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**ALTOONA NATIVE AND CELEBRATED COMPOSER MICHAEL KOOMAN TO
HEADLINE *CRYSTAL SOIRÉE***

Bedford – Michael Kooman, the internationally acclaimed musician and composer behind the hit Disney Junior animated series *Vampirina*, will perform a New York City-style cabaret show at the 2019 *Crystal Soirée*, “Sparkle & Shine,” on January 26 at the luxurious Omni Bedford Springs Resort. A native of Altoona, Kooman will return to the region where he honed his musical talents to perform at the fundraiser supporting the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Bedford and Bedford County Humane Society.

Upon his graduation from Altoona Area High School, Kooman continued his studies at Carnegie Mellon University, where he met his songwriting partner, Christopher Dimond. The two found perfect harmony, as Kooman’s music combined with Dimond’s lyrics to create musical magic. They found initial success with the musical *Homemade Fusion*, which debuted at CMU in 2006 and has since been performed across the country as well as internationally.

Kooman and Dimond have continued to have success in musical theater, including *The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes*, which recently finished a run at Seattle’s Village Theatre. The production earned rave reviews as Zoe Saylor of the *Seattle Times* wrote “Michael Kooman (music) and Christopher Dimond (book and lyrics) bring everyday authenticity to the fantastical world of musical theater, asserting both the value and absurdity of contemporary American musicals.”

Kooman also has composed music for successful and well-loved musicals such as *Dani Girl*, *Junior Claus*, *Judge Jackie Justice*, *Orphie and the Book of Heroes*, and *The Enlightenment of Percival von Schmootz*. Their most recent musical, *Romantics Anonymous*, debuted to rave reviews and sold-out audiences at Shakespeare’s Globe this fall.

Kooman may be best-known, however, for *Vampirina*, an animated television series that follows a family of vampires as they adjust to life in human society after making the move from Transylvania to Pennsylvania. Kooman has written more than 100 songs for the hit series, which debuted in the fall of 2017 and has been renewed for a third season by Disney Junior. *Vampirina* reaches more than 49 million viewers in 115 countries.

In addition to his work for stage and screen, Kooman has written songs for Patti Lupone, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Patina Miller, Wanda Sykes and others. His list of awards and honors

includes the 2013 Fred Ebb Award, the Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award, the Burton Lane Award from the American Theatre Hall of Fame, and the Samuel French Next Step Award.

Kooman's cabaret performance at *Crystal Soirée* will feature songs from throughout his storied career. As an added treat, Kooman's concert will include a surprise visit by a vocalist from New York City's theater scene. *Crystal Soirée*'s exciting line-up also boasts live and silent auctions, a gourmet three-course dinner, and a live band. The event is scheduled for 5:30 to 11 p.m. on January 26 at Omni Bedford Springs Resort. Proceeds from the event benefit SAMA-Bedford and the Bedford County Humane Society. Tickets are \$150 per person and are available by calling SAMA at (814) 589-3020 or on the Museum's website, www.sama-art.org. Sponsorship and advertising opportunities are available. Special room rates for Omni Bedford Springs Resort also are available by calling the Museum. For more information, please visit www.crystalsoiree.com.