



INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



**Enriching Our Lives**  
*Together Through Music*

2023–2024 SEASON REVIEW

Austin Huntington, Principal Cellist

*Thank You*  
from  
**James M.  
Johnson**

Dear Friend of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra,

Thanks to your support, the ISO made remarkable strides during the 2023–24 season, connecting our community through music. This report showcases our shared accomplishments and potential for future success.

This season saw thrilling milestones, including the announcement of our eighth music director, Jun Märkl, in January. Maestro Märkl received a warm welcome, bringing valuable media coverage and excitement for his artistic leadership.

New community events, like *Symphony on the Circle*, funded by the Margot L. Eccles Arts & Culture Fund, a CICF Fund, introduced the ISO to new audiences with a day of musical exploration at Monument Circle, culminating in a live stream. A collaboration with the Indianapolis Ballet, supported by the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, featured a magical *Romeo and Juliet* program led by Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly at Clowes Hall.

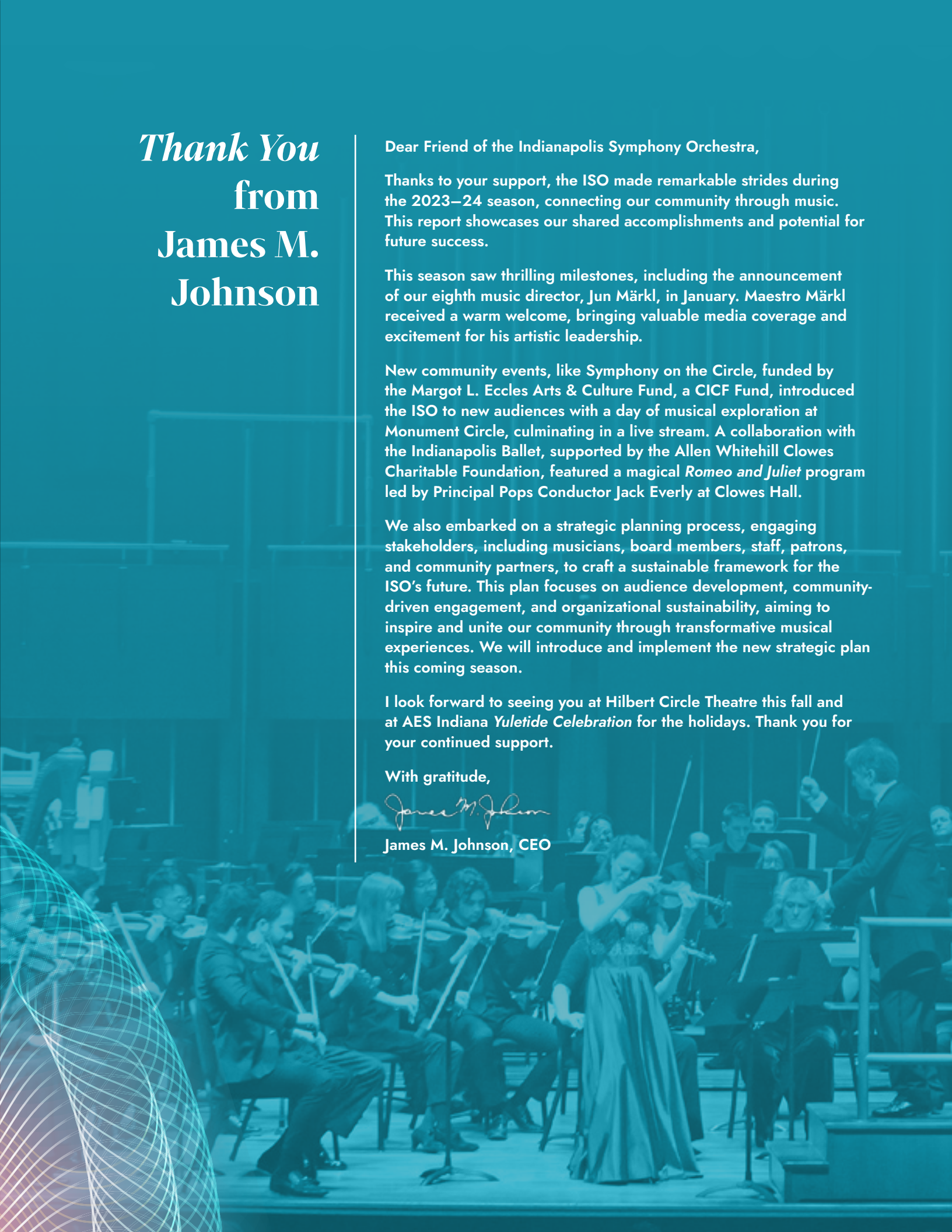
We also embarked on a strategic planning process, engaging stakeholders, including musicians, board members, staff, patrons, and community partners, to craft a sustainable framework for the ISO's future. This plan focuses on audience development, community-driven engagement, and organizational sustainability, aiming to inspire and unite our community through transformative musical experiences. We will introduce and implement the new strategic plan this coming season.

I look forward to seeing you at Hilbert Circle Theatre this fall and at AES Indiana *Yuletide Celebration* for the holidays. Thank you for your continued support.

With gratitude,



James M. Johnson, CEO





# 2023–2024 Season Highlights

**102,257**

Attendees at Hilbert  
Circle Theatre

**60,000**

attendees at Kroger  
*Symphony on the Prairie*

**136**

rehearsals

**&**

**316**

rehearsal hours per musician

**103**

guest conductors and artists

**6,213**

subscriptions

**&**

**1,941**

new subscriptions

**250+**

musicians and vocalists  
were on stage for *Carmina  
Burana* by Carl Orff,  
the most all season

**1,481**

student tickets purchased

## PERFORMANCES

- 3** Uncharted
- 6** Coffee Classical
- 6** Film
- 8** Coffee Pops
- 11** SOTP featuring the ISO
- 16** Evening Pops
- 21** Specials (Gala, Sphinx, etc.)
- 31** Yuletide Celebration
- 32** Evening Classical

**134** Total Performances

“ Because the ISO is a nonprofit, we support it by volunteering to ensure the ISO can continue to be the outstanding orchestra it is. ”

—DAVE AND SHARON REED, USHERS

## The People of the ISO

**51**

staff members

**76**

musicians

**5,513**

volunteer hours

**2,500+**

individual donors

**28**

foundation/government  
partners

**63**

corporate sponsors

**491**

nonprofit and community  
organizations served  
through ticket donations

**13,000+**

ISOA volunteer hours

“ The ISO is genuinely a world-class orchestra. We are high-level musicians from around the world, and we aim to bring you amazing live music. While we might seem serious on stage, we're all hyper-focused before and during the concert. Afterward, there's always the adrenaline rush, and it's nice to see familiar faces in the audience. ”

—ALISTAIR HOWLETT, ACTING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL FLUTE

## Celebration of Women

In March, the ISO held a Celebration of Women concert, presented by Telamon for Women's History Month. Conductor **Rebecca Tong** led the orchestra, with violinist **Melissa White** performing Florence Price's Violin Concerto. The program featured works by six female composers from Brazil, the U.S., China, Canada, Indonesia, and Mexico, including Florence Price, Clarice Assad, and Gabriela Ortiz. Before the concert, the ISO hosted a panel discussion on women in the arts, and hosted more than 15 women-led community organizations in the Hilbert Circle Theatre lobby.

“ I am from Daejeon, South Korea, and Indiana is the first place I've lived in the U.S. Being a musician here feels like I'm performing for my community, which brings me immense joy. Sharing a diverse range of music with Indy's people has been a fulfilling experience. Working with talented musicians has sharpened my professional skills and inspires me to contribute my best work. I'm honored to be a part of a team that delivers outstanding music. ”

—BYUL BELLA SEO, VIOLIN

## AES Indiana *Yuletide Celebration*

AES Indiana *Yuletide Celebration* celebrated the gifts of Principal Pops Conductor **Maestro Jack Everly**, guest host **Ben Crawford**, and **101** singers, artists, puppeteers, dancers, production assistants, choreographers, writers, stage crew members, wardrobe team, and more. The production has a 74% retention rate of performers—75 individuals have participated in the show before!

**Yuletide is a family affair!** Within the company last year, we had:

- » One set of triplets
- » One pair of sisters
- » Two pairs of spouses
- » One pair of cousins
- » Two mother and daughter combos
- » One mother and son combo
- » Four ISO administrative staff participating in the show

*Did you know?*

**37,000**

total tickets sold

**31**

shows in three weeks

**3**

full days to build the set

**200**

hours of rehearsals in two weeks



## Jun Märkl As New Music Director

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra welcomed conductor **Jun Märkl** as the eighth music director, effective September 1, 2024, marking the beginning of the 2024–25 season.

“The ISO is deeply grateful to Maestro Märkl for his artistic leadership and unwavering commitment to the orchestra. We look forward to a new era of musical collaboration and artistic excellence in the coming years under Maestro Märkl’s vision,” said **James Johnson**, CEO of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

As music director, he will bring creative leadership to the ISO through visionary programming, community engagement, and artistic development. The appointment celebrates the culmination of Maestro Märkl’s nearly 25-year collaboration with the ISO.



## Sphinx Series Continues

The ISO continued its partnership with the Sphinx Organization to present four free concerts during the 2023–24 season. This collaboration, aimed at developing young Black and Latinx classical musicians, brought Sphinx artists and ISO musicians together for performances across Indianapolis, supported by Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, Honda, Pacers Sports & Entertainment, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The 2023–24 Sphinx Series featured concerts at the Madam Walker Legacy Center, Arts for Lawrence’s Theater at the Fort, Central Library, Clowes Auditorium, and Hilbert Circle Theatre. Sphinx musicians actively engaged with the community by performing at various events, bringing their inspiring music and passion for the arts to diverse audiences throughout the area.

### UNHEARD VOICES

As part of the ISO’s Unheard Voices initiative, the orchestra highlighted underrepresented composers, celebrating diverse cultural expressions through music in both the Sphinx Series and the 2023–24 IU Health Plans Classical Series.



## ISO in the Community

The ISO put on **35+** community engagement events this past season, partnering with local nonprofits and events around Central Indiana to connect communities and provide access to music.

Some of these include IU Simon Cancer Center's CompleteLife Art Show, Global Village Welcome Center's Lunar New Year Celebration, LUNACY at White River State Park celebrating the Solar Eclipse, Indiana State Library celebrating our joint exhibit with Ensemble Music Society, Eskenazi Hospital: Marianne Tobias' Music Program, Original Farmers' Market at Monument Circle, Georgia Street for USA Swimming LIVE, and Make Music Indy at SPARK on the Circle.

### Musicians giving back

ISO musicians give back at least six hours per year to the community through many opportunities throughout central Indiana. This past year, ISO musicians donated **300+** hours through their volunteer efforts!



## Symphony on the Circle

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra presented the inaugural Symphony on the Circle this past spring.

More than **22** local organizations participated in this all-day arts celebration on the circle, including Downtown Indy, Inc., Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, Indiana Ballet Conservatory, Indiana Association of Chinese-Americans, Ballet Folklorico Mosaicos Indianapolis, Suzuki Academy, and many more! The Hilbert Circle Theatre was open to all, and more than **325** people explored the Hilbert Circle Theater during the open house. The day culminated with an exhilarating live-streamed performance on the circle from Music Director **Jun Märkl** and ISO musicians. The steps were filled with hundreds of people watching live on Monument Circle.

**"From consistent programming at Hilbert Circle Theatre to live-streamed concerts in partnership with Downtown Indy, Inc., the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra has long been a key contributor to the vibrancy of Monument Circle,"** said DII President & CEO Taylor Schaffer.

This opportunity was made possible by the Margot L. Eccles Arts & Culture Fund, a CICF Fund.





# Education Programming

In addition to community engagement programming, the ISO offers numerous education programs for young children through high school in Indiana.

## TEDDY BEAR SERIES

24

Teddy Bear concerts in 5 counties with over 2,000 kids served

## COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK DISCOVERY CONCERTS

7

concerts

5

ASL-interpreted performances

13

counties represented

Bilingual curriculum offered in English and Spanish

9,400+

audience members

51

volunteers

## METROPOLITAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA (MYO)

200

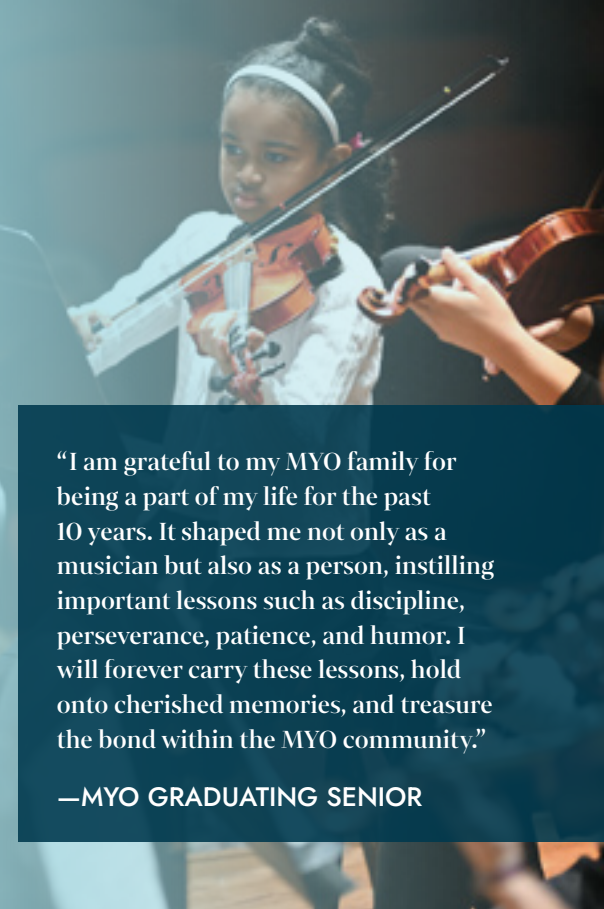
students  
K-12

7

community  
partners

24

concerts, recitals, chamber performances, and events, including the ISO Gala cocktail reception, Broadway United Methodist 150-year celebration, family concert series at the Indy Central Library, ISO Symphony on the Circle, ISOA Jubilee fundraiser, Child Advocates Inspire fundraiser, the national anthem at Indiana Fever and Pacers games, and more




“I am grateful to my MYO family for being a part of my life for the past 10 years. It shaped me not only as a musician but also as a person, instilling important lessons such as discipline, perseverance, patience, and humor. I will forever carry these lessons, hold onto cherished memories, and treasure the bond within the MYO community.”

—MYO GRADUATING SENIOR

## Exciting Collaborations During 2023–2024

### INDIANAPOLIS BALLET



The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra collaborated with the Indianapolis Ballet to present the full-length ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, featuring Sergei Prokofiev’s score conducted by ISO Principal Pops Conductor **Jack Everly**. Presented by the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation.

### HOOSIER ART SALON PARTNERSHIP



The ISO and the Hoosier Art Salon hosted the Clowes Collaborative Invitational Art Exhibit for a second year. The exhibit, supported by The Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, featured the works of award-winning Indiana artists at Hilbert Circle Theatre. This past year, the Clowes Collaborative also featured Herron High School Art students in the exhibition.

### WOMEN OF THE ISO EXHIBIT

In collaboration with the Ensemble Music Society of Indianapolis, the ISO showcased a joint exhibit at the Indiana State Library, highlighting the history of female musicians in the orchestra. The exhibit, titled “Over Eight Decades of Classical Music, featuring Women of the ISO and the Ensemble Music Society in Images and Words,” was unveiled in April and ran through the summer of 2024.



**INDIANAPOLIS  
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32 E. WASHINGTON ST., SUITE 600  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204  
**INDIANAPOLISSYMPHONY.ORG**

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“ On behalf of all the musicians and the staff, thank you for believing in the strength of music to uplift and inspire us all. I hope to see you very soon at one of our concerts. ”

—JUN MÄRKL, MUSIC DIRECTOR