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PHILHARMONIC  
ORCHESTRA  
Stilian Kirov, Gibb Music Director

**2023/24  
SEASON**



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Dear Friends of the IPO,

I hope you are enjoying a wonderful 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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



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Freedom Hall Nathan Manilow Theatre is an intimate Chicago suburbs concert venue and performing arts theatre located in Park Forest, Illinois. We are thrilled to present LIVE music in our Nathan Manilow theatre!



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](mailto: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](http://trnty.edu) for more information about our mission.

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

## ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA ADVANCING CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE SOUTHLAND

IPO **is** Music—onstage, in the classroom, and throughout our diverse community. Programs impact over 11,000 individuals annually in a multitude of harmonious ways.

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### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

Impacts **4k** students & community members each year

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### FRIENDS OF THE IPO

Builds community camaraderie in support of IPO.

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Donated Over **500k** to IPO since 1989

### EXPANDING CLASSICAL MUSIC

**21** World Premiere Commissions

**50+** International Guest Artists

## 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.*

LEARN MORE AT [IPOMUSIC.ORG](http://IPOMUSIC.ORG)

*Come Alive!*  
IN PALOS HEIGHTS



# 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



[www.palosheights.org](http://www.palosheights.org)

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## MEET THE MUSICIAN



OANA TATU, VIOLA

### How long have you been playing music?

I have been playing viola for 33 years.

### What instruments do you play, other than

**what you play in IPO?** Sometimes I play violin with wedding bands, which I find to be a lot of fun as I fiddle around with pieces that I would never have an opportunity to play on the viola.

### How gratifying is it to be able to have a career as a professional musician?

After being deprived of the opportunity of performing during the pandemic, I started appreciating much more the opportunity of expressing myself through music. I am grateful every time I get to share this experience with our audiences.

### Who has been the most significant influence on your musical career?

I could name several artists that have influenced me along the way, but the one person I will always be most thankful for having a chance to work with is Cliff Colnot, the conductor of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and the DePaul Symphony while I was completing my graduate studies at DePaul University. I owe him everything I know about being a good orchestra player and I still apply that knowledge every time I perform with an orchestra. My favorite saying is: "everybody needs a little bit of Cliff."

### What is your favorite thing about IPO?

I love the enthusiasm of our audience and I am happy to see how consistent they are in supporting us and showing up, regardless of the weather and other impediments.

**Please share one of your favorite IPO memories.** I will never forget the winters when IPO's late principal violist, Matt Mantell, used to bring treats to the rehearsals to share with everyone. That's when I first had a taste of white chocolate peppermint bark, which I thought tasted heavenly, and have been a fan of ever since. Thank you, Matt!

### Do you perform outside of IPO and if so, where?

There are a few other groups I perform with aside from IPO, in different parts of Chicago and its suburbs, with various sized ensembles, both chamber and orchestral. The groups I perform with on a regular basis are the Northbrook Symphony, Chicago Opera Theatre, and Oistrakh Symphony.

### Do you have a website and/or social media channels where patrons can follow you?

I am not very active on social media and tend to be more of an observer of virtual interaction, rather than a participant.

### Tell us some more about yourself (outside interests, family, etc.)

Aside from music, I love to dance and my next self imposed challenge is to learn how to tango. .

## IPO CONCERT ROSTER

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Azusa Tashiro,  
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Ebedit Fonseca,  
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Kate Lano  
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**Congratulations on your 46<sup>th</sup> Season  
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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!*





# IPO Summer @

## Olympia Fields Country Club

IPO Summer @ OFCC is Open To Non-Club Members 2024

JUNE

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**Memorial Concert Honoring Patrick Coburn**

Stilian Kirov, *Conductor*

Kimberly E. Jones, *Soprano*

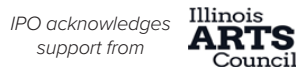
Leah Dexter, *Mezzo-Soprano*

Ryan Townsend Strand, *Tenor*

Bill McMurray, *Baritone*

Chicago Community Chorus (Dr. Keith Hampton, *Artistic Director/Founder*)

Kenwood String Orchestra (Jhonatan Roldan, *Director*)



*Symphony No. 9 is supported in part by the Music Lights Our World 2023 Gala Donors*

Seven Joys

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

I. After a Storm

II. interlude

III. Ratio

IV. interlude

V. What Seems Like Joy

VI. interlude

VII. Blackbird Etude

**INTERMISSION**

Symphony No. 9, op. 125, D minor

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

I. *Allegro ma non troppo; un poco maestoso*

II. *Molto vivace*

III. *Adagio molto e cantabile*

IV. *Presto – Allegro assai – Allegro assai vivace*

*Program and artists subject to change.*

*Opening Act Lobby Performers*

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Donnell and Jeanne Schwarz

Lee Shirer

Jeff Stevenson

Barbara Sturges

Marilynn Tannebaum

Terese Thrall

Donica and Benjamin

Van Voorhees

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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.



Soprano **KIMBERLY EILEEN JONES** is an alum of the Ryan Opera Center with the prestigious Lyric Opera of Chicago. Her performances there include the slave girl, Margru, in the world premiere of Anthony Davis' *Amistad*, which was released nationally on the New World recording label. She also portrayed the feisty Olga in *Fedora*, Princess Xenia in *Boris Godunov*, and the spitfire Despina in *Cosi Fan Tutte* student matinee performances. With the Ryan Opera Center, she portrayed Laetitia in Menotti's *Old Maid and the Thief*. Additionally, she made her Grant Park Festival debut as Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) and Adele (*Die Fledermaus*) the following season.

Kimberly performed in Houston Grand Opera's colorful production of the *Magic Flute* (Papageno), and reprised her role of Xenia in *Boris Godunov*. Also with Houston, she participated in their production of *Porgy and Bess*, as Clara. This tour graced the international stages of La Scala in Milan,

the Bastille in Paris, and the Bunkamura in Tokyo, Japan. For her portrayal of Clara, she was nominated for Best Supporting Actress by the NAACP Awards.

She captivated audiences in her Alice Tully Hall debut with the Little Orchestra Society in an evening of Vivaldi arias. She received rave reviews as the Composer in Mozart's *Jewel Box* with the Chicago Opera Theater, as well as Mahler's Second Symphony with the Madison Symphony. She has also appeared in concert with the Ravinia Festival (*Bourgeois Gentleman*), Richmond Symphony (*Knoxville: Summer of 1915*), and with Madison Symphony (*Messiah* and Christmas Pops). Her first *Carmina Burana* and *Haydn Creation* were performed with the Rockford Symphony, later repeated with Chicago Sinfonietta. She was showcased opening weekend of Jay Pritzker Pavilion of Millennium Park in Chicago.

She was selected by Maestro Bruno Bartoletti, Lyric Opera's former Artistic Director, to appear with the Orchestra della Toscana in Florence, La Spezia and Piombino. (Barber Knoxville Summer of 1915) She was one of four opera center artists showcased at the Chatelet in Paris, France.

She has received a 3Arts grant, George London grant, Sullivan grant, and a Licia Albanese Encouragement grant. She has been nominated for the Richard Tucker grant, received three grants from the MacAllister Awards competition, and was awarded the Richard Gold Career Grant from the Lyric Opera of Chicago. She is a Union League Civic and Arts Foundation (now Luminarts) prize winner. At the recommendation from Ardis Krainik, she was presented in Opera's *Now* magazine's "Who's Hot in Opera".

She has performed the Philip Glass Symphony #5 at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Germany, and with the Stuttgart and

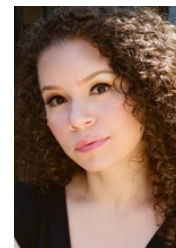
Danish Radio Symphonies in Germany and Copenhagen. She has performed four times at the Chicago Cultural Center in Preston Bradley Hall, including a WFMT radio broadcast of the Dame Myra Hess concert, and a Negro Spirituals concert with award winning actress, Irma P. Hall. She made her Connecticut Opera debut as Fiordigili in *Cosi Fan Tutte*.

Kimberly returned to Mandel Hall singing Vaughn Williams' *Sea Symphony* and Brahms *Requiem*. She made her Grand Rapids Symphony debut with Maestro David Lockington in Handel's *Messiah*. She repeated her performances of Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate*.

She is recurring artist with the Michigan City Chamber Music Festival. With South Bend Symphony, she performed in her first Britten *War Requiem*. She sang the soprano solos in her first Verdi *Requiem* with Chicago Community Chorus. She debuted with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra in an evening of *Porgy and Bess* excerpts and spirituals. She is the founder of the soprano trio group, called simply, "Tres Belle." She was showcased in engagements that included *Carmina Burana* with the Chicago Sinfonietta, and Beethoven Mass in C with the DePaul Community Chorus. She was a frequent guest with Yachatz Festival in Yachatz, Oregon. She was showcased in the Christmas Pops South Bend Symphony for Maestro Tsung Yeh's retiring season.

Other engagements included the title role of *The Fairy Queen* with Chicago Opera Theater, repeated with Long Beach Opera. Also with COT, Stewart Copeland's *Invention of Morel* as Dora, Micaela in *Carmen* and Grace Alumond in *Quamino's Map*. She performed in Lyric Opera's production of Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut up in My Bones*.

In concert appearances, she sang with Fox Valley Symphony, and Fort Wayne Symphony. She sang the roles of Tibrino/Amore in the Haymarket Opera production of *L'Oronte*, and Galatea in *Acis*. Last summer she portrayed Angelica in an operatic video of Handel's *Orlando*. Miss Jones is on the voice faculty at Roosevelt University and DePaul University.



**LEAH DEXTER**, mezzo-soprano, is excited to be returning to the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. A frequent performing artist with Chicago Opera Theater, she has recently been seen as

Traveller/Attendant #4 in Shostakovich's *The Nose*, Mrs. Herring in *Albert Herring*, Ib in *Becoming Santa Claus*, and Mercedes in *Carmen*. Known for her performances of contemporary opera, Leah has also premiered several roles with the company that include: Gloria in *Freedom Ride*, Night Maid in *The Transformation of Jane Doe*, Mistress Paddington in *Quamino's Map*, and Nelda in *Taking Up Serpents*, for which her performance was lauded as being "...executed with an intensity that will put the fear of God in you" (Opera News).

Other recent operatic engagements have included Siegrune in *The Valkyries* with Detroit Opera, Dimas' Mother/Lupe in *Frida* with both Detroit Opera and El Paso Opera, and Bertha in *Fire Shut up in My Bones* with Lyric Opera of Chicago. Additional recent soloist engagements have included *Messiah* with Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, *Terra Nostra* with the Northwestern Symphony Orchestra, *Elijah* with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, *Petite Messe Solennelle* with the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, *The Ordering of Moses* with the Elgin Master Chorale, and recital

appearances and recordings with LYNX Project of Chicago.

For the 2023–24 season, Leah returned as a soloist for the DePaul Community Chorus' Masterworks of Brazil concert, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Notes for Peace Celebration concert, the Chicago Opera Theater 50th Anniversary gala, and the *Terra Nostra* album release event, celebrating the recording made last year with Cedille Records. She sang the alto solos in Rockefeller Memorial Chapel's *Messiah* and returned to the Elgin Master Chorus as the alto soloist for Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*. She presented a solo recital at Glessner House of Chicago and premiered another opera with Chicago Opera Theater, *The Weight of Light*, in the role of Object 1.

Leah continued her work, as well, throughout the season, with the Lyric Opera of Chicago Chorus, the Chicago Symphony Chorus and will re-join the Grant Park Festival Chorus for the summer concert season.

A native of Detroit, MI, Leah attended the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor for her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees, and studied the violin and cello for many years.



With more than forty operatic roles to his credit, baritone **BILL McMURRAY** has been described as “a baritone with warm, rich tones and superb stage presence” by the Durham Herald Sun. Such roles include “Figaro” in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, “Count Almaviva” in *Le nozze di Figaro* and “Escamillo” in *Carmen*.

Walter Marini of the New Buffalo Times is quoted as saying his portrayal of “Marcello” in Puccini’s *La Boheme* as “a powerful actor who brings great elegance to the role. His singing is as fine as anything being heard in major opera houses today.”

He has sung with noted companies like Florida Grand Opera, Opera North, Knoxville Opera, Skylight Music Theater, Opera Company of NC, Mobile Opera, Opera Carolina, Central City Opera and Opera on the James.

Recent engagements include his return to Chicago Opera Theater to perform the role of “Mr Gedge, the Vicar” in *Albert Herring*, his debut with Opera San Antonio as “Marullo” in *Rigoletto*, “Ibn Hakia” in Tchaikovsky’s Russian opera *Iolanta*, “The Father” in the Midwest premiere of Stefan Weisman’s opera *The Scarlet Ibis*, the Narrator in *The Snowman* with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra and as the bass soloist in Handel’s *Messiah* with the Apollo Chorus. Other solo highlights include a Porgy and Bess concert, as well as performances of the Mozart *Requiem* with the Chicago Bar Association and Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* in his debut with South Bend Symphony Orchestra.

The 23/24 season will feature a return to Opera San Antonio to sing the “Pirate King” in *Pirates of Penzance*, *Messiah* performances with Michigan City and the Apollo Chorus, his debut with Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra, baritone soloist in Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* with the Illinois Philharmonic and the baritone soloist in the Bruckner *Te Deum*.

Equally successful on the concert stage, Bill has sung solos in sacred works such as Handel’s *Messiah*, Haydn’s *The Creation*, Mozart’s *Mass in C Minor* and

Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*. He has also been the featured soloist in Vaughan Williams’ *Five Mystical Songs*, Aaron Copland’s *Old American Songs* and the *Faure Requiem*. He was the baritone soloist in Michael Tippett’s oratorio *A Child of Our Time*, conducted by Barbara Schubert with the University of Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Other solo orchestral appearances include the New Philharmonic Orchestra, Elmhurst Orchestra and Choral Society, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Skokie Valley Symphony, Elgin Symphony, Chicago Civic Orchestra and Waukegan Symphony. At the Ravinia Festival he was the bass soloist in the final movement of Haydn’s *Creation*, conducted by former Metropolitan Opera Music Director, James Levine. He is a previous first place winner of the National Association Teachers of Singing competition and was one of eight singers selected to the Winners Circle of The Classical Music Vocal Competition. In 2021 Bill received a Grammy award as a member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus for their work on the recording of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 13, *Babi Yar*.



**RYAN TOWNSEND STRAND**, tenor, is a Minnesota native whose “beautiful vocalism” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) and “...attractive nimble tenor” (*Chicago Classical Review*) have afforded him an expanding career as a concert and oratorio soloist. Strand most recently was a featured soloist with Bella Voce performing Mozart’s *Requiem* in September and the Niles Metropolitan Chorus as the tenor for Handel’s *Messiah* in December. Along with being thrilled to return to Bach Cantata Vespers, highlights of the 2021–2022 season included Bach’s *Johannes-Passion* with the Elmhurst Symphony, Wally Gunn’s *The*

*Ascendant* with the William Ferris Chorale, and Kevin Puts’ *To Touch The Sky* with La Caccina & Constellation Men’s Ensemble.

Strand made his professional Chicago opera debut in Haymarket Opera Theater’s production of Alessandro Scarlatti’s *Gli equivoci nel sembiante* (Armindo). Last fall, he premiered *Acis & Galatea in HD* (Chorus, Acis Cover) with Haymarket Opera as part of “a sparkling group of singers,” (*Hyde Park Herald*). He returned to Haymarket for their production of *L’incoronazione di Poppea* in September 2022. Other operatic productions included Handel’s *Beauty’s Truth* (Pleasure) & *Così fan tutte* (Ferrando) with Transgressive Theater-Opera & Elmhurst Symphony; Mark Adamo’s *Little Women* (Laurie), Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* (Nero), and Ricky Ian Gordon’s *The Grapes of Wrath* (Al Joad) with Northwestern Opera Theater. With Chicago Opera Theater, Strand most recently performed Jake Heggie’s *Moby Dick* and has sung other chorus roles in productions of Philip Glass’ *The Perfect American*, Mozart’s *Lucio Silla*, and Bloch’s *Macbeth*. He would have made his onstage debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago in Richard Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung* prior to COVID-19.

Our mission at the **CHICAGO COMMUNITY CHORUS** (CCC) is to provide an advanced choral experience to anyone who loves to sing. Founded in 2003, the CCC now numbers over 130 singers from all walks of life and levels of musical experience. We seek to reflect the diversity of Chicago by involving singers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. We welcome new members to join us! We present at least three performances each year in a variety of venues and are often invited to participate in local musical events. We have performed in many Chicago locations and in neighboring communities. Our repertoire spans the widest possible variety of choral music: from

gospel to hip hop, from cantata to oratorio, from jazz to pop. Our choral literature includes works of the great composers from the fifteenth century to the present. Dr. Keith T. Hampton is our Artistic Director and Founder and was named one of the top 25 Contemporary Composers by the North Central American Choral Directors Association. The CCC is also supported by two talented Associate Conductors, Michelle Douglas and Christopher Joyner, as well as a team of dedicated Board and Staff members. The Chicago Community Chorus seeks to be a leader in choral music education for ALL people who love to sing.



**DR. KEITH T. HAMPTON**, affectionately known as “Doc,” is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Chicago Community Chorus (CCC). In addition, Dr. Hampton is an organ performer, conductor,

composer, educator, church musician, adjudicator and workshop clinician. He is president of Dr. KT Productions, Inc., Chicago, Illinois and serves as the Director of Music/Organist at St. Thomas Episcopal Church. Classically trained as an organist and conductor, he has served as Music Director/organist-choir director of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Country Club Hills, Illinois; Wesley United Methodist Church, Aurora, Illinois; Bryn Mawr Community Church; Congregational Church of Park Manor; Park Manor Christian Church, and Assistant Director of Music at Trinity United Church of Christ, all in Chicago.

A specialist in the field of Gospel Music, the North Central American Choral Directors Association in 2010 selected Dr. Keith Hampton as one of the top

25 Contemporary Composers “whose composition, Praise His Holy Name, should be standard repertoire for choirs today and for the next 25 years.” Dr. Hampton has guest conducted the, ACDA Eastern Division High School Honors Choir, Alabama All State Junior High School Honors Chorus, Baltimore All County High School, Georgia All State Collegiate Chorus, Ithaca College Gospel Festival, Oklahoma All State Junior High School Honors Choir, Rhode Island All State Chorus, Virginia All State Honors Choir, Wisconsin All State Middle Level Chorus and District Choruses in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. Keith Hampton earned a Bachelor of Music Education Degree from Westminster Choir College, a Master of Arts Degree from Marywood University and a Doctor of Music Degree in Church Music from Northwestern University.

Dr. Hampton has been awarded the Service Playing, Choir Master and Associate certificates from the American Guild of Organists. Dr. Hampton was twice chosen as one of 14 Conductors to participate in the Oregon Bach Festival Conducting Master Classes. The festival is held at the University of Oregon under the direction of Helmuth Rilling and Thomas Somerville. He also was chosen to conduct in an A Cappella Music workshop sponsored by Chorus America. At Dr. KT Productions, Inc., Keith provides music transcriptions of Black Gospel Music with the use of Finale by Make Music. He produced the CD, “Celebrate”, in 2009, and published the book, *Praise His Holy Name ... And Other Songs in the Gospel Style*, in 2011. In 2012, Dr. Hampton produced two organ CDs, *Organ Masterworks, Volume I* and *French Organ Music, Volume II*. As a published composer, Dr. Hampton’s arrangements of Spirituals and Gospel Songs are available through Augsburg Fortress Press, Choristers Guild, earthsongs Publications, Hal Leonard Corporation, Hinshaw Music, and Dr. KT Productions, Inc.

## PROGRAM NOTES AND MUSINGS

### **Seven Joys** **CAROLYN SHAW**

*Seven Joys* explores the notion of joy in today’s world. Through looking at joy from different angles I began to consider the roots, surfaces, and textures from which it arises. I have often felt that we cannot experience pure joy without experiencing its counterpart—deep sadness. And often, one brings about the other—deep sadness gives birth to a true joy (or maybe, as Kaveh Akbar says, “what seems like joy”). At the same time, joy is not always certain (especially today), and I wanted to try to understand where joy lives and what it seems like. Each of *Seven Joys’* four movements with text looks at the concept of joy through a particular frame—joy and sorrow, joy and reason, joy and the mundane, joy and song—and is followed or preceded by a purely instrumental meditation. In these moments of reflection, the bright sound of the brass, which we often associate with fanfare and celebration, becomes instead the color of contemplation.

—Carolyn Shaw

### **Symphony No. 9** **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

The choral final movement makes Beethoven’s final symphony, the *Symphony No. 9 in D minor*, a cultural icon. This piece became a monument and inspiration to subsequent composers such as Wagner and Mahler because of its breadth and ambition.

There can hardly be any doubt that the idealistic text of the Finale with Schiller’s famous line, “alle Menschen werden Brüder” (all men will become brothers) and Beethoven’s great melody introducing

the “Ode to Joy” are what give the work its universal relevance. As H.C. Robbins Landon put it: “...this experimental, even controversial, Finale has...become the symbol (and literally, the theme song) for Europe, for humanity, for all that is noble and great in our Western civilization.”

Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), German poet, philosopher, historian, and playwright, believed that culture could and should improve humanity. Great music, as well as literature, can further this ideal. Consider the quote attributed to Handel when he was complimented on the fine “entertainment” of his 1741 oratorio, *Messiah* (“I should be sorry if I only entertained them, sir, for I wished to make them better”). Beethoven revered Handel. He was profoundly exploring Handel’s music at the time of the composition of the *Ninth*.

In 1808, Beethoven concluded a massive, four-hour concert dedicated to premieres of his works—including his *Symphonies 5 and 6* and *Piano Concerto No. 4*—with his *Choral Fantasy*. The *Fantasy* starts with an improvisation for solo piano which leads into some variations for piano and orchestra before ending in a *choral setting with vocal quartet*. Thus, almost 15 years prior to the *Ninth*, Beethoven had essentially devised a “study” for his *Ninth Symphony* having concluded a purely instrumental exactly the way he would conclude the *Ninth Symphony*. Further, he employed a relatively straightforward, folk-like melody (from one of his songs written in 1795) which bears an unmistakable resemblance to the famous Joy melody of the *Ninth Symphony*. There is even a striking harmonic episode in the choral writing on the words “und Kraft” which

## PROGRAM NOTES *continued*

Beethoven repeats in the *Ninth Symphony* on the words “vor Gott” (before God).

The years subsequent to 1808 were full of ups and downs for Beethoven in Vienna. There was the French bombardment of Vienna in 1809 with the subsequent defeat of the Napoleonic forces in 1812. While Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* has certainly achieved an unmistakable fame; less known is that Beethoven made his own contribution to the battle repertoire with his “Wellington's Victory” Symphony which, like the Tchaikovsky, includes canon shots plus other military sounds. Significantly, it also includes a fugue on “God Save the King.” This piece, along with the first public performance of the magnificent *Symphony No. 7* were given on the 8th of December 1813 in a concert to benefit soldiers' widows. There was uproarious acclaim, especially for the “Wellington's Victory,” by an audience of over six thousand. This was Beethoven at the height of his fame.

Beethoven highly respected the English anthem—especially its extreme emotional effect on the English and the reverence in which it was held. It's no accident that Beethoven's famous Joy melody attempts to achieve a similar reaction.

Beethoven was plagued by emotional and financial difficulties in the years following 1813. He had broken off his hopes for a relationship with his “immortal beloved” who seems likely to have been the married Antonie Brentano—not, heaven forbid, his widowed sister-in-law, Johanna, as depicted in the movie “Immortal Beloved.” As a matter of fact, Beethoven spent much of the period between 1815, when his brother died, to the end of his life, struggling with his duties as guardian to his nephew, Karl. Karl became Beethoven's charge after he wrested Karl

from Johanna in a bitter court battle. As part of the legalities, Beethoven had to admit publicly that he was of common birth, a fact that the ambiguous “van” (Flemish) with its nearness to the noble “von” (German) had allowed Beethoven to obscure. The difficulties with Karl, who shot himself in the scalp in a failed suicide attempt in 1826, ruined Beethoven's fantasy of a normal family life. He had long given up his prospects for a love life.

In 1822 Beethoven accepted the commission of the Philharmonic Society of London for a symphony which we know as the *Ninth*. It is often difficult to figure out the issues of commission, first performance, dedication, and publication rights in Beethoven's works because, to counter his poor finances, there was often haggling and double-dealing as his method to get more money at each stage of a work's evolution.

Beethoven immediately began work on the London commission and finished the composition in February 1824. Upset with his treatment by a somewhat colder nobility now that he was fully revealed as a commoner, he initially toyed with giving the first performance in Berlin. This would have been a huge blow to the prestige of the Viennese. A group of his supporters published an open letter essentially begging him to give the premiere in Vienna. They were sure that this new work would be a worthy successor to—“*Wellington's Victory!*” They decried the present shallowness in art (read Rossini) and pleaded that “foreigners” (read Prussians) would not fully comprehend his music. Beethoven was convinced.

The Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* was premiered on the 7th of May 1824—tonight's performance by the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is taking place almost 200 years to the day after its first performance. The 1824 premiere included the *Consecration of*

*the House Overture* and several movements from the *Missa Solemnis* which had to be labeled “anthems,” even though they were clearly parts of a mass, since liturgical music was forbidden in a public theater. Though there is at least one surviving contemporary diary entry which contradicts the often-told success story, it still seems likely that the concert was a popular success—with the second movement immediately encored and with vigorous applause at the conclusion.

Beethoven was almost completely deaf at the time. And though he was in front of the musicians, they were given strict instructions to ignore his arm movements as he was paging through the score. The *Symphony* ended before Beethoven realized, and the mezzo soloist, Karoline Unger, had to gently turn him around so that he could acknowledge the wild applause of the audience. A final irony is that the receipts from the concert were quite meager, so that at the repeat concert on May 23rd a Rossini aria was added to boost attendance.

The first movement “Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso (Fast but not too much, a bit majestic) opens indistinctly with repeated notes in the strings. Following this example, Bruckner, who coincidentally celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth in 2024, opens almost all his symphonies in the same manner. The movement quickly builds into a conflict involving the entire orchestra. Beethoven gives a false repeat of the opening and goes directly into the development, the only time he doesn't literally repeat his first movement exposition in a symphony. The beginning of the recap is highly dramatic with thundering timpani blows. There is an extended coda, and the movement ends with an abrupt severity. H.C. Robbins Landon put it, “...even the extraordinary power of the *Third, Fifth, and Seventh Symphonies* hardly prepares us for

the shattering explosion which is the *Ninth*... where the key of D minor takes on a titanic, remorseless, superhuman character...”

The second movement “Molto vivace” (very lively—a scherzo in all but name), begins in melodic octaves, including distinctively unusual octaves in the timpani. Beethoven then breaks into a giant fugue (really fughetto—fugue like) in pounding groups of three notes where the various “factions” seem to be following one another like automatons. There's a dramatic pause and the pounding continues with more isolated dramatic octaves from the timpani. After a climax in the whole orchestra concludes this mini sonata form, some humanity breaks out in the trio section. The Molto vivace section repeats. When it seems like the trio is fully returning, Beethoven has the slashing octaves cut it off.

The third movement “Adagio molto e cantabile” (very slow and in a singing manner) elevates the slow movement in importance by its placement in third position just before the finale rather than its usual second position in the symphonic structure. It is essentially a double theme-and-variation movement with a few intervening episodes. After a very brief introduction in the bassoons and clarinets, the movement's main, reverential theme is sung “mezzo voce” (half voice) by the first violins. There is a rising second theme, still taken by the violins but at a somewhat faster tempo. The variations continue to a climax before ending softly.

Beethoven struggled with the issue of to how to couple the choral ending to the instrumental movements of the *Symphony*. His solution is perfect and highly original. The finale opens with a dissonant chord which Wagner termed a “chord of terror.” After this commotion, the cellos and basses recite in an almost conversational mode.

**PROGRAM NOTES** *continued*

The themes from the earlier movements are played briefly but “rejected” by this ‘executive committee’ of low strings. If not these, what? Then the Joy Melody is introduced softly and almost piously in the low strings—like something arising from the depths. Beethoven repeats the theme in increasingly louder and grander orchestrations until the ‘terror chord’ returns and the bass soloist exclaims (in words by Beethoven, not Schiller), “Friends not these...” He then leads into the Ode with a repeat by the chorus. This pattern of soloists leading and the chorus repeating, persists until an episode of comic relief.

Beethoven seemingly parodies his heroic self in the solo tenor episode with men’s chorus where he evokes the rural sound of “band” music with cymbal, flute, and bass drum. This is heroism but at the strictly retail level. Beethoven follows with an orchestral fugue stereotypical of a “battle scene” a la “Wellington’s Victory.” But this directly leads to the full-throated, choral proclamation of the Joy Melody. If there is one “this-is-it!” episode to characterize the whole piece, well, this is it.

Beethoven then switches ground. A new theme is taken by the men of the chorus, and, in unison with the trombones, blares forth in a verse where Schiller poetically relates embraces and kisses for the whole world with an appreciation of a loving Father and Creator in the starry vault above. There is a moment where Beethoven pictorially evokes the distant galaxies with glimmering flutes and other woodwind friends. Here, the sopranos in the chorus have to sing repeated, pianissimo high G’s. After Beethoven’s earlier demands for blaring, sustained high A’s in the sopranos and now this torture, most sopranos would agree that Beethoven is brutally difficult to sing.

Then comes a Handelian, oratorio-like passage where Beethoven (remember his preoccupation with Handel at this time) combines both the Joy Melody and the trombone melody into a giant choral double fugue. The solo quartet makes one more contribution including an ecstatic high note by the soprano soloist. The chorus returns, and the orchestra (including the “band” instruments) finishes jubilantly.

—IPO Board Member Charles Amenta, M.D.

*The April 2024 Program Notes for BOLOGNE, Symphony No. 1, MOZART, Horn Concerto No. 4 and HAYDN, Symphony No. 104 were written by IPO Board Member Charles Amenta, M.D. They were erroneously uncredited. IPO regrets the error.*



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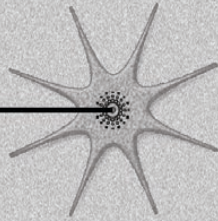
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