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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The City of Chicago's downtown, outdoor classical-music program, the Grant Park Music Festival, will celebrate its 75th season on July 1, 2009; and

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WHEREAS, The Grant Park Music Festival was first conceived by Chicago Mayor A. J. Cermak during the Great Depression in 1931, providing free concerts as a way to lift the spirits of city residents; and the following year James Petrillo, the president of the Chicago Federation of Musicians, worked to turn the concerts into a permanent summer tradition; and

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WHEREAS, On July 1, 1935, the Grant Park Concerts made their official debut, commencing with the march from Wagner's Tannhauser; shortly thereafter some of music's biggest stars performed at Grant Park, including violinist Jascha Heifetz, conductor Andre Kostelanetz, and soprano Lily Pons; and

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WHEREAS, In 1943, the Chicago Park District assembled a single resident orchestra, the Grant Park Orchestra, under the direction of Principal Conductor Nicolai Malko; and in 1962, the 100-member Grant Park Chorus was formed by Thomas Peck, who led the group until his death in 1994; and

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WHEREAS, The Festival has presented new works by

1 contemporary composers like John Corigliano, Aaron Jay Kernis,
2 and Michael Torke; and has featured the works of artists like
3 Benny Goodman, Mitch Miller, Poi Dog Pondering, and the Joffrey
4 Ballet; and

5 WHEREAS, The Festival is a treasured Chicago tradition,
6 with audiences that sometimes top 10,000; its Principal
7 Conductor is Carlos Kalmar, its Chorus Director is Christopher
8 Bell, and the outgoing Artistic and General Director is James
9 W. Palermo; and

10 WHEREAS, The Festival will kick off its 75th season
11 celebration on June 10, 2009, with Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto
12 No. 1; and

13 WHEREAS, The Festival's home, Grant Park, has served as a
14 gathering place for wartime rallies and protests,
15 depression-era camps, visiting queens and popes, citywide
16 festivals, and Barack Obama's election-night celebration
17 following his 2008 election as president of the United States;
18 therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
20 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
21 congratulate the City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District,
22 the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Grant Park

1 Orchestral Association on the celebration of the Grant Park
2 Music Festival's 75th season; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
4 presented to the City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District,
5 the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Grant Park
6 Orchestral Association as a symbol of our respect and esteem.