

## **Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra Awarded \$40,000 Grant from OpenAI Foundation's People-First AI Fund**

*Orchestra embraces the world-changing technology as it chooses to  
utilize AI to foster more opportunities for artists, students, and  
audiences*

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**Park Forest, IL** – Yesterday, the OpenAI Foundation announced the first recipients from its People-First AI Fund, a multi-million-dollar investment in community-based nonprofits working to strengthen local communities and expand the opportunity of AI. The only professional orchestra to be awarded a grant, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the recipients.

Artificial Intelligence, AI for short, has been a red-hot topic as it reshapes nearly every industry around the world in real time. Rooted in classical music, IPO has long been a forward-thinking organization and is keen to investigate utilizing the technology to enhance and bolster its mission and efforts.

*“IPO champions live music and live arts experiences. IPO also recognizes AI's potential to strengthen civic and cultural life, if applied thoughtfully,”* says IPO Executive Director Christina Salerno.

*“We see AI not as a replacement for human artistry, but as a tool to expand access, enhance participation, and amplify community voice. By combining our history of professional programming with new AI capacity, IPO will work to ensure that orchestral music remains a transformative, inclusive force for communities in Chicago’s Southland. We’re excited to embark upon this new journey and are hopeful that the path will lead to more opportunities for artists, students, and audiences.”*

Through an open call, the Foundation will provide \$40.5 million in unrestricted grants to 208 nonprofits across the United States. From a pool of nearly 3,000 applicants, IPO is one of 18 arts and culture organizations chosen for the grant and one of only five performing arts organizations to receive an award. A second wave of \$9.5 million in Board-directed grants will be announced in the coming months, supporting organizations already advancing transformative AI work in areas like health that reflect the Fund’s people-first values and potential for broad public benefit.

*(more)*



*“The People-First AI Fund reflects our commitment to supporting a wide range of organizations advancing work that strengthens communities and expands opportunity,” commented Bret Taylor, Chair of the OpenAI Foundation Board. “We’re proud to support this first group of grantees and to continue work that is mission-driven and responsive to the people it exists to serve.”*

See The OpenAI Foundation’s complete announcement [HERE](#).

#### **ABOUT ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

*The 2025/26 concert season marks the 48<sup>th</sup> for Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, the three-time Illinois Council of Orchestras “Professional Orchestra of the Year.” Under the leadership of Gibb Music Director Stilian Kirov and Executive Director Christina Salerno, the mission of IPO is to utilize the universal expression of music to create profound, inspiring and personal connections between the people and communities of Chicago’s Southland.*

*During the 2025/26 season, IPO will perform several classical concerts at their home venue, the state-of-the-art, 1,100 seat Ozinga Chapel at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, IL, while continuing to strengthen a partnership with the Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University for one concert. In addition to live orchestral concerts, IPO presents a myriad of educational youth offerings each year via its educational arm - The Marilyn Tannebaum Youth Music Education Institute. IPO also performs an annual summer chamber series, IPO Summer @ Olympia Fields Country Club.*

*From its community orchestra roots in Park Forest, the 69-member orchestra has grown into a critically acclaimed professional regional orchestra. Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is supported in part by the Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University, Ozinga Foundation, Gerhard Manufacturing and Design, Michuda Construction, Old National Bank, and the Illinois Arts Council. For more information, visit [ipomusic.org](http://ipomusic.org).*

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