? @thomas_thetrombonist on instagram



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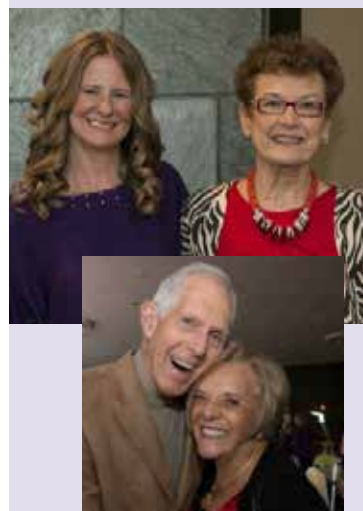
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The Friends of the IPO is a dedicated group of extraordinary volunteers committed to sustaining IPO—the only professional orchestra based in the Chicago Southland. In addition to fundraisers and other social and community events, we showcase young South Suburban musicians in our Rising Star Showcase each spring, host an annual Symphony of Style fall fashion show and luncheon, and provide hospitality for the orchestra throughout the season. Individual membership is \$30, and a Family membership is \$45 annually. For more information about Friends of the IPO, call (708) 481-7774.

Thank you so much to the Friends of IPO for all of your support!

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Welcome to Palos Heights!

On behalf of the City of Palos Heights, I want to thank you for your support of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra and welcome you to the beautiful Ozinga Chapel on the campus of Trinity Christian College.

While you are here, I hope you will explore all that our city has to offer. From the peace and serenity of Lake Katherine to our many outstanding retail shops and restaurants, there are many ways to experience all the amenities and come alive in Palos Heights.

Finally, I want to thank the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra for enhancing our commitment to the arts by bringing live classical music to our community. I know you will enjoy the concert and I hope you will visit us again soon.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Straz
Mayor



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ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

MARCH 16, 2024 | 3:00 P.M.

Stilian Kirov, *Conductor*

Elizabeth Huffman, *Violin*

Anima - Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus – Evan Bruno, *Artistic Director*

ChiArts – Charles Taylor, *Music Director*

Suite Bergamasque; arr. Mouton

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

I. *Prelude*

II. *Menuet*

III. *Clair de lune*

IV. *Passepied*

The Lark Ascending

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

INTERMISSION

Gwendolyn Brooks Settings

Augusta Read Thomas (b. 1964)

Program and artists subject to change.

Opening Act Youth Lobby Performers and Special Guests

Lincoln-Way Youth Strings

LWYouthStrings.com

Contact: Michelle Freeland, Director at lwyouthstrings@gmail.com



The artwork displayed in the Grand Lobby was first presented as part of Tall Grass Arts Association's 'Living Gwendolyn Brooks' show in 2023 and is presented again tonight in conjunction with Tall Grass Arts Association.



This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council.



Tonight's concert is dedicated to Gwendolyn Brooks, one of the most accomplished and acclaimed poets of the last century, the first black author to win the Pulitzer Prize and the first black woman to serve as poetry consultant to the Library of Congress—the forerunner of the U.S. Poet Laureate. IPO applauds both Ms. Brooks and her artistry.



BIOGRAPHIES



STILIAN KIROV,

Gibb Music Director

Currently in his seventh season as the newly retitled Gibb Music Director of the Illinois Philharmonic, Maestro Stilian Kirov is the First

Prize Winner of the "Debut Berlin" Concert Competition, prizewinner at Denmark's 2015 Malko Competition, as well as the 2010 Mitropoulos Competition. Maestro Kirov has made his conducting debut at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2017 and is also a recipient of numerous Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Awards (2016–2019).

Highlights of Mr. Kirov's guest performances include appearances worldwide with the Seattle Symphony, Israel Camerata, Xi'an Symphony, Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra, Sofia Philharmonic, Leopold Chamber Orchestra/Ukraine, Orchestra of Colors/Athens, Orchestre Colonne/Paris, Sofia Festival Orchestra, State Hermitage Orchestra/St. Petersburg, Thüringen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Zagreb Philharmonic, the Musical Olympus International Festival in St. Petersburg, Victoria Symphony/British Columbia, Omaha Symphony and the Memphis Symphony, among others.

Stilian Kirov assisted distinguished conductors such as Bernard Haitink with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, as well as Stéphane Denève, the late Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Andrew Davis, all with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Kirov is a graduate of The Juilliard School's orchestral conducting program, where he was a student of the late James DePreist. He has also studied with the late Kurt Masur, Michael Tilson Thomas, the late Gianluigi Gelmetti, George Manahan, Robert Spano and Asher Fisch, among others.

Also a gifted pianist, Stilian Kirov was Gold Medalist of the 2001 Claude Kahn International Piano Competition in Paris.



ELIZABETH HUFFMAN

is the Assistant Concertmaster of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. An active violinist in the Chicago area, Ms. Huffman performs with the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra, Broadway in Chicago, Chicago Opera Theatre, and many other ensembles. Ms. Huffman is the Assistant Director of the Oak Park String Academy and enjoys working with her students, ages 5–17.



The GLEN ELLYN THEATER CHORUS

was founded by Barbara Born in 1964 to celebrate

and showcase the voices of young local singers. It quickly grew to include singers from throughout greater Chicagoland and rose to acclaim performing with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and touring around the country and eventually the world.

Almost 60 years later, **ANIMA-GLEN ELLYN CHILDREN'S CHORUS** is world renowned. Its rich heritage of artistic and educational excellence has been recognized by Chorus America, American Composers Forum, and the National Endowment for the Arts, among other awards. They frequently perform with area professional music organizations, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, and Grant Park Music Festival.

As the options for extra-curricular activities continue to increase, Anima's programming is evolving to meet a range of personal aspirations and give all young people the opportunity to grow their vocal ability.

At Anima-Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus, they don't subscribe to the idea that we either "can sing" or "can't sing." They believe every child who wants to sing, can sing. A child's job is to want to sing, and Anima's job is to teach them how in a supportive, welcoming environment.

Anima rehearsals are...

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- **Challenging** – to help singers take risks
- **Supportive** – to make singers feel valued

The joy of singing is universal, but singing in public can be intimidating, especially at first. Anima singers experience the immense power of choral singing to create community, as they are surrounded by others on their own paths of musical discovery and vocal development.



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Integrity—We hold ourselves and each other to high academic and artistic standards through honesty, sincerity, and accountability.

Humility—We allow our artistic and intellectual talents to speak for themselves, acknowledge our history, and are open to constructive criticism, realizing our finest achievements could not happen without the contributions of others.

Balance—We strive to lead well-rounded lives; we are reflective, and we manage our energies in ways that are productive, healthy, and foster connection with others.

Perseverance—We demonstrate courage through self-discipline and dedication as we embrace a willingness to move through obstacles with resilience.

In 2004, The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust and the Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust convened a group of approximately ten arts and education organizations to discuss the issue of diversity within mid- to large-sized arts organizations in Chicago and specifically the lack of representation in this landscape by professional artists representing the many ethnic communities who call Chicago home.

The Diversity Working Group (DWG) surveyed the Chicago landscape to identify existing educational resources for aspiring young artists across a broad age spectrum, keeping in mind the concentrated, focused training required to prepare young artists for professional careers. Incredible richness within the existing resources in Chicago's many excellent privately funded community music schools, youth orchestras, university music programs and major cultural institutions were evident. What was not found was a public institution that would provide a comprehensive learning environment with superior training at the high school level—a critical stage in development for the aspiring young artist. This age group stood out as the one area of greatest need and also that with greatest potential for positive impact.

Once it was decided to pursue the idea of an arts high school, the group undertook conversations with key senior administrative members from Chicago Public Schools to assess receptivity and possible options for the creation of an exceptional arts-focused educational institution in Chicago. DWG members conducted site visits and/or spoke to officials at several public and private arts high schools in other cities.

At that time, Renaissance 2010 became an avenue for establishing new schools and offering students and parents a quality choice in education. Civic leaders were identified by

the DWG members to become the executive committee that would lead the project through the application process. The Chicago Board of Education approved the school on October 24, 2007. The executive committee became the founding board of directors of the school and ChiArts opened its doors for the first time on September 8, 2009.



The music of **AUGUSTA READ THOMAS** (b. 1964 in New York) is nuanced, majestic, elegant, capricious, lyrical, and colorful—"it is boldly considered music that celebrates the sound of

the instruments and reaffirms the vitality of orchestral music" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*).

A composer featured on a Grammy winning CD by Chanticleer and Pulitzer Prize finalist, Thomas' impressive body of works "embodies unbridled passion and fierce poetry" (American Academy of Arts and Letters). *The New Yorker* magazine called her "a true virtuoso composer." Championed by such luminaries as Barenboim, Rostropovich, Boulez, Eschenbach, Salonen, Maazel, Ozawa, and Knussen, she rose early to the top of her profession. The American Academy of Arts and Letters described Thomas as "one of the most recognizable and widely loved figures in American Music."

She is a University Professor of Composition in Music and the College at The University of Chicago. Thomas was the longest-serving Mead Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for conductors Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez (1997–2006). This residency culminated in the premiere of *Astral Canticle*, one of two finalists for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Music. During her residency, Thomas not only premiered nine commissioned orchestral works, but was also central in establishing the

thriving MusicNOW series, through which she commissioned and programmed the work of many living composers. For the 2017-2018 concert season, Thomas was the Composer-in-Residence with the Eugene Symphony Orchestra, while Francesco Lecce-Chong served as Music Director and Scott Freck as Executive Director. Thomas was MUSICALIVE Composer-in-Residence with the New Haven Symphony, a national residency program of The League of American Orchestras and Meet the Composer.

Thomas won the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, among many other coveted awards. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Thomas was named the 2016 Chicagoan of the Year.

In 2016, Augusta Read Thomas founded the University of Chicago's Center for Contemporary Composition, which is a dynamic, collaborative, and interdisciplinary environment for the creation, performance and study of new music and for the advancement of the careers of emerging and established composers, performers, and scholars. Distinguished by its formation within an uncompromising, relentlessly searching, and ceaselessly innovative scholarly environment, which celebrates excellence and presents new possibilities for intellectual dialogue, the Center comprises ten integrated entities: annual concert series featuring the Grossman Ensemble, CHIME, visiting ensembles, distinguished guest composers, performances, recordings, research, student-led projects, workshops and postdoctoral fellowships.

Not only is Thomas one of the most active composers in the world, but she is a long-standing, exemplary citizen with an

extensive history of being deeply committed to her community. She is the former Chairperson for the American Music Center; Vice President for Music, The American Academy of Arts and Letters; and Member of the Conseil Musical de la Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco.

In February 2015, music critic Edward Reichel wrote, "Augusta Read Thomas has secured for herself a permanent place in the pantheon of American composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. She is without question one of the best and most important composers that this country has today. Her music has substance and depth and a sense of purpose. She has a lot to say and she knows how to say it—and say it in a way that is intelligent yet appealing and sophisticated."

Recent and upcoming commissions include those from the Santa Fe Opera in collaboration with the San Francisco Opera and other opera companies, PEAK Performances at Montclair State University and the Martha Graham Dance Company, The Cathedral Choral Society of Washington D.C., The Indianapolis Symphony, Tanglewood, The Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, Des Moines Symphony, Boston Symphony, the Utah Symphony, Wigmore Hall in London, JACK quartet, Third Coast Percussion, Spektral Quartet, Chicago Philharmonic, Eugene Symphony, the Danish Chamber Players, Notre Dame University, Janet Sung, Lorelei Vocal Ensemble, and the Fromm Foundation.

Thomas has the distinction of having her work performed more frequently in 2013-2014 than any other living ASCAP composer, according to statistics from the performing rights organization (*New York Times*). Her discography includes 90 commercially recorded CDs.

PROGRAM NOTES AND MUSINGS

***Suite Bergamasque*; arr. Mouton CLAUDE DEBUSSY**

What makes a piano piece suitable for a pleasing orchestral arrangement? Perhaps Ravel gives a hint from his choosing to orchestrate only a selection of his piano pieces from his *Tombeau du Couperin* which the Illinois Philharmonic audience heard last season. Of the six piano pieces in the original suite, Ravel didn't orchestrate the "Toccata" nor "Fugue" movements, believing they were intrinsically too pianistic in concept. (Paradoxically, one of the most famous orchestrations is Leopold Stokowski's arrangement of J. S. Bach's original organ piece *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*.) A successful orchestration isn't an adverse judgement of the piano original, but only a means of using the colors and power of the orchestra to give a different yet valuable musical experience.

While Debussy himself (1862-1918) made famous orchestrations from the piano-solo originals of Satie's First and Third *Gymnopédies*, there seemed to be a minor industry of **other** composers orchestrating his small piano pieces, usually with his approval, though the arrangement of the *Suite Bergamasque* that we will hear this afternoon dates from the mid-20th century. This is the suite that includes "Clair de Lune" (Moonlight) which may be one of the most famous melodies ever written. In an on-line music company's offerings, there were 1,610 items for "Clair de Lune" including 168 arrangements for various saxophone solos and ensembles. (The saxophone was originally a French instrument for which Debussy wrote an exotic *Rhapsody for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra*.)

It is amazing to contemplate that "Clair de Lune" might never have seen the light of day (sorry) had Debussy not been convinced by his publisher to rehab these four simple piano pieces, originally composed in 1890. After the great success of his opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), Debussy was frequently approached for further publications. Still, he decided to revise the pieces from his earlier style for their publication in 1905 as the *Suite Bergamasque*.

The title comes from a poem by Paul Verlaine entitled "Clair de Lune" whose first stanza reads:

*Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et
bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements
fantasques.*

Your soul is like a landscape fantasy,
Where masks and bergamasks, in
charming wise,
Strum lutes and dance, just a bit sad to be
Hidden beneath their fanciful disguise.

Suite Bergamasque was orchestrated by Gustave Cloez and André Caplet. Caplet, whose orchestration of Debussy's *Children's Corner Suite* the IPO audiences heard last season, early-on had orchestrated "Clair de Lune." Much later, Cloez arranged the other movements for the ballet, *L'Ange gris* (1953).

The "Prelude" opens with energy (with a piano in the orchestra's percussion). Debussy is more noted for flow than classical form, but the opening returns after some lovely pensive phrases taken by the woodwinds.

“Menuet” begins with bouncy syncopations and continues with rhythmic complexity and an antique modality which evokes Rameau rather than any Classical minuet heard symphonically in this concert hall. “Clair de Lune” also contains breathtaking rhythmic elisions. The charming opening returns after a contrasting middle section which seemingly evokes Verlaine’s lover’s soul, fantasy landscape rather than a moonlit painting. The concluding “Passepié” is an up-tempo dance which comes from a tradition that Wyn Jamison Allanbrook describes as “a dance in which attention to individual steps is all but overwhelmed by a preoccupation with the geometry of the intertwining pairs of dancers.” This is perfectly expressed by Debussy—a master of shifting, flowing, dancing musical patterns.

—Program Note by IPO Board Member
Charles Amenta, M.D.

The Lark Ascending **RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Ralph Vaughan Williams was born in The Vicarage, in Down Ampney in Gloucestershire, on 12 October 1872 but moved to Leith Hill Place in Surrey when he was just two, upon his father’s death. His father, Arthur, was a vicar from a prominent family. His mother, Margaret, hailed from the famous Wedgwood (as in fine china) family which multiple times in the proceeding decades had married members of the Darwin family. Thus, young Ralph (pronounced “rayf”) was the great nephew of Charles Darwin. His maternal aunt gave him his first piano lessons at a young age, and he wrote his first little piece at age six. Vaughan (pronounced vawn) Williams was by no means a prodigy in musical performance or composition. And even though he was a skilled violist, his family preferred him to take up the organ—which he did with some success.

Vaughan Williams obtained a degree in music from the Royal College of Music in 1894 including studies with the composer Hubert Parry. His style was much influenced by his discovery and avid collecting of English folk songs beginning in 1903. A further influence developed when his work as an organist led to his being asked to edit the English Hymnal over the period 1904–1906. This brought him in contact with the work of earlier English composers dating from the Tudor and Elizabethan periods, like Thomas Tallis. Even as an agnostic, he wrote several hymns himself and initially had them listed as “anonymous.” His famous hymn “Come down, O Love Divine” is often called the “Down Ampney Hymn” in his honor. His other hymns include “O taste and see” and “The Old Hundredth.”

He studied briefly with the German Max Bruch and much later in 1908 with French Impressionist composer and orchestration wizard Maurice Ravel who happened to be several years his junior. This French instruction helped free Vaughn Williams’s sound from the Wagnerian, Teutonic influences of which he and many of his fellow British composers had been inculcated. Yet, while Vaughan Williams picked up some of Ravel’s orchestral mastery and lightness of texture, he avoided imitating the Impressionist style. Indeed, Ravel stated that Vaughan Williams was his only student “who did not write music like Ravel.”

Despite completing nine symphonies, as well as several operas as one of the great English composers of the 20th century, Vaughan Williams’s reputation outside of England is mostly carried by his pastoral, occasion pieces such as his *Fantasia on Greensleeves*, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (performed by the IPO in that famous concert at the Harris Theater), and the piece we will hear today, *The Lark Ascending*. This pastoral approach did not fre-

quently garner the favor of the progressive classical enclave. Aaron Copland is supposed to have said that listening to Vaughan Williams’s *Symphony No. 5* was like “staring at a cow for 45 minutes.” Yet several of Vaughan Williams’s pieces have much more of an edge to them, including his WWII-prefiguring *Symphony No. 4*. Vaughan Williams died in 1958 at the age of 85—the same year that he completed his *Ninth Symphony*.

That said, *The Lark Ascending*, a romance for solo violin and orchestra, not only holds the sweetness that comes immediately from consuming a soft drink, it generates a feeling similar to the pleasant aftereffect of downing a tall gin and tonic while enjoying an outdoor scene in the country. It was inspired by a poem by George Meredith and written in 1914 just before the start of WWI. However, the piano/violin score wasn’t orchestrated until 1920. The premiere took place in 1921 with the dedicatee, Marie Hall, as soloist under the baton of the young Adrian Boult, who became one of the composer’s greatest advocates.

—Program Note by IPO Board Member
Charles Amenta, M.D.

Gwendolyn Brooks Settings **AUGUSTA READ THOMAS**

Music for me is an embrace of the world, a way to open myself to being alive in the world—in my body, in my sounds, and in my mind. I care deeply about musicality, imagination, craft, clarity, dimensionality, an elegant balance between material and form, and empathy with the performing musicians as well as everyone who works in the presenting organizations.

Gwendolyn Brooks Settings was composed between 2018 and 2020. Collaborating with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, Stilian Kirov, IPO Gibb Music Director; Anima—Glen Ellyn Children’s Chorus, Evan Bruno, artistic

director, William Buhr, accompanist; and The Chicago High School for the Arts, Charles Taylor, music director, Andrew Lawrence, accompanist, has been an exhilarating experience. I am grateful to the many extraordinary colleagues who have made this partnership possible. The magnificence and energy of massed vocal and orchestral resources is humbling, inspiring, and exemplifies teamwork.

I am deeply thankful to Cedille Records, James Ginsburg, president, Bill Maylone recording engineer, and to the whole Cedille Records team for recording *Gwendolyn Brooks Settings* for release.

In 2018, Dr. Charles Sundquist, the former artistic director, Anima—Glen Ellyn Children’s Chorus, generously proposed to me the idea of my making a large-scale composition for chorus and orchestra which would set texts from Gwendolyn Brooks’ famous book entitled *Bronzeville Girls and Boys*.

Gwendolyn Brooks is legendary literary icon. I love her work and was (and remain) thrilled by this opportunity to compose *Gwendolyn Brooks Settings*. By consent of Brooks Permissions, I was given formal permission to set and reprint Brooks’ inspiring words.

Across the thirty-minute composition, which is formed in six parts that are performed without a pause, each lasting *circa* five minutes, the music, the singers, and the musicians paint sonic images of the deeper meanings of the texts. Each part, subsection, and musical arc captures the aura of Brooks’ words.

Organic and at every level concerned with transformations and connections, the carefully sculpted, fashioned, and notated musical materials are agile and spirited. Their flexibility allows pathways to braid harmonic, rhythmic, timbral, and

PROGRAM NOTES *continued*

contrapuntal elements which are constantly transformed. The music traverses sound words that are energized, balletic, colorful, vibrant, reflective, playful, majestic, intimate, lyrical, layered and reverberating with overtly cantabile, melodic resonance, pirouettes, and fulcrum points.

Music's eternal quality is its capacity for change, transformation, and renewal. No one composer, musical style, school of thought, technical practice, or historical

period can claim a monopoly on music's truths. I believe music feeds our souls. Unbreakable is the power of art to build community. Humanity has worked, and will always work, together to further music's flexible, diverse capacity and innate power.

Gwendolyn Brooks Settings was co-commissioned by Anima—Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus and the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra with partial support from Illinois Arts Council Agency and Illinois Humanities.

—Augusta Read Thomas

“BRONZEVILLE GIRLS AND BOYS”

Reprinted By Consent of Brooks Permissions.

I shall create! [1]
Each body has its art...[2]

Tommy

I put a seed into the ground
And said, “I’ll watch it grow.”
I watered it and cared for it
As well as I could know.

One day I walked in my back yard,
And oh, what did I see!
My seed had popped itself right out,
Without consulting me.

Live in the along. [3]:
To be in love
Is to touch things with a lighter hand. [4]:

Cynthia in The Snow

It SUSHES.
It hushes
The loudness in the road.
It flitter-twitters,
And laughs away from me.
It laughs a lovely whiteness,
And whitely whirs away,
To be
Some otherwhere,
Still white as milk or shirts.
So beautiful it hurts.

If you wanted a poem you only need to look
out of a window. [5]:
Poetry is life distilled. [6]:

If you wanted a poem you only need to look
out of a window. *Reprise* [7]:
Live in the along. *Reprise*
Your sky may burn with light,
While mine,
Spreads beautiful to darkness. [8]:

Robert, Who is Often a Stranger to Himself

Do you ever look in the looking-glass
And see a stranger there?
A child you know and do not know,
Wearing what you wear?

Exhaust the little moment. Soon it dies.
And be it gash or gold it will not come
Again [9]:

From De Koven

I’d keep you with me always.
You’d shine both night and day.

Mexie and Bridie

A tiny tea-party
Is happening today.
Pink cakes, and nuts and bon-bons on
A tiny, shiny tray.

It’s out within the weather,
Beneath the clouds and sun.
And pausing ants have peeked upon,
As birds and God have done.

Mexie’s in her white dress,
And Bridie’s in her brown.
There are no finer Ladies
Tea-ing in the town.

Live in the along. *reprise*
We are each other’s magnitude and bond. [10]:

From De Koven

Ah
night and day

Marie Lucille

That clock is ticking
Me away!
The me that only
Yesterday
Ate peanuts, jam and
Licorice
Is gone already.
And this is
‘Cause nothing’s putting
Back, each day,
The me that clock is
Ticking away.

The Admiration of Willie

Grown folks are wise
About tying ties
And baking cakes
And chasing aches,
Building walls
And finding balls
And making planes
And cars and trains –
And kissing children into bed
After their prayers are said.

From De Koven

Ah
Shine Star Shine!

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1) Boy Breaking Glass. 2) Quote. 3) Report From Part One. 4) To Be In Love. 5) The Essential Gwendolyn Brooks. 6) Poetry Is Life Distilled, biography of Gwendolyn Brooks by Christine M. Hill. 7) Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward (Among them Nora and Henry III). 8) Corners on the Curving Sky. 9) Annie Allen. 10) Published in “Family Pictures” (1971)



Kathleen Field Orr

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To provide the best concert experience for our guests and musicians, we kindly request the following:

- Please silence your cell phones
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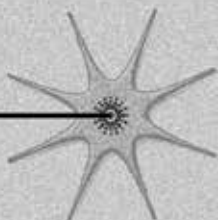
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