



KEN FISCHER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AS UMS PRESIDENT --Fischer will step down at end of 16-17 season after 30 years--

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ANN ARBOR, MI (April 7, 2016) — **Kenneth C. Fischer**, president of the University Musical Society of the University of Michigan (UMS), has announced that he will retire from UMS on June 30, 2017, at the conclusion of his 30th year in the job. A long UMS tenure is not unique to Ken; he is only the sixth person to serve as UMS president during its 137-year history after Henry Simmons Frieze (1879-81, 1883-89), Alexander Winchell (1881-83, 1889-91), Francis Kelsey (1891-1927), Charles Sink (1927-68), and Gail Rector (1968-86).

“Ken has been a remarkable leader for UMS. He has brought this organization to global prominence that has changed not only the performing arts scene but also the quality of life in our city and region,” said Stephen R. Forrest, chair of the UMS Board of Directors. “Ken has followed a highly inclusive philosophy of ‘everybody in, nobody out’ that has had an enormous impact on so many people, who under his leadership have developed a lifelong passion for the arts. He will certainly be missed but he leaves a legacy that will continue long into the future.”

Fischer, 71, took the reins of UMS on June 1, 1987. Over the past three decades, he has overseen the organization’s artistic growth and diversification into ongoing commitments to art forms outside of classical music; expansion into K-12, university, and community education programs; and initiatives to put UMS on a secure financial footing. Under Fischer’s visionary leadership, UMS has greatly expanded and diversified its programming and its audiences, deepening its engagement with the University (including relationships with 70 academic units and more than 200 faculty) and southeast Michigan communities; created exemplary partnerships with leading artistic collaborators across the world; taken an active role in commissioning new works; and received significant grants awarded by prominent

foundations that support the arts, including the Wallace Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Major artists and residencies presented during Fischer's time include being one of only four cities in the country to present the Vienna Philharmonic's final tour with Leonard Bernstein (1988), celebrating Bernstein's 70th birthday and Hill Auditorium's 75th; debuts of many artists who were unknown when they were first presented but went on to celebrated careers, most notably Cecilia Bartoli (1993); a celebration of Martha Graham's centenary (1994); a multi-year partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company (2001-2012), which included the presentation of 10 plays as well as the creative development of five others; *Einstein on the Beach* (2012), which launched the final production with the original creators and went on to tour 14 cities in 11 countries; and in-depth work with the Arab-American community in metro Detroit, which launched eight years of global programming focused on specific regions of the world (Arab/Middle East, Asia and the Subcontinent, Africa, and the Americas). UMS has also commissioned, co-commissioned, or co-produced more than 60 works in dance, theater, and music since 1990.

Under Fischer's tenure, UMS was named a 2014 National Medal of Arts recipient, the first university presenter to receive this highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States government. Since his first season in 1987, UMS's budget has grown fourfold, due in large part to expansion of mainstage artistic programs but also to the development of a robust education and community engagement programs.

Fischer is known widely as a caring, supportive, and enthusiastic colleague and mentor. He is legendary in his ability to build relationships and make connections among colleagues, often leading them to unique and fruitful collaborations. Fischer has developed UMS under his philosophy of "EINO" — Everybody In, Nobody Out — which he attributes to his mentor, the late Patrick Hayes of Washington, DC. This philosophy is now intrinsic to UMS's work and guides the organization in building a truly inclusive and multicultural community around all of its mainstage and educational programming.

Fischer has also contributed to the performing arts presenting field as a speaker, workshop leader, panelist, and cultural ambassador to Brazil, China, Lithuania, and Mexico under U.S. State Department auspices. He serves on the boards of directors of National Arts Strategies, International Society for the

Performing Arts (ISPA), Arts Midwest, Sphinx Organization, and Ann Arbor SPARK and has also served on the boards of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) and Chamber Music America (CMA). ISPA honored him with the Patrick Hayes Award in 2003, and APAP and CMA have presented him with their highest recognition through the Fan Taylor Award (APAP, 2011) and the Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award (CMA, 2016). He is an emeritus trustee of the Interlochen Center for the Arts. Locally, he has been recognized by the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan, The Links, Inc., the Ann Arbor Public Schools Foundation, Neutral Zone, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, and others for his contributions to the Ann Arbor community.

A native of Plymouth, MI, Fischer spent considerable time in Washington, D.C. prior to coming to UMS, working as a management consultant with particular focus in higher education (he completed coursework for a PhD candidate in higher education at the University of Michigan) and independent concert production. He is married to professional flutist Penelope Peterson Fischer; they have one son, Matt, who lives with his wife Renee and their two children in California.

Fischer says, "When I look back at my first season at UMS and the season that we are just finishing, I am so proud of how this organization has grown artistically and educationally, and of the astonishing support that our devoted community of audience members and donors provides. Their willingness to take risks means that UMS can program exciting, ground-breaking artistic work that balances the traditional programming that we were known for in our early years. But I want to reassure people: while I get a lot of the credit for UMS's success, I have a terrific team of over 30 colleagues that makes it all happen, and they will continue to do so after I retire as president."

UMS will announce its 2016-17 season, which includes several concerts programmed with Ken's final year in mind, on April 16.

The executive search and recruitment firm Spencer Stuart has been retained and a search committee appointed to assist UMS with the search for a new president. The 12-member search committee includes: Stephen Forrest, chair of the UMS Board; Rachel Bendit, secretary of the UMS Board; Lisa Cook, UMS Board member; Aaron Dworkin, Dean of the U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Linda Gregerson, U-M Professor of English and Literature; Michael Kondziolka, UMS Director of Programming; Tim Lynch, U-M Vice President and General Counsel; Tim Marshall, President & CEO of Bank of Ann

Arbor; Sarah Nicoli, vice chair of the UMS Board; Mike Ross, director of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois; Rhemé Sloan, U-M '14, working at the Houston Symphony; and Dr. James Stanley, UMS Campaign co-chair.

More info: bit.ly/kenfischer **[NOTE FOR JOURNALISTS: this link will be made live on April 7 at 12:01 am]**

ABOUT UMS

One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS (also known as the University Musical Society) contributes to a vibrant cultural community by connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. UMS is an independent non-profit organization affiliated with the University of Michigan, presenting over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season, along with over 100 free educational activities. UMS is part of the University of Michigan's "Victors for Michigan" campaign, reinforcing its commitment to bold artistic leadership, engaged learning through the arts, and access and inclusiveness. UMS was awarded the 2014 National Medal of Arts by President Obama.

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