

Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

June 1, 2017

## **AOIFE O'DONOVAN JOINS NSO FOR ANNUAL LABOR DAY CONCERT**

**Sunday, September 3, at 8 p.m.  
West Lawn of U.S. Capitol**

**FREE – NO TICKETS REQUIRED**

(WASHINGTON)—Vocalist, guitarist and songwriter Aoife O'Donovan joins the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) in its annual free Labor Day concert on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, on [Sunday, September 3, at 8 p.m.](#) Guest conductor John Morris Russell leads the NSO and O'Donovan in a program of Americana featuring marches, folk music, and bluegrass-inspired songs, including O'Donovan-penned songs, "Red & White & Blue & Gold", "Magic Hour" and "The King of All Birds," plus the Bob Dylan song "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carrol."

No tickets are required for this popular annual event and gates open to the public at 3:00 p.m. In case of inclement weather, the Labor Day concert will be moved to the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.

Aoife O'Donovan's signature style of folk, indie, and American bluegrass influences has come from an eclectic mix of collaborations throughout her career. In addition to releasing two solo albums, she is a member of the band I'm With Her, a current member of a Prairie Home Companion house band, and fronts the seminal

progressive bluegrass band Crooked Still. This Labor Day Concert marks Russell's and O'Donovan's NSO debuts.

### **ABOUT AOIFE O'DONOVAN**

When *USA Today* predicted that Aoife O'Donovan would soon become "the newest darling of the Americana set," it had already been true for quite some time. Called "a vocalist of unerring instinct" by the *New York Times*, O'Donovan is one of the most sought after vocalists and songwriters in the roots music field and her career has allowed her to collaborate with some of the most eminent names in music across a wide variety of genres.

This year finds O'Donovan on the road, including a 32-date solo run of the continental U.S., Hawaii, United Kingdom, and Ireland and her first solo shows in Germany and Sweden. Most of the U.S. shows are part of the Release the Hounds tour, a night of acoustic music with Julian Lage & Chris Eldridge. This summer, O'Donovan will take the stage with her folk trio, I'm With Her, with singers Sara Watkins (Nickel Creek) and Sarah Jarosz. Their "American Acoustic" tour with The Punch Brothers includes a stop at Newport Folk Festival.

O'Donovan's sophomore album, 2016's *In the Magic Hour* - produced by Tucker Martine (The Decemberists, Neko Case) - is a 10-song album full of the singer's honeyed vocals mixed with gauzy, frictionless sounds: splashing cymbals, airy harmonies, the leisurely baritone musings of an electric guitar. Written in the wake of O'Donovan's grandfather's death, *In the Magic Hour* is her most introspective effort yet, an aching exploration of memory and mortality. *Mojo* described the record as "exhilarating and exploratory," while the *New York Times* named "The King of All Birds" one of the Best Songs of 2016.

In 2013, O'Donovan released her debut solo album, *Fossils*, a moody collection of original songs with a country lilt. The record received critical acclaim and was featured on a number of "Best of 2013" lists from outlets like NPR Music, *American Songwriter*, *New York Magazine*, and *No Depression*, among others. *The Guardian* deemed O'Donovan the "next Americana celebrity" and international promotion of *Fossils* included plays at Glastonbury and Roskilde.

For a decade, O'Donovan wielded her instrument with tensile strength as the captivating lead singer of the Boston-based progressive string band Crooked Still. She was a featured vocalist on The Goat Rodeo Sessions, the Grammy-winning album by Yo-Yo Ma, Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer, and Chris Thile, and has collaborated as a guest vocalist with Dave Douglas, Noam Pikelny, Jazz Trumpeter, Joshua Radin, and Jesca Hoop, among others. Aoife has made regular appearances on *A Prairie Home Companion* and, in 2016, was featured as a member of the house band. O'Donovan's songwriting came to the attention of Alison Krauss, who recorded the Aoife-penned track "Lay My Burden Down" on her 2011 album *Paper Airplane*.

### **ABOUT JOHN MORRIS RUSSELL**

A remarkable artist with boundless enthusiasm for music-making of all kinds, John Morris Russell is a modern conductor who engages and enthralls audiences with the full breadth of the orchestral experience. Conductor of the Cincinnati Pops since 2011, Mr. Russell's

diverse programming and electric stage presence have infused new creativity and energy into one of the world's most iconic pops orchestras.

Consistently winning international praise for his extraordinary music-making and visionary leadership, this Ohio native is also Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra in South Carolina where Mr. Russell's commitment has yielded a new level of artistic excellence. He was also recently named Principal Pops Conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, beginning in the 2015-16 season. A popular guest conductor throughout the United States and Canada, he also holds the title of Conductor Laureate with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra in Ontario, Canada, where he served as Music Director for eleven years.

With the Cincinnati Pops, Mr. Russell regularly leads sold-out performances at Cincinnati's Music Hall. Additionally, he conducts the Pops at the Riverbend Music Center and in concerts throughout the Greater Cincinnati region and on tour. Mr. Russell has collaborated with generations of great performers including the late Ray Charles and Rosemary Clooney, as well as Idina Menzel, Vince Gill, Branford Marsalis, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Megan Hilty, Michael McDonald, George Takei, Amy Grant, Brian Wilson, Katharine McPhee and Marvin Winans.

A sought-after guest conductor across the continent, Mr. Russell returned to the Hollywood Bowl in July 2014 to conduct the Los Angeles Philharmonic for a trio of concerts. Other recent engagements include the New York Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, among many other ensembles.

### **ABOUT THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

The 2016–2017 season marks the NSO's 86th, and its seventh and final led by Music Director Christoph Eschenbach, also the Music Director of the Kennedy Center. Founded in 1931, the Orchestra has, throughout its history, been committed to artistic excellence and music education. In 1986, the National Symphony became an artistic affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where it has performed a full season of subscription concerts since the Center opened in 1971. The National Symphony Orchestra regularly participates in events of national and international importance, including performances for state occasions, presidential inaugurations and official holiday celebrations. Its regularly televised holiday appearances for Capitol Concerts and local radio broadcasts on WETA make the NSO one of the most-heard orchestras in the country.

The Orchestra itself numbers 96 musicians who perform approximately 150 concerts each year. These include classical subscription series, pops concerts, summer performances at Wolf Trap and on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, chamber music performances in the Terrace Theater and on the Millennium Stage, and an extensive educational program, with performances designed for ages three years and up, and audience engagement activities, as well. Additionally, the NSO's community engagement projects are nationally recognized, including NSO In Your Neighborhood which comprises a week of approximately 50 performances in schools, churches, community centers, and other neighborhood venues) and NSO Sound Health, which has taken the NSO to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Children's Inn at NIH, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Children's National Medical Center, and Inova Health System. Career development opportunities include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and its Summer Music Institute.

For more information about the NSO, visit [nationalsymphony.org](http://nationalsymphony.org).

For more information about the Kennedy Center, visit [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org).

Patrons 30 and under and active-duty members of the military are invited to join the Kennedy Center's *MyTix* program for special discount offers and chances to win free tickets. For more information, visit [kennedy-center.org/mytix](http://kennedy-center.org/mytix)



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