



HIGH SCHOOL VIOLINIST PRESENTED WITH VIOLIN PRIOR TO IPO CONCERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 18, 2026

Park Forest, IL – Arabella Y Alvarez, a young violinist with the Suburban Youth Symphony Orchestra (SYSO), was the recipient of a restored violin at the Valentine’s Day concert hosted by Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra.

Longtime IPO supporter Elaine MacKenzie recently donated a violin to IPO that had been in her family with the hope it would find its way into the hands of musician in need of a quality instrument. IPO Education Director Roosevelt Griffin Ed. D. reached out to SYSO Music Director (and IPO violinist) Brian Ostrega to see if he knew of a young, area musician fitting that description. After careful consideration, Ostrega recommended the violin be gifted to Arabella after a careful restoration by Kenneth Stein Violins in Elmhurst, IL.

“Arabella is a very talented, young musician and needed a quality instrument,” offered Ostrega. *“Her talents had grown to the point where they exceeded the instrument she had been playing.”*

“We are extremely excited to be able to make this match,” exuded IPO Executive Director Christina Salerno. *“Together with our Marilyn Tannebaum Youth Music Education Institute, IPO is very resolute in our desire to enhance and further the musical journey for our area youth musicians in any way possible. To be able to pair this young violinist with an instrument of this caliber is an absolute joy.”*

ABOUT SUBURBAN YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (SYSO)

For over 50 years, SYSO has brought meaningful, quality musical experiences to its members. SYSO welcomes students at any level - from absolute beginner to advanced - to improve their skills and hone their musicianship through participation in ensembles designed to let them learn, rehearse, and perform with their peers. There are three major concerts every season, plus other performance and educational opportunities throughout the year, including a pre-concert with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. Learn more about SYSO at SuburbanYouthSymphony.org.

ABOUT ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The 2025/26 concert season marks the 48th 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.

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