CHICAGO NATIVE AMIR ELSAFFAR AND MIKE REED BRING COMPELLING PROJECTS TO SCP JAZZ SERIES

Chicago-based Drummer Mike Reed Opens the Evening with Music from Flesh & Bone

Chicago-Born Trumpeter Amir ElSaffar Unites Chicago Jazz Tradition with Middle Eastern Heritage

Friday, February 9, at 8 p.m.

CHICAGO—Trumpeter Amir ElSaffar and his Rivers of Sound Orchestra bring their cross-cultural sonic tapestry to Symphony Center on Friday, February 9, at 8 p.m., as part of the Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz series. Chicago-based jazz drummer Mike Reed opens the evening with music from his powerful project Flesh & Bone.

Building upon the creative musical ideas associated with his other groups, trumpeter Amir ElSaffar’s 17-piece Rivers of Sound Orchestra combines elements of jazz and contemporary classical music with the rich musical heritage of the Middle East. Performing music from their acclaimed debut album Not Two, the ensemble features both traditionally western and uniquely Middle Eastern instruments, including strings, winds and various percussion, and features ElSaffar performing on trumpet, voice and santur, a Persian hammered dulcimer.

Opening the program is Mike Reed’s seven-piece ensemble Flesh & Bone—Greg Ward, alto saxophone; Tim Haldeman, tenor saxophone; Ben Lamar Gay, cornet; Jason Stein, bass clarinet; Jason Roebke, bass; Marvin Tate, vocals; and Mike Reed, drums. Formed in the wake of a violent, racially-charged incident Reed endured while traveling with his quartet abroad, Flesh & Bone serves as a musical reflection on that experience. An expansion of Reed’s traditional quartet, Flesh & Bone features rich, detailed compositions arranged for the ensemble of winds, bass and drums, and is augmented by video created by Kim Alpert.
Trumpeter, santur player and vocalist Amir ElSaffar has built a career drawing upon diverse musical traditions. Born in Chicago and a former member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, ElSaffar trained as a classical trumpeter at DePaul University, absorbing the jazz and blues traditions of his hometown throughout his young life. Upon winning the Caruso Jazz Trumpet Competition in 2001, ElSaffar traveled to Iraq, his father's homeland, to study with the few surviving masters of Maqam – the tonal systems that form the basis of Middle Eastern music. He spent five years pursuing these masters across the Middle East and Europe, learning to speak Arabic, sing maqam and play the santur. ElSaffar's travels inspired him to combine Middle Eastern musical languages with jazz and other styles of contemporary music. He currently leads four critically-acclaimed ensembles: Two Rivers, the Amir ElSaffar Quintet, Safaafir and the Alwan Ensemble, and has released six albums as leader.

German-born drummer Mike Reed is a musician, composer and arts presenter based in Chicago. He is also the founding director of the Pitchfork Music Festival and the current programming chair of the Chicago Jazz Festival. An active performer on Chicago’s jazz and improvisational music scene, Reed leads several renowned groups including the improvisation-heavy quintet Loose Assembly, octet Living by Lanterns, and is also a member of the collective trio Artifacts. His long-running jazz quartet People, Places & Things has collaborated with such luminaries as Ira Sullivan, Art Hoyle and Craig Taborn. In conjunction with his career as a performer, Reed's drive to enrich the Chicago arts scene has led him to open the performing arts venue Constellation, as well as the Hungry Brain, a neighborhood venue for live, creative music and socially-driven public programs.

Tickets for all Symphony Center Presents Jazz series 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.

The Symphony Center Presents Jazz series is sponsored by Exelon.

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Dena ElSaffar, violin, viola, joza
John Escreet, piano
Ole Mathisen, tenor saxophone
Aakash Mittal, alto saxophone
JD Parran, bass saxophone, clarinet
Mohamed Ibrahim Saleh, oboe, English horn
Miles Okazaki, guitar
Tim Moore, percussion
Tareq Abboushi, buzuq
Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone
Adam Cruz, drums
Rajna Swaminathan, mrdungam

Mike Reed’s Flesh & Bone

Greg Ward, alto saxophone
Tim Haldeman, tenor saxophone
Ben Lamar Gay, cornet
Jason Stein, bass clarinet
Jason Roebke, bass
Marvin Tate, vocals
Mike Reed, drums
Kim Alpert, video

Tickets: $24 - $76

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**Featured Artists for this Performance:**

Amir ElSaffar
Mike Reed

**The Chicago Symphony Orchestra:** [www.cso.org](http://www.cso.org) and [www.csosoundsandstories.org](http://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](http://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](http://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. Bank of America is the Global Sponsor of the CSO. 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.