

ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA PRESENTS MUSIC INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO WITH PRESTIGIOUS RUTH D. AND KEN M. DAVEE EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS AWARD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MAY 18, 2026

Park Forest, IL – The Music Institute of Chicago has been selected by Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra at the 2026 recipient of the **Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee Excellence in the Arts Award**, an honor bestowed periodically by IPO to honor an individual, group, or organization whose exceptional commitment, vision, leadership, and achievements have resulted in major contributions to the arts and music. This is the most prestigious award given by the orchestra.

The award was presented to MIC Vice President and Chief Development Officer **Jennifer Beienmann** by IPO Life Director **Craig C. Grannon** prior to IPO's season finale concert on Saturday, May 16, 2026.

IPO Board Member and Artistic Committee Chair, **Charles Amenta M.D.** expounded upon the reason IPO chose Music Institute of Chicago for this prestigious award.



"Since its founding in 1931, the Music Institute of Chicago has served as an important community resource, engaging in innovative teaching, inspiring performances, and a fundamental drive to ensure access to music for everyone. The practice of studying music prepares MIC alumni for success across every conceivable industry from Grammy Award winners to zoologists. Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra has had a long relationship with MIC alumni Matthew Lipman and Rachel Barton Pine whose Foundation was awarded the Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee Excellence in the Arts Award in 2022."



“Receiving the Davee Excellence in the Arts Award from the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra underscores the powerful role music plays in our lives, and the importance of collaboration, education, and artistic leadership in strengthening our communities,” noted Beienmann. *“This recognition is a profound honor for the Music Institute of Chicago (MIC), affirming our shared commitment to artistic excellence, lifelong music education, and community engagement.”*

The Music Institute of Chicago fosters lifelong engagement with music for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Serving students from early childhood through pre-professional training and adult studies, MIC combines exceptional teaching, outstanding performance opportunities, and community programming. By harnessing the power of music, MIC educates and inspires while ensuring broad access to high-quality music education.

MIC envisions a community where music education and performance are accessible to everyone, regardless of age, background, or ability to pay. We believe strongly that the arts contribute to vibrant, resilient communities and strive to reach individuals with music education where such opportunities are limited. Music education is an investment in helping young students develop into strong, creative, and productive citizens. Music students at MIC grow into creative and engaged citizens, making the world a better place.

Founded in 1931 by David and Dorothy Dushkin, the Music Institute of Chicago (MIC) makes high-quality music education accessible to all. MIC is recognized as a cornerstone of Chicago’s musical ecosystem, contributing generations of artists to institutions such as Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Lyric Opera of Chicago with alumni performing on major stages such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, The Hollywood Bowl, as well as other prestigious venues around the world. Its faculty includes celebrated teachers Almita Vamos, Tanya Carey, and GRAMMY Award–nominated Marta Aznavoorian; Alumni include Rachel Barton Pine, GRAMMY-winners Emily Bear, Hilary Hahn, and Jennifer Koh.

To learn more about the Music Institute of Chicago, visit MusicInst.org.

PHOTO: Craig C. Grannon (IPO), Jennifer Beienmann (MIC), Julie Justie and Kevin Justie (Davee Family). Photo Credit: Ned Rissky / IPO

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



Marilynn 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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