



**GRANT PARK  
MUSIC FESTIVAL**

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**GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL CHORUS DIRECTOR**  
**CHRISTOPHER BELL**  
**RENEWS HIS CONTRACT THROUGH 2023**

CHICAGO (April 26, 2019) — Grant Park Orchestral Association President and CEO Paul Winberg announced today that Christopher Bell has renewed his contract as Chorus Director of the Grant Park Music Festival through the 2023 season.

In the new agreement, Bell will continue to lead the Grant Park Chorus in its performances at Millennium Park’s Jay Pritzker Pavilion and in neighborhood parks throughout the city. He will continue to conduct the Festival’s annual *Independence Day Salute*, which draws capacity audiences to the Pritzker Pavilion each summer.

Bell also heads the Festival’s *Project Inclusion* Vocal Fellowship program, which guides young musicians from diverse backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in the symphonic orchestral and choral field towards successful careers in music. *Project Inclusion* is a partnership with the Chicago Sinfonietta; the Festival’s Vocal Fellowship program is now in its third year.

“Under Christopher’s leadership, the Grant Park Chorus has become one of the finest choral ensembles in the country, thrilling audiences with outstanding musical experiences not found anywhere else,” said Winberg.

“I am thrilled to renew my association with this remarkable institution that has been my US summer artistic home for the past seventeen years,” Bell said. “The Grant Park Chorus sets the standard for excellence in choral singing in this country and, together with the Grant Park Orchestra, moves audiences night after night with their spectacular sounds each summer.”

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Christopher Bell has served as Chorus Director of the Grant Park Chorus since 2002, and led the Chorus through its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012 with a series of special events, including the release of its first ever *a cappella* recording entitled *Songs of Smaller Creatures and other American Choral Works*, available on Cedille Records.

Bell and the Grant Park Chorus will return to the South Shore Cultural Center and the Columbus Park Refectory for their annual *a cappella* concert in July. This year's program will celebrate the legacy of music written by women and will feature a world premiere commission by composer Lori Laitman.

During his tenure, Bell and the chorus have been recipients of the coveted Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence given by Chorus America, as well as glowing reviews from both critics and audiences alike. In 2013, Bell won the Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art.

In addition to his work with the Festival, Christopher Bell is the Artistic Director of The Washington Chorus. Largely responsible for the formation of the National Youth Choir of Scotland in 1996, he has been its Artistic Director ever since. Bell was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Music from the Royal Conservatoire in Scotland in 2012, in recognition of his contribution to performing arts in Scotland. In 2015, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Music from the University of Aberdeen.

On May 17, Christopher Bell will be honored by the choral music ensemble, Chicago *a cappella*, for his significant contributions to choral music in the Chicago area. "Christopher is an inspiring leader in our field," said Chicago *a cappella* Executive Director Matthew Greenberg. "He has both elevated the artistry of choral music with the Grant Park Chorus in Chicago, as well as internationally."

For more than 80 years, the Grant Park Music Festival has been Chicago's summer musical sensation, demonstrating that classical music, performed by a world-class orchestra and chorus can have a transformative impact on the city. Showcased in the city's most spectacular setting, the Festival continues to be the summer gathering place for all of Chicago. The Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park is the official home of the Grant Park Music Festival, with free seats available for every concert. The Festival's 85<sup>th</sup> season begins on June 12 and runs through August 17.

The Grant Park Music Festival is proudly presented by the Grant Park Orchestral Association with key support from the Chicago Park District, and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. The Festival is led by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Carlos Kalmar, along with Grant Park Chorus Director Christopher Bell, Grant Park Orchestral Association President and CEO Paul Winberg, and Board Chair Stephen Smith.

The Grant Park Music Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous support from its major sponsors: AbelsonTaylor, BMO Harris Bank, ComEd, Fairmont Chicago Millennium Park, Jones Day, Macy's, and William Blair; with additional support from Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, the Julius N. Frankel Foundation, Walter E. Heller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, MacArthur Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

For information about the Grant Park Music Festival, **visit [gpmf.org](http://gpmf.org)** or call **312.742.7647**. For additional information, visit the Grant Park Music Festival Facebook page or follow the Festival on Twitter [@gpmf](https://twitter.com/gpmf).

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