



For Immediate Release

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IPO Names Finalists in Classical Evolve, the First Annual Composer Competition

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Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is pleased to announce the three finalists for IPO Classical Evolve - the inaugural composition competition aimed at expanding the canon of classical music for current and future generations. This event will take place on May 8, 2018, at 6:30PM in Ozinga Chapel on the campus of Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights.

"Our goal is to provide young American composers with opportunities to create, grow and learn while being part of a vibrant professional organization. As IPO's Composer in Residence for one year, having their works performed by IPO on a regular basis, along with experimenting and interacting with our outstanding musicians, should offer an extremely valuable experience that will hopefully give these composers the tools to lead American classical music into a very bright, exciting future!" said IPO's Music Director, Stilian Kirov.

Finalists include (in alphabetical order):

- Ben Ash, a 2014 New York University graduate in Music Theory and Composition whose work has been performed in New York and Seattle, as well as in several films including Milan's Festival MIX award-winning documentary "Coming Out"
- Saad Haddad, a 2016 M.M. graduate of Juilliard and winner of numerous conducting prizes/awards whose work has been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony

Orchestra and others

- Conor Mackey, a 2013 St. Olaf College graduate in Music Theory and Composition whose classical roots have led to a career as a performer/composer/producer of new music

At the final round on May 8, each finalist's work will be rehearsed and performed by IPO in a 45-minute workshop session. At the conclusion of the three sessions, the audience will be able to vote for their favorite. The audience's collective winner will count as one vote for that finalist on the judging panel with the winner announced that night and named Composer in Residence for the 2018-19 season.

"While results are being tabulated, the audience will have the opportunity to hear each composer's personal story and ask questions during on stage interviews. It's really a unique, exciting event that hopefully will bring us on the path to discovering the future's most eminent American composers," Kirov added.

The participating judges are notable Chicago artists and arts professionals: Kyong Mee Choi, Henry Fogel, Stilian Kirov, and Jim Stephenson.

Kyong Mee Choi is a Chicago-based composer, visual artist, painter, organist and poet. She has received several prestigious awards and grants including the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and the Aaron Copland Award. She has also received a D.M.A. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is an Associate Professor of Music Composition at Roosevelt University in Chicago where she teaches composition and electro-acoustic music.

Henry Fogel serves as the Dean of Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. He is the former president of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and former manager of the New York Philharmonic and has received honorary doctorates from the Curtis Institute, Northwestern University, Columbia College, and Roosevelt University. Fogel also works alongside IPO as an Artistic Consultant and serves on multiple arts organizations' boards.

New England Conservatory graduate Jim Stephenson performed 17 seasons as a trumpeter in the Naples Philharmonic in Florida before transitioning into composition work. His arrangements have been performed/recorded/broadcast by virtually every major orchestra in the country, including the Boston Pops and New York Pops. On the podium, Stephenson has led orchestras and bands across the U.S. With the Lake Forest Symphony, he has not only conducted but also has served for seven years as Composer-in-Residence.

General admission to Classical Evolve is \$25. Student tickets are \$10. Fees may apply.

To order tickets, visit ipomusic.org or call (708)-481-7774. The box office at Ozinga Chapel will open at 5:30PM on May 8.

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is celebrating its 40th Anniversary Season in 2017-18. From its community orchestra roots in Park Forest, the 64-member orchestra has grown into a critically acclaimed professional regional orchestra.

Under the leadership of Music Director Stilian Kirov and Executive Director Christina Salerno, the mission of IPO is to provide concerts of compelling professional

symphonic music, support music education, and expand audience awareness of musical excellence for the diverse communities of the greater Chicago region. Beginning in the 2017-18 season, IPO will perform six classical concerts at their new single venue, Ozinga Chapel at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights. A five concert, small ensemble summer series is held at Ravisloe Country Club on Wednesday nights in June, July and August. In addition, the orchestra performs four educational youth concerts each year, serving over 4,000 students in the Chicago Southland.

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is supported in part by: Bimba Manufacturing, Michuda Construction, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, Gerhard Designing & Manufacturing, Inc., WFMT, and in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

For more information, visit ipomusic.org or call 708.481.7774.

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