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Chicago Philharmonic Mentorship Program Forges Connections in Local Communities

Chicago, IL – (February 1, 2016) The Chicago Philharmonic Mentorship Program offers students at Chicago-area public schools opportunities for musical and personal growth through repeated interactions with The Chicago Philharmonic Society's musicians. The program was launched last year at Old Orchard Junior High School (OOJH) in Skokie, and tomorrow it will be expanded to the Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts) in the Humboldt Park neighborhood on the city's West Side.

Elements of the Mentorship Program include masterclasses, side-by-side rehearsals, and band and orchestra concerts presented by students and their musician mentors. The program further engages students and their families with group outings to attend a Chicago Philharmonic concert.

Through repeated meaningful contacts with professional musicians, the program is designed to cultivate students' musical skills while developing relationships that allow the mentors to serve as role models not only as musicians but also as dedicated professional adults. Students build confidence, responsibility, critical thinking, and other skills valuable to them in their lives as musicians and beyond.

The efforts at ChiArts are part of a planned expansion for the Mentorship Program. Chicago Philharmonic Society executive director Donna Milanovich said, "We are excited about this opportunity to engage the school's bright, hard-working young musicians, who come from a broad range of neighborhoods and backgrounds."

OOJH is a diverse school with over 65 languages spoken among its approximately 600 students. ChiArts, Chicago's first public high school for the arts and one of its most diverse schools, also has approximately 600 students. Over half the students at both of these schools are from low-income communities. Between the two schools, Chicago Philharmonic musicians will work with over 250 instrumental music students.

OOJH and ChiArts orchestra and band teachers direct the side-by-side rehearsals and performances and, along with other leaders in the schools' administrations and music departments, coordinate the program with Chicago Philharmonic Society staff.

The in-school side-by-side concerts, which are the culmination of the Mentorship Program, will take place at OOJH (9310 Kenton Avenue in Skokie) on February 9 at 7:00 P.M. (string orchestra) and February 10th at 7:00 P.M. (band) and at ChiArts (26714 W. Augusta in Chicago) on March 8 at 7:00 P.M. These concerts are open to the public.

The Mentorship Program builds on The Chicago Philharmonic Society's other outreach initiatives, including Night Out in the Parks (in which community members rehearse and perform a concert with Chicago Philharmonic musicians in partnership with the Chicago Park District), Families to The Phil (through which Chicago-area students and their family members receive complimentary tickets to attend Philharmonic concerts), Side by Side (by which outstanding high school students perform alongside the orchestra in a Chicago Philharmonic concert), and Next! (through which student soloists and groups and local ensembles perform in the foyer at Chicago Philharmonic concerts).

The Chicago Philharmonic Mentorship Program is made possible by the generous support of the Dan J. Epstein Family Foundation (principal supporter of the Mentorship Program at ChiArts), the Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation, and program sponsors [Mathew Lucante Violins](#), [J.W. Pepper](#), and [Music & Arts](#). Individual contributions to The Chicago Philharmonic Society can be made at <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/store/34171/alldonations/21290>.

About The Chicago Philharmonic Society

The Chicago Philharmonic Society is a collaboration of over 200 of the highest-level classical musicians performing in the Chicago metropolitan area. Governed under a groundbreaking structure of musician leadership, the Society presents concerts at venues throughout the Chicago area that cover the full spectrum of classical music, from Bach to Britten and beyond. The Society's orchestra, known simply as the Chicago Philharmonic, has been called "one of the country's finest symphonic orchestras" (*Chicago Tribune*), and its unique chamber music ensembles, which perform as the Chicago Philharmonic Chamber Players (cp²), draw from its vast pool of versatile musicians. The Society's outreach programs connect Chicago-area youth to classical music and provide performance opportunities for members of the community. Founded 26 years ago by principal musicians from the Lyric Opera Orchestra, the Chicago Philharmonic currently serves as the official orchestra of the Joffrey Ballet, continues its 21-year association with the Ravinia Festival, and presents symphonic concerts in Evanston and, beginning in May 2016, at the Harris Theater.

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