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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Richmond Symphony Selected From Over 350 State-Wide Nominees as a “50 for 50 Arts Inspiration” by the Virginia Commission for the Arts

From an original pool of over 350 nominees, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the state arts agency, has selected the Richmond community’s own Richmond Symphony Orchestra to receive one of its prestigious “50 for 50 Arts Inspiration Awards” in the category of Exemplary Programs and Pinnacle Events for its Big Tent initiative.

The “50 for 50 Arts Inspiration Awards” were conceived and designed by the Commission as a 50th anniversary tribute to 50 examples of programs, individuals, and organizations critical to the arts in Virginia. The designated “Arts Inspirations” may have played a critical role in the last 50 years, serve as today’s leaders and exemplars, or may be tomorrow’s visionaries, leading the way to a culturally vibrant future. The Commission was established by law in 1968 to promote awareness of and access to the arts across the state and to support a broad range of artists, arts organizations, and arts educators.

Following a statewide call for nominations, nominees for the awards in all categories were accepted for two months this spring. A panel comprised of former commissioners and arts leaders reviewed the nominations this past summer and recommended a slate to the full Board which adopted the final roster this fall. To ensure impartiality, no former commissioners and no state-elected officials were selected for the roster. “We are indeed fortunate in Virginia to have an abundant and diverse roster of outstanding artists and organizations and their supporters spanning disciplines and decades”, said Margaret Vanderhye, the Commission’s executive director. “The 50 selected winners are representative of the best, but this list is far from definitive. Every day in

communities across the Commonwealth, thousands of people benefit from the creative energies and pursuit of excellence that characterize Virginia artists and arts organizations”, she concluded.

VCA Commissioner and 50th Anniversary Co-Chair Jo Hodgkin (Annandale) stated:

“These awardees carry the banner for countless arts workers and supporters who use the arts to build a strong Virginia”. “We believe the arts are essential for a creative 21st century workforce, economically dynamic communities, and a culture based on wellness and accessibility,” she added.

“The Richmond Symphony is honored to be selected as an Arts Inspiration awardee,” says Richmond Symphony Executive Director David J.L. Fisk. “This is especially sweet in our 60th Anniversary Season as projects like the Big Tent allow us to reach new audiences and have a positive impact on our community like never before. This work lays the groundwork for the next 60 years and beyond. We thank the Virginia Commission for the Arts for its exemplary support of the arts throughout the Commonwealth, and endorse the call for the budget of the VCA to be increased in the upcoming General Assembly Session to allow Virginia’s arts organizations, and the State, to reach even greater heights.”

Award recipients were honored with other state arts leaders and supporters at a special reception this fall for a Celebration of the Arts at the Executive Mansion with Governor Terry McAuliffe and First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe. On Wednesday, January 31, 2018 from 1:00-5:00 p.m. the Commission will hold a 50th Anniversary Program for arts organizations across the state at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. That afternoon the 50 for 50 Arts Inspiration award recipients will be officially recognized and for their achievements. A reception will follow in the Marble Hall.

Commission Chair Shelley Kruger Weisberg (Williamsburg) commented: “The entire Commission applauds the 50 for 50 Arts Inspiration Award recipients whose work is representative of the transformative power of the arts in our Commonwealth”. She added, “The impressive array of arts leaders, arts organizations, pinnacle events and

artists are a testament to the extraordinary diversity and vitality of the arts in every corner of the state”.

Each of the five nomination categories represents a different element of the arts in time and focus. For the Exemplary Programs and Pinnacle Events category awarded to The Richmond Symphony, the criteria (was one of the following):

Bedrock Institutions: Winners have been in existence more than ten years, have demonstrated a benefit to the economic health and or tourism in the community, exhibit artistic excellence, celebrate diversity and showcase Virginia as a cultural destination.

Exemplary Programs and Pinnacle Events: Winners have programs or events from the past 50 years that have demonstrated artistic excellence, celebrated diversity, offered outreach to underserved populations, have engaged community partners and have a visionary or innovative approach to their program or event.

Emerging Artists and Organizations: Winners have been in existence under ten years, have demonstrated a benefit to the economic and or social health of the community, have demonstrated artistic excellence, outreach to underserved populations, embraced diversity, and taken a visionary or innovative approach to their work.

Arts Leaders and Supporters: Winners have demonstrated a serious sustained leadership in the arts that have made a significant contribution to their communities, have encouraged decision makers to create a sustainable environment for artists and arts organizations, have taken an original approach to arts leadership and encouraged the engagement of others, and have championed a broad role for arts organizations and artists to play in their own respective communities.

Outstanding Artists: Winners have demonstrated consistent artistic excellence, a stellar body of work, provided service to their respective communities and beyond, and enhanced the artistic and cultural life of Virginia with their creativity.

For more information about the Richmond Symphony or to learn about upcoming programs and, go to www.richmondsymphony.com.

For more information about the Virginia Commission for the Arts, visit www.arts.virginia.gov.

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About the Richmond Symphony

Celebrating its 60th Anniversary Season in 2017/18, the Richmond Symphony is the largest performing arts organization in Central Virginia. The organization includes an orchestra of more than 70 professional musicians, the 150-voice Richmond Symphony Chorus and more than 260 students in the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra programs. Each season, more than 200,000 members of the community enjoy live concerts and radio broadcasts. The Symphony also provides educational outreach programs to over 55,000 students and teachers each year. The Symphony was recently named one of 21 American orchestras selected as a leader in orchestra innovation by the League of American Orchestras through its Futures Fund Initiative. The Richmond Symphony is partially funded by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Visit www.richmondsymphony.com.

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