ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Stilian Kirov, Gibb Music Director

ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA PRESENTS 2026 LEO AND ANNE MICHUDA IPO AWARD FOR LIFETIME SERVICE TO ANDREA AND RICHARD GIBB

Longtime IPO Stalwarts Recognized for Decades of Dedication

PARK FOREST, IL (October 19th, 2026) - Before the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra took the stage for the second half of their 2026/27 Opening Night concert on October 17th, 2026, the organization honored longtime IPO stalwarts Andrea and Richard Gibb with the 2026 Leo and Anne Michuda IPO Award for Lifetime Service.

One of the highest honors IPO bestows, the Michuda Award is an honor reserved for those who show excellence in leadership, the securing of resources vital to the success of IPO, and the application of extraordinary efforts to enhance the image or promote the artistic mission of IPO in the greater Chicago metropolitan area.

For decades, the Gibbs have been part of the IPO family. "*We've shared a love of classical music throughout our marriage and for 40 years, IPO has been a meaningful part of our journey*."

Ask Richard why IPO matters so much, and he'll tell you it's about more than the music itself.

"Music enriches our lives, contributes significantly to the development of youth, and provides wonderful opportunities to develop friendships with like-minded people," he says. *"In our community, the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is the premier source of classical music. We enjoy the professionalism of our players, appreciate the expertise of our Staff, and take pride in our Board of Directors and their historical selection of truly talented music directors. Our current Music Director, Stilian Kirov, continues leadership critical to the continued success of the IPO."*

That kind of clear-eyed devotion is exactly what has made the Gibbs indispensable. Always with an eye on the future and a finger on the pulse of the orchestra, they've worn nearly every hat IPO has to offer — financial stewards, visionary volunteer leaders, and some of the organization's most enthusiastic champions in the community.

"*Andrea and Richard are at the heart of what makes IPO such a special organization*," said IPO Executive Director Christina Salerno. "*They are generous with their time, expertise, and resources. And their commitment to the orchestra inspires others to become more involved with the organization*."

Deeply invested in IPO's future, Andrea and Richard want the generations who come after us to feel what they have felt — the power and grace of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. As members of the IPO Encore Society, both have remembered IPO in their wills, helping ensure IPO's artistic and cultural force keeps playing on for our community for years to come.

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HISTORY OF LEO AND ANNE MICHUDA AND THE LEO MICHUDA AWARD

Leo Michuda was an Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra benefactor, board member, and 30-year member of the violin section. Anne, a renowned soprano and a highly respected vocal coach, offered the orchestra decades of unwavering guidance and support. Together, the couple's love of music and deep commitment to philanthropy shaped IPO in lasting ways – through financial and musical support and through their steady presence and advocacy, including many receptions and musical events at their home, the "Villa di Musica." After Leo's death in 2014, the IPO Board of Directors created this award to honor his memory and those who showed similar sustained, outstanding contributions and exemplary service to the orchestra. In 2026, the award was renamed the Leo and Anne Michuda Award in recognition of Anne's equally lasting contributions to IPO. The qualifications for the award include Excellence in Leadership, the Securing of Resources vital to the success of IPO, and the Application of Extraordinary Efforts to enhance the image or promote the artistic mission of IPO in the greater Chicago metropolitan area. The first honoree was Helen Silvia in May 2015.

ABOUT ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The 2026/27 concert season marks the 49th 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 2026/27 season, IPO performs several classical concerts split over two venues, The Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University and Lincoln-Way North High School in Frankfort, IL. 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 Gerhard Manufacturing and Design, Old National Bank, Ozinga Foundation, Michuda Construction, Distinctive Gold Jewelry, Suburban Service League, Music Performance Trust Fund, Craig and Janet Duchossois, and the Illinois Arts Council. For more information, visit IPOmusic.org.

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