



MUSIC OF
THE BAROQUE
50TH ANNIVERSARY

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**ILLINOIS COUNCIL OF ORCHESTRAS AWARDS MUSIC OF THE BAROQUE
“PROFESSIONAL ORCHESTRA OF THE YEAR,” “EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
YEAR,” AND “VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR”**

CHICAGO, APRIL 9—The Illinois Council of Orchestras has named Music of the Baroque its 2021 “Professional Orchestra of the Year” in its annual awards for excellence in the field of music performance.

The pandemic required every Chicago arts organization to think creatively about how to remain vibrant—and for Music of the Baroque, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2020-21, the challenges were particularly unique. The ensemble kept much of its season alive in the face of this adversity, including livestreaming a shortened six-concert season, hosting its first virtual fundraising event, partnering with 98.7/WFMT to broadcast its current season as well as a nine-concert series in 2020, continuing many arts education activities in Chicago public high schools, and engaging audiences in new ways through a series of virtual performances and interviews—all while retaining over half of its subscriber base and keeping its entire full-time staff employed. (Further details about the organization’s activities are available below.)

The ICO also recognized the organization’s executive director, Declan McGovern, as “Executive Director of the Year,” and board director Marjorie M. Stinespring as “Volunteer of the Year.” Due to COVID restrictions, the awards will be presented in virtual ceremonies between April and July 2021.

Executive Director Declan McGovern commented, "I have so enjoyed being part of this special organization since arriving in Chicago in the summer of 2017. I am grateful to be surrounded by a fabulous team of colleagues who make everything we do happen so well, every day. This is not how we expected to celebrate our 50th season, but COVID threw up new challenges—and like so many other organizations in Chicago's rich performance arts landscape, we made the best of it! I am struck by how supportive our audience remained even though our season was reduced by two-thirds and patrons were unable to attend concerts in person. The pandemic also prompted us to think and communicate in new ways, and we were thrilled to invite our musicians back to the stage in January and stream our concerts directly into the homes of our audience. This was—and continues to be—a team effort. Our musicians, Music Director Dame Jane Glover, and all of us at Music of the Baroque so appreciate these awards from the Illinois Council of Orchestras in our special anniversary season. It's particularly gratifying to see our longest-serving board member, Marjorie Stinespring, recognized for her 46 years of service and for her lifelong support and love for Music of the Baroque."

Established in 1974, the Illinois Council of Orchestras serves as an advocacy and service organization for the orchestral community in the state of Illinois. In addition to conferences, workshops, and other educational activities, the ICO is committed to promoting the exchange of resources and ideas among its members. For more information about the organization and the full list of winners, visit [the ICO website](#).

About Music of the Baroque

Long recognized as one of the region's top classical groups, Music of the Baroque is devoted to the performance of eighteenth-century music. The ensemble's 50th anniversary season, retooled due to the pandemic, takes place between January-June 2021 and consists of six programs focusing on intimate, string-dominated music well-suited to social distancing. Each concert lasts approximately one hour with no intermission and are streamed live, with an option to view On Demand for a month following the performance. Highlights include Vivaldi's iconic *Four Seasons* led by concertmaster Gina DiBello; concertos for two violins by Bach and Vivaldi; Dame Jane

Glover's first season appearance alongside American-Israeli pianist Inon Barnatan in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 14; three of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos led by Principal Guest Conductor Nicholas Kraemer; works for groups of four (or more) by four Baroque composers, including Vivaldi's Concerto for 4 violins in B Minor; and a choral program featuring Vivaldi's Gloria. More information is available [here](#).

Music of the Baroque has kept audiences engaged since March 2020 through virtual programming available on their website. A weekly series of broadcasts on 98.7/WFMT between August and October featured concert highlights from the past ten years, and in September the organization released a new recording of Bach's Mass in B Minor. Music of the Baroque also produced several video interviews, including a three-part conversation with Dame Jane Glover and renowned early music specialist Sir John Eliot Gardiner on the lives of Bach and Handel, and offered two free performances, "Baroque Beautiful—MOB's At-Home Gala" and "A Baroque Thanksgiving." More information on the ensemble's virtual programming is available at baroque.org/virtual.

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