FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Chicago Philharmonic brings incredible cirque acts with live music to Harris Theater this Memorial Day weekend

Chicago, IL – (May 6 2019) This Memorial Day weekend, Chicago Philharmonic partners with the athletes, actors, and acrobats of Cirque de la Symphonie for the second time by popular demand. This extraordinary spectacle combines awe-inspiring cirque acts onstage with the virtuoso Chicago Phil musicians performing classic movie music from Superman, Star Wars, Chicago, Harry Potter, and more. These two powerhouse performing arts groups last joined forces in 2016 in a sold-out performance, impressing critics and astounding audiences of all ages.

Cirque de la Symphonie’s cast of Olympians and world record-holders includes clowns, acrobats, strongmen, jugglers, and aerialists. The troupe performs exclusively with orchestras and has garnered acclaim at venues such as the Kennedy Center and the Sydney Opera House. Performers include seven-time consecutive acrobatic gymnastics National Champion and Olympic athlete Christine Van Loo, hula hoops and third-generation circus extraordinaire Alina Sergeeva, hilarious mime and juggler Vladimir Tsarkov, and many more.

Chicago Philharmonic & Cirque de la Symphonie
May 26, 7:30pm
Harris Theater, Chicago
Scott Speck Conductor

Antonín Dvořák Carnival Overture
John Williams Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone Harry’s Wondrous World
John Williams The Witches of Eastwick Devil’s Dance
Carlos Gardel Scent of a Woman Por una cabeza (Tango)
Johnny Mercer/John Williams Hooray for Hollywood
John Barry Out of Africa
John Williams Superman
John Williams Overture from The Cowboys
John Kander Selections from Chicago
John Williams Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope The Throne Room End Title Medley
John Williams Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones Across the Stars
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov Tsar Salton Flight of the Bumblebee
Hans Zimmer / arr. John Wasson Gladiator

Tickets $30 - $125 | Children/students from $10
chicagophilharmonic.org | (312) 957-0000
Approximate running time 2 hours with intermission. Photos and review tickets available upon request.

ABOUT THE CHICAGO PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

The Chicago Philharmonic Society is a collaboration of nearly 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 Bernstein 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, 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 nearly 30 years ago, the Chicago Philharmonic currently serves as the official orchestra of the Joffrey Ballet, continues its 25-year association with the Ravinia Festival, is a resident company of Harris Theater Chicago, and performs at Auditorium Theater, Symphony Center and all the great concert halls of the Chicago and North Shore area. In 2018, the Illinois Council of Orchestras awarded the Chicago Philharmonic “Orchestra of the Year”.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Scott Speck, Artistic Director, has inspired international acclaim as a conductor of passion, intelligence, and winning personality. Speck is the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Chicago Philharmonic, and Music Director of the Joffrey Ballet, Mobile (AL) and West Michigan Symphony Orchestras.

Speck led four performances for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2014-15 and was immediately reengaged for four more concerts the following season. His concerts with the Moscow RTV Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky Hall garnered unanimous praise. His gala performances with Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Midori, Evelyn Glennie, and Olga Kern have highlighted his recent and current seasons as Music Director of the Mobile Symphony. He was invited to the White House as former Music Director of the Washington Ballet.

In past seasons Speck has conducted at London’s Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, Chicago’s Symphony Center, Washington’s Kennedy Center, San Francisco’s War Memorial Opera House, and the Los Angeles Music Center. He has led numerous performances with the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Houston, Baltimore, Paris, Moscow, Shanghai, Beijing, Vancouver, Romania, Slovakia, Buffalo, Columbus (OH), Honolulu, Louisville, New Orleans, Oregon, Rochester, Florida, and Virginia, among many others.
Previously he held positions as Conductor of the San Francisco Ballet, Music Advisor and Conductor of the Honolulu Symphony, and Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Opera. During a tour of Asia he was named Principal Guest Conductor of the China Film Philharmonic in Beijing.

In addition, Speck is the co-author of two of the world’s best-selling books on classical music for a popular audience, *Classical Music for Dummies* and *Opera for Dummies*. These books have received stellar reviews in both the national and international press and have garnered enthusiastic endorsements from major American orchestras. They have been translated into twenty languages and are available around the world. His third book in the series, *Ballet for Dummies*, was released to great acclaim as well.

**Cirque de la Symphonie** is an exciting production designed to bring the magic of cirque to the music hall. For more than 10 years, it has thrilled and bedazzled veteran concert-goers and new patrons as they see accomplished aerial flyers, acrobats, contortionists, dancers, jugglers, balancers, and strongmen perform to live symphony music. They include world record holders, gold-medal winners of international competitions, Olympians and some of the most experienced cirque talent ever seen. Their performances are uniquely adapted to stage accommodations shared with the symphony, and each artist’s performance is choreographed to the music arranged in collaboration with the maestro. When the artists of Cirque de la Symphonie perform in front of the full orchestra, an incredible fusion of these two great art forms takes place. The aerialists and acrobats turn the concert into a three-dimensional entertainment extravaganza, and the orchestra seems to play with enhanced enthusiasm.

**Christine Van Loo** is a seven-time consecutive National Champion, Female Olympic Athlete of the Year, and Athlete of the Decade in acrobatic gymnastics. She was inducted into the USSA (acro-gymnastics) Hall of Fame and the World Acrobatics Society Gallery of Honor. As a professional aerialist and acrobat, she has performed in the 2002 Winter Olympics, at the Grammy Awards (with No Doubt and with Ricky Martin), at the American Music Awards (with Aerosmith), the Miss Universe pageant, and Paul McCartney’s European tour. She was a trainer and performer with NBC’s Celebrity Circus, and she choreographed the acrobats for the Britney Spears World Tour and Stars on Ice US tour. Christine provides spell-binding performances of aerials silks, rope, lira, and trapeze with Cirque de la Symphonie.

**Vitalii Buza** began his gymnastic training in the Republic of Moldova and soon competed as an elite gymnast with the Russian national team. At the age of 16, Vitalii joined the Moscow State Circus as a professional acrobat and toured throughout Europe. After a move to the US, he starred in productions at Sea World, Universal Studios, and Walt Disney World. He has been featured in numerous TV ads and won a role in the Walt Disney movie *Enchanted*. Vitalii also performed at the 2006 Latin Grammy Awards, the 2007 NFL Pro Bowl, 2010 Academy Awards, and the 2011 Latin Grammy Awards. He has performed for celebrities and at corporate events for major companies. Vitalii excels in multiple cirque acts, such as duo hand-balancing, straps, Cyr wheel, spinning cube, Chinese pole, and the Russian bar.
The amazing strength and balancing act of Acro Duo consists of Vitaliy Prikhodko and Pavel Korshunov. Vitaliy is a native of Ukraine, where he graduated from Kiev State Circus College. He began his career with the National Circus of Ukraine, winning first place at the New Ukrainian Circus Festival. His acrobatic experience includes worldwide tours with Nikulin’s Moscow Circus. Pavel, a native of Voronezh, Russia, is a three-time National Champion of Russia, two-time World Champion, and two-time Champion of the World Cup in acrobatic sport. A former veteran with Cirque du Soleil’s “Varekai”, Pavel is a multi-talented performer on straps, Russian swing, trampoline, and acrobatics. Acro Duo’s performances with Cirque de la Symphonie create spontaneous eruptions of applause and emotion, as they display a stunning display of strength and balance.

Vladimir Tsarkov Jr. comes from a famous circus family rich in the traditions of Russian circus artistry. Trained by masters in the circus arts, he exhibits exceptional talents and skills in all of his performances. His “mystery guest” juggling act is a fascinating blend of illusion and juggling skills. Vladimir is a worldwide star, having performed in major productions spanning from Las Vegas to Korea. He enchanted audiences at Busch Gardens’ cirque show. His impressive performing range includes various juggling acts, spinning shapes, mystery guest, and diablos.

Alina Sergeeva is a third-generation circus performer from Russia. She began performing on the stage at the age of three with her family in a hand balancing adagio act with her father, later branching out into various acts such as aerial silks, lira, and hoops. Alina’s professional performances have taken her around the world to countries in South America, Europe, and Asia. Along the way, she won the “most talented” award for youth performers in Brazil. Alina’s career in the US includes numerous circus tours, corporate shows, cruise ship productions, and special events. Alina has starred in numerous Cirque de la Symphonie productions as an amazing hula hoops performer, with accompanying hand balancing, acrobatic, and contortion skills. Her mastery of illusion includes the amazing quick change and magic jacket acts.

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