RAFAEL PAYARE MAKES SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT DEBUT WITH THE CSO IN JANUARY CONCERTS AT SYMPHONY CENTER

CSO Principal Bassoon Keith Buncke makes his solo debut with the Orchestra in Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto

January 18 and 20, 2018

CHICAGO—Venezuelan conductor Rafael Payare makes his subscription series debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) in concerts on Thursday, January 18, at 8:00 p.m., and Saturday, January 20, at 8:00 p.m. This appearance follows Payare’s 2015 CSO podium debut at the Ravinia Festival that the Highland Park News hailed as “best classical concert of the Ravinia season so far.” CSO Principal Bassoon Keith Buncke makes his solo debut with the Orchestra in Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto on a program that also includes works by Leonard Bernstein and Béla Bartók.

The program opens with Bernstein’s Symphonic Dances from West Side Story, a suite adapted from Bernstein’s score to the 1961 Academy Award-winning film directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins. The story of star-crossed lovers set in 1950’s New York unfolds on a unique musical backdrop that fuses classical music, distinctive Latin rhythms and jazz and represents one of Bernstein’s most iconic works. This is one of three programs during the CSO’s 2017/18 season that recognize the centenary of the birth of celebrated American composer Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990). The CSO performed Bernstein’s Symphonic Suite from On the Waterfront led by conductor James Gaffigan in October, and performs his Symphony No. 2 (The Age of Anxiety) with conductor Kent Nagano in March 2018.

The program continues with Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto. Written when Mozart was just 18, the lively bassoon concerto displays the composer’s mastery of melody and musical humor while showcasing the instrument’s remarkable agility, range and lyricism. Completing the program is Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra. One of the composer’s best-known works, the five distinctive movements highlight the virtuosic capabilities and unique characteristics of each section of the
Orchestra with the musical material drawing extensively on the folk melodies and harmonies of Bartók’s native Hungary. Thematically, the Concerto for Orchestra explores the journey from darkness into light, moving from stern “Night music” in the first movement and to a thrilling Presto complete with a large-scale fugue in the work’s brilliant finale.

Following his CSO subscription concerts, Payare also makes his podium debut with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, leading a program of works by Bartók and Mahler on Monday, January 22, 2018, at 8 p.m. The distinctive driving rhythms and sharp dissonances of Bartók’s Suite from The Miraculous Mandarin, Op. 19 musically depict the disturbing experiences of modern urban existence and the dangers of materialism found in the grim story by Melchior Lengyl. Mahler’s Symphony No. 1 completes the program. The composer borrowed much of the work’s musical material from one of his early masterpieces, the song cycle Lieder eines fahrenden Gessellen, or Songs of a Wayfarer and it evokes a variety of settings including pastoral landscapes, a funeral procession and a glorious victory.

Renowned for his musicianship and charismatic presence, Rafael Payare is among the most sought-after young conductors today. He is the Chief Conductor of the Ulster Orchestra in Northern Ireland, a position he has held since 2014, and succeeded his mentor Lorin Maazel as Principal Conductor for the Castleton Festival in Virginia in 2015. A graduate of El Sistema in Venezuela, Payare served as Principal Horn of the Simón Bolívar Orchestra before winning First Prize at the Malko International Conducting Competition in May 2012. Payare has led many of the world’s most prestigious orchestras, such as the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Simón Bolívar Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

As the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s youngest member at 24, Principal Bassoon Keith Buncke has already distinguished himself with his exceptional artistry and technical brilliance. Prior to his appointment to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra by Riccardo Muti in July 2015, Buncke served as Principal Bassoon of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra while still a student at the Curtis Institute of Music. A native of Portland, Oregon, Buncke has performed as soloist with the Oregon Symphony for its Children’s Concerts, and was featured in NPR’s From the Top. Additionally, Buncke was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Festival, has participated in the Music Academy of the West, Pacific Music Festival and Aspen Music Festival, and is an alumnus of Interlochen Arts Academy.

Tickets for all CSOA-presented concerts can be purchased by phone at 800-223-7114 or 312-294-3000; online at cso.org, or at the Symphony Center box office: 220 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60604. Discounted student tickets for select concerts can be purchased, subject to availability, online in advance or at the box office on the day of the concert. For group rates, please call 312-294-3040.

Artists, programs and prices are subject to change.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Thursday, January 18, 2018 at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 8:00 p.m.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Rafael Payare, conductor
Keith Buncke, bassoon

BERNSTEIN Symphonic Dances from West Side Story
MOZART Bassoon Concerto
BARTÓK Concerto for Orchestra

Tickets: $34 - 221

Civic Orchestra of Chicago

Monday, January 22, 2018, 8:00 p.m.

Civic Orchestra of Chicago
Rafael Payare, conductor

BARTÓK Suite from The Miraculous Mandarin, Op. 19
MAHLER Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Free and open to the public; tickets are required

Featured Artists for this Performance:
Rafael Payare, conductor
Keith Buncke, CSO Principal Bassoon

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra: www.cso.org and www.csosoundsandstories.org

Founded by Theodore Thomas in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. Since 2010, the preeminent conductor Riccardo Muti has served as its 10th music director. Yo-Yo Ma is the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, and Samuel Adams and Elizabeth Ogonek are its Mead Composers-in-Residence.

From baroque through contemporary music, the CSO commands a vast repertoire. Its renowned musicians annually perform more than 150 concerts, most at Symphony Center in Chicago and, each summer, at the suburban Ravinia Festival. They regularly tour nationally and internationally. Since 1892, the CSO has made 60 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents.

People around the globe listen to weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings on the WFMT radio network and online at cso.org/radio. Recordings by the CSO have earned 62 Grammy Awards, including two in 2011 for Muti’s recording with the CSO and Chorus of Verdi’s Messa da Requiem (Muti’s first of eight releases with the CSO to date). Find details on these and many other CSO recordings at www.cso.org/resound.

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus (Duain Wolfe, Director and Conductor) and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, a training ensemble for emerging professionals. Through its prestigious Symphony Center Presents series, the
CSOA presents guest artists and ensembles from a variety of genres—classical, jazz, world, and contemporary.

The Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO offers community and education programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds. Through the Institute and other activities, including a free annual concert led by Muti, the CSO is committed to using the power of music to create connections and build community.

The CSO is supported by thousands of patrons, volunteers and institutional and individual donors. The CSO’s music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation. The Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.