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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 6, 2018**

**International Beethoven Project announces  
Beethoven Spirit Award to DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly  
Free passes for artists and students in honor of Mr. Kelly  
to 9th Annual Beethoven Birthday Bash “METAMORPHOSIS” series, Dec. 14-16**

**CHICAGO** - The Chicago-based **International Beethoven Project** is thrilled to announce that it has selected **Mark Kelly, Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) of the City of Chicago, to receive its fourth Beethoven Spirit Award on December 16th.** The decision was made in recognition of Mr. Kelly’s long, distinguished, and creative career in the arts and education, and for his continued enthusiasm and belief in the value of art for all. Like Beethoven, Mark Kelly is a humanist who believes in the power of the creative spirit to help make the world more peaceful, socially cohesive, and to help bring out the best in all of us. **The strength of Mark Kelly’s convictions has helped bring Chicago, along with thousands of people he has directly influenced and inspired, closer to Beethoven’s ideal of “universal brotherhood”.**

**The award ceremony will take place on Sunday, December 16th, 2018 from 6pm to 9pm on the 248th anniversary of Beethoven’s birthday,** as part of the International Beethoven Project’s annual Beethoven Birthday Bash series, **at the Holy Trinity High School Auditorium, 1443 W. Division Street in Chicago.**

In honor of Mark Kelly’s long-standing support of artists and students, and to help recognize his contribution to Chicago’s creative spirit, the **International Beethoven Project is inviting all artists, creative spirits, and students to [attend this event for free, by RSVPing online](#),** or at the door pending availability. For all others, tickets range from \$30 to \$50.

Mark Kelly is sometimes referred to as the **City of Chicago’s “Culture Czar”, a “Culture Wizard” whose magic wand makes the city come alive with extreme creativity.** Mr. Kelly sees Chicago as his canvas, and in his current position as Commissioner of DCASE, he gets to activate and engage artists, organizations, and communities from every corner of the city. Among many examples, **Mr. Kelly is**

**following through on Mayor Emanuel's 50x50 project to put public art in each of the city's fifty wards**, in addition to steering major "downtown" art projects for all, whether at the **Chicago Cultural Center, Grant Park, or in the streets, such as Wabash Avenue for the Wabash Arts Corridor, the Wabash Avenue Flying Creatures project, and the Arts in the Dark Halloween Parade**. Mark Kelly is focused on bringing art and culture to the public without restriction and to have fun while doing it, encouraging all of us to play with art as well. Mr. Kelly wants to inspire and engage everyone he can reach, which is why he has put such a **strong emphasis on public art projects, building upon one of Chicago's most notable and inspiring traditions**.

**Commissioner Kelly spent thirty-two years working with students at Columbia College Chicago before being appointed by Mayor Emanuel to head the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events in 2016**, and has always put much of his **efforts on encouraging, engaging, and inspiring youth and young adults**. While 2017 was the City of Chicago's official "Year of Public Art", 2018 has been the "Year of Creative Youth", which has engaged Chicago's youngest citizens to find their own creative spirit and strength, whether in the pursuit of an artistic path, or any other path. Mark Kelly, like Beethoven before him, believes in the **power of art and culture to bring people together** to build a better world. Giving young people a creative vision is critical to that idea, especially as creativity is the only way to solve our world's problems. **Mark Kelly's influence and long-lasting impact, which benefits us all, is already guaranteed**.

**Mark Kelly follows Zarin Mehta, Otto von Habsburg, and Hervé and Isabelle de la Vauvre** in receiving the International Beethoven Project's Beethoven Spirit Award. The **Beethoven Spirit Award, established in 2011**, is given on occasion to an accomplished person or team that has lived a life of humanistic action connected to the arts. In the spirit of Beethoven's own beliefs in the creation of a better world through lasting and powerful art initiatives, nominees are selected from a pool of highly accomplished persons who have used the arts and humanities as a platform to inspire and change the world. **The Beethoven Spirit Award is a symbolic honor meant to highlight the important work of its winners, as a means to encourage and inspire similarly courageous action in others**.

The **Beethoven Spirit Award** ceremony is presented as part of the International Beethoven Project's **9th annual Beethoven Birthday Bash series, titled "Metamorphosis"**, celebrating **Beethoven's 248th birthday** during three days of events with multidisciplinary programming. Beginning **Friday December 14th at the Chopin Theatre from 7pm to midnight, continuing on Saturday December 15th at the Hairpin Arts Gallery from 2pm to 1am, and concluding on Sunday December 16th at the Holy Trinity High School Auditorium from 6pm to 9pm**, the celebration for Beethoven's 248th will include **classical, jazz, indie rock, and electronic music, along with visual art, film, theatre, dance, and more**. Among participating artists and groups are IBP's President and pianist George Lepauw, violinist Consuelo Lepauw, Silent Theatre, indie rock band Faintlife, photographer Céline Oms, Singer Ana Lamuntee, jazz bassist Jeremiah Hunt, Amos Gillespie Chamber Quartet, Desueno Dance, Oona Tramps, DJ Silent Marvin, J. Lindsay Brown Dance, comedian Matt Griffo, John Sutton improv, artist Arthur Wright, and others.

**Day Passes are free for artists and students on a limited basis ([RSVP here](#) or via [website](#))**, \$30 for General Admission, and \$50 for VIP Admission. 3-day passes are available for \$50 for General Admission and \$100 for VIP Admission.

**For more information, please visit [www.internationalbeethovenproject.com](http://www.internationalbeethovenproject.com).**



**Mark Kelly** is the Commissioner of the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), which presents and promotes high-quality free festivals, exhibitions, performances and holiday celebrations each year in parks, the historic Chicago Cultural Center and other venues throughout the city. He was appointed to the post by Mayor Rahm Emanuel in July 2016.

Kelly previously served as the Vice President for Student Success at Columbia College Chicago, where he fostered and oversaw an immersive arts experience for Columbia's

burgeoning student body, across its 100 different degree programs. For more than 30 years, Kelly served in numerous leadership roles at Columbia, supporting students who view the world through a creative lens in attaining a world-class education that blends creative and media arts, liberal arts and business.

Kelly has amassed more than 40 years of experience working as an academic administrator, with prior positions at Wayne State University and City Colleges of Chicago. Kelly was the founder of the Wabash Arts Corridor (WAC) initiative, and he created the artistic vision for the Arts in the Dark Halloween Parade. He is a percussionist who worked with free form jazz artist Hal Russell, and he had the honor of bringing percussion to an Allen Ginsberg performance. Throughout his career, Kelly has served on many arts and cultural-centric boards, with active roles on the following: Arts Alliance Illinois Board; the Chicago Loop Alliance Board; and America's Urban Campus Committee. Kelly holds a master of arts in counseling from the University of Cincinnati and a bachelor of arts in sociology from John Carroll University.

**The International Beethoven Project (IBP), now in its 11th season, is a Chicago-based Not-for-Profit founded in 2008** by concert pianist and cultural activist George Lepauw, intended to celebrate Beethoven's legacy and advance creativity and human "brotherhood" through the arts, with a focus on classical music, and through engagement with contemporary artists of all disciplines. IBP has produced many events, ranging from concerts to multi-disciplinary festivals, as well as media projects involving film, audio, and video work. The International Beethoven Project is currently working to build a global celebration of Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020.

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