

HARRIS THEATER CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE

New Space Unveiled at April 5 Gala, Imagine the Celebration

Mark Morris Dance Group to Perform *Dido and Aeneas*



Mark Morris Dance Group; Credit Susana Millman

CHICAGO – The **Harris Theater for Music and Dance** is pleased to announce *Imagine the Celebration*, the Gala event which will be held on **Tuesday, April 5, 2016**, hosted by the **Harris Theater for Music and Dance** and **Gala Chairs Jay Franke and David Herro**. The internationally renowned **Mark Morris Dance Group and Music Ensemble** will headline the evening with a performance of *Dido and Aeneas*. The evening will celebrate the completion of the first phase of the *Imagine* campaign which made the renovation and expansion of the public space of the Harris Theater possible.

Imagine the Celebration

Imagine the Celebration will be an exclusive evening at the Harris full of entertainment, food, drink, and of course, music and dance. The Gala is a fundraising event to raise \$1 million to support the mission of the theater.

Mark Morris Dance Group's performance at 8:00PM will be the centerpiece of the evening's festivities as the group defines artistic perfection with Morris' masterwork, *Dido and Aeneas*. Based on Henry Purcell's opera, the modern dance is performed with a live orchestra and chorus, the Mark Morris Music Ensemble, with Morris as conductor. Mark Morris is hailed as one of the most prodigiously gifted choreographers of his time. A story centered on the nexus of love, sex, destruction and death is prime material for dance. Mark Morris Dance Group embodies these sentiments and packs their movement with meaning.

Prior to the headline performance, the Host Committee and key influencers in the arts community will attend an exclusive pre-performance dinner onstage at the Pritzker Pavilion beginning at 6:00PM. At 6:30PM, a pre-performance buffet reception will take place in the Theater lobbies for gala sponsors. Following the 8:00PM performance of *Dido and Aeneas*, there will be an after-party in the lobbies for all attendees. Roughly 1,000 of Chicago's most established dance and music enthusiasts will experience the Theater's brand new expanded lobby space with champagne, sweets, and live music from **DJ Matt Roan**; Mark Morris and dancers of the company will be in attendance.

Gala Chairs & Host Committee

The Gala Chairs for *Imagine the Celebration*, Jay Franke and David Herro, are staples in the arts and culture scene of Chicago. Mr. Franke is on the Board of Trustees for the Harris Theater, as well as the Artistic Director of the beloved Chicago Dancing Festival, the opening night of which takes place at the Harris each year. Mr. Franke also has an extraordinary performance career; after receiving his BFA in Dance from the Juilliard School, Jay worked with the Twyla Tharp Dance Company "THARP!", The 58 Group, Lyric Opera Ballet Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and was a leading dancer in the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company from 2005-2010.

With Jay's leadership, the 2016 Gala Host Committee is comprised of the city's most prominent civic and business leaders, including:

2016 Imagine the Celebration Gala Host Committee:

Jay Franke and David Herro, 2016 Gala Chairs

Rita and John Canning

Liz and Matt Connelly, JPMorgan Chase

Pamela Crutchfield

Michael and Jacky Ferro, The Sun-Times Foundation/The Chicago Community Trust

Jack and Sandra Guthman

The Harris Family Foundation, Caryn and King Harris

Joan W. Harris

Liz and Eric Lefkofsky

Robert and Diane Levy

George Lucas and Mellody Hobson

Mac MacLellan and Miriam Waltz, The Northern Trust Company

Rocco and Roxanne Martino

Alexandra and John Nichols

Abby McCormick O'Neil and D. Carroll Joynes

Cari and Michael J. Sacks

E. Scott and Nancy Santi, ITW

Opportunities are still available to join the Host Committee alongside some of Chicago's most influential arts philanthropists.

Additional sponsorship opportunities include:

Presenting Sponsors (\$50,000)

Lead Sponsors (\$25,000)

Underwriting Sponsors (\$10,000)

Contributing Sponsors (\$5,000)

To become a sponsor, please visit the *Imagine the Celebration* microsite [HERE](#), or contact Director of Annual Giving and Sponsorships, [Amanda Lawson](#) (312-334-2456).

\$250 tickets to the Gala performance of *Dido and Aeneas* by Mark Morris Dance Group are for sale now. \$250 ticket buyers are invited to the after-party – purchase [HERE](#).

Construction Completed

Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater, is a \$38.8M comprehensive fundraising effort supporting the Theater's multifaceted mission. The campaign ensures the continued growth and artistic development of the Harris Theater over the next 10 years. **The Harris is proud to celebrate this milestone moment where construction is complete and the *Imagine* campaign has been funded to over 70% with roughly \$28 million raised.**

The physical construction portion of the campaign is the largest and most visible portion of the Theater's renovations and will have the strongest impact on the patron experience. The completed renovations are:

- Two high-speed, high-capacity elevators to increase accessibility and improve flow through the Theater
- Expanded lower lobby to create a flexible, multi-use performance and enrichment space providing a platform for added community engagement and artistic programs
- Reconfigured staircases to allow for elevator construction and improve vertical circulation
- Additional hand railings throughout the entire house of the theater

The Harris is proud to have completed this important renovation and to have become the most accessible possible home for patrons, artists, and resident and visiting companies.



Sponsors

Imagine the Celebration, the Harris Theater's 2016 Gala, was made possible with support from Jay Franke and David Herro, Presenting Sponsors.

The Northern Trust Company is the Harris Theater's 2015–2016 season sponsor. United Airlines is the Official Airline of the Harris Theater. Hyatt Regency Chicago is the Harris Theater's season hotel partner. The Theater gratefully acknowledges the Irving Harris Foundation for its leadership support of the Presenting Fund. The Harris Theater is partially supported by the Illinois Arts Council Agency. All performances take place on The Elizabeth Morse Genius Stage at the Harris Theater.

Harris Theater for Music and Dance

The Harris Theater's primary mission is to partner with an array of Chicago's music and dance performing arts organizations to help them build the resources and infrastructure necessary to achieve artistic growth and long-term organizational sustainability. The Harris Theater's original group of 12 resident companies has grown to include 35 diverse organizations. Through these partnerships, the Theater has earned national recognition as a distinctive model for collaboration, performance, and artistic advancement.

Opened on November 8, 2003, the Harris Theater for Music and Dance was the first multi-use performing arts venue to be built in the Chicago downtown area since 1929. Today the Theater continues to host the most diverse offerings of

any venue in Chicago, featuring the city's world-renowned music and dance institutions and the *Harris Theater Presents* series of acclaimed national and international artists and ensembles.

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The *Imagine* campaign is led by four transformational gifts: from The Irving Harris Foundation, Joan W. Harris; Alexandra and John Nichols; Chauncey and Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation, Abby McCormick O'Neil and D. Carroll Joynes; Caryn and King Harris, The Harris Family Foundation. Additional leadership gifts supporting programmatic and capital projects have been generously funded by The Crown Family, Jay Franke and David Herro, Jack and Sandra Guthman, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Neisser Family Foundation, The Northern Trust Company, Christine and Glenn Kelly, Laura and Ricardo Rosenkranz, and Marilyn and David J. Vitale.

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust are the lead underwriters of fundraising for *Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater*.

The Harris maintains a strong emphasis on community engagement through enrichment activities and their *Access Tickets Program*, in which the Harris Theater partners with health and human services agencies and community organizations to provide underwritten performance tickets for individuals facing illness, disability and challenging life circumstances. Since 2009, the Theater has provided over 8,800 tickets to children and families, representing 25 neighborhoods across the city of Chicago.

To learn more about the Harris Theater, please visit HarrisTheaterChicago.org. Call the Box Office at 312.334.7777 to request a brochure or additional information.

The Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago's state-of-the-art 1,525-seat performance venue, can also be found on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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