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40th Annual Do-It-Yourself *Messiah* Tickets Go On Sale November 18

This Sell-out Event Takes Place December 21 and 22 at the Harris Theater

CHICAGO – The 40th Anniversary of the International Music Foundation’s Do-It-Yourself *Messiah* takes place at the Harris Theater on Monday, December 21 and Tuesday, December 22, 2015. Tickets for the event go on sale at noon on November 18 and in years past, tickets have sold out in just a few days. Tickets are \$15 per person and can be purchased online at www.harristheaterchicago.org, or at the Harris Theater Box Office located at 205 E. Randolph, or by phone at 312-334-7777.

“It is a prized holiday tradition for many families. Some attendees came to their first *Messiah* as children and now they are bringing their own children,” said Ann Murray, Executive Director of the International Music Foundation. “It is very rewarding to bring together families from all over the Chicago area, from different races, religions and cultures to celebrate the season singing the Do-It-Yourself *Messiah*.” This is the 26th year that Ms. Murray has been involved with the *Messiah* production.

The performances offer a rare opportunity for the audience to perform as the choir in George Frederic Handel’s masterpiece, *Messiah*. Accompanied by a volunteer orchestra and a world-renowned conductor and soloists, the multi-generational audience is seated according to voice range: soprano, alto, tenor or bass. The four professional soloists include Naperville resident Soprano Michelle Areyzaga, Chicago-based Alto Ryan Belongie, Tenor Thomas Glenn, and Bass-baritone Mark Steven Doss. Acclaimed Maestro Stanley Sperber, who travels from his home in Israel each year to be part of the *Messiah*, will conduct.

Performances of the Do-It-Yourself *Messiah* begin at 7 p.m. on Monday, December 21 and Tuesday, December 22. Patrons may take their seats in the theater, located at 205 E. Randolph, beginning at 6:15 p.m. The *Messiah* performance lasts approximately two and a half hours and is filled with joyful good will and camaraderie.

The Do-It-Yourself *Messiah* is made possible through generous lead sponsorship from Wintrust Financial Corporation, and additional sponsorships from Performance Trust Companies, Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust, Liisa Thomas and Winston & Strawn LLP, and the Saints Volunteers for the Performing Arts. For more information about the performances, please visit the International Music Foundation website at www.imfchicago.org.

About the Messiah: Composed in 1741 by George Frederic Handel, *Messiah* is a large-scale piece for orchestra, chorus and soloists. Originally intended as an Easter oratorio, it has become more popularly associated with the Christmas holiday season. A small church in rural England began the “do-it-yourself” part more than 40 years ago. Al Booth, founder of the International Music Foundation, was an early participant and brought the idea home to Chicago where he and Margaret Hillis, then director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, staged the first event in 1976.

About the International Music Foundation: The International Music Foundation (IMF) was founded in 1979 by Chicagoan Al Booth as the umbrella organization for two of his music projects: the Do-It-Yourself *Messiah* and the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert series, both now cornerstones of the Chicago musical scene. In 1981, with the help of Yehudi Menuhin, the IMF added Live Music Now!, a free concert series for children in the Chicago Public Schools. For more information please visit, www.imfchicago.org.