IPO ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Stilian Kirov, Gibb Music Director

ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA REACHES THREE-YEAR CONTRACT EXTENSION WITH AWARD-WINNING MUSIC DIRECTOR

Gibb Music Director Stilian Kirov Signs Through 2029/30 Season

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Park Forest, IL – Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) is pleased to announce a three-year contract extension with IPO Gibb Music Director Stilian Kirov. The extension keeps Kirov, the Illinois Council of Orchestras 2026 Conductor of the Year (Professional), on the podium through the 2029/30 season, bringing his IPO tenure to 13 years. This is the third time IPO has renewed Kirov.

"I am truly honored and delighted to continue as Gibb Music Director of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra," says Kirov. *"The musicians of the IPO are extraordinary artists, and making music with them is a constant source of joy and inspiration. I am deeply grateful to our board, Executive Director Christina Salerno, and the entire IPO team for their trust in me and their commitment to our shared musical vision. To our wonderful patrons, thank you for your warmth and support. I look forward to sharing many more unforgettable musical moments with you in the years ahead."*

In Kirov's time with IPO, the orchestra has featured works by 29 living composers and presented 26 world-commissions and co-commissions. He has also expanded IPO's commitments to American music and underrepresented composers, cemented its pledge to music education for area youth and championed IPO's first professional recording, *Children's Stories* (Cedille Records).

Kirov's impact reaches well beyond the concert hall: his leadership has helped raise IPO's profile, significantly grow its board, secure its first seven-figure endowment gift and reach its $5.1 million endowment goal.

"Stilian's artistic leadership has fostered a wonderful renewal for live orchestral music across our region through Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra concerts, appearances, and educational programming," says IPO Executive Director Christina Salerno. *"His genuine love of this art form, his fun and approachable nature, and his insistence that IPO continually evolve to better reflect our community have been inspiring. IPO is excited to be extending Stilian's contract on the eve of our 50th Anniversary Season, and we look forward to continuing our musical journey with him at the helm."*

"*I am thrilled to report that Maestro Stilian Kirov has been renewed for a new term beginning with the 2027/28 season,"* says Dr. Michael Rogers, president of IPO's Board of Directors. "*During his tenure, he has expanded our repertoire, initiated Classical Evolve to support new orchestral compositions, and presented IPO's first commissioned work based on Gwendolyn Brooks' poetry. This extension carries him into and through IPO's 50th Anniversary celebration in the Chicago Southland.*"

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 between 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.

Media Inquiries:
Ken Churilla – IPO Marketing & Communications Director
kchurilla@ipomusic.org | 708.481.7774