JOHN BEASLEY BRINGS HIS GRAMMY-NOMINATED MONK'ESTRA PROJECT TO SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS JAZZ SERIES

Special Guest Grégoire Maret Joins
John Beasley’s Big-Band Tribute to Thelonious Monk

Saxophonist Melissa Aldana Opens Program in Symphony Center Debut

Friday, January 26, at 8 p.m.

CHICAGO—Grammy-nominated pianist and bandleader John Beasley brings his MONK’estra project to the Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz series on Friday, January 26, at 8 p.m. The 15-piece big band project captures the spirit of Thelonious Monk’s singular music through off-beat melodies and humor, strange beauty and unbounded swing. The group is joined by special guest Grégoire Maret on harmonica. The evening opens with Chilean saxophonist Melissa Aldana, who performs with her band for a SCP Jazz series debut.

The latest project of pianist John Beasley’s diverse musical career, MONK’estra celebrates the music of legendary jazz pianist and composer Thelonious Monk. Formed in anticipation of Monk's centennial year in 2017, Beasley’s MONK’estra big band performs compositions from Monk’s singular catalogue of tunes adapted for large ensemble. Since the group’s formation, Beasley and MONK’estra have released two albums, MONK’estra Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 respectively, both of which have been nominated for Grammy Awards—including 2018 nominations for Best Large Jazz Ensemble and Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Cappella, for MONK’estra Vol. 2. Drawing upon years of experience composing for film, television and countless jazz groups, Beasley crafts arrangements that infuse Monk’s distinctive musical voice with New Orleans spirit, hip-hop, Afro-Cuban rhythms and atmospheric colors. Beasley and MONK’estra are joined by special guest and close collaborator, harmonica phenom Grégoire Maret.
Pianist John Beasley leads a multi-faceted career as a performer, composer, arranger and bandleader, juggling various combos and his big band project MONK'extra, which celebrated the release of its first album last fall. As a performer, Beasley can be heard in hit films such as James Bond: Spectre and Skyfall, Finding Dory and Finding Nemo. He spent a decade composing scores for iconic TV shows like Cheers, Fame and Star Trek: Next Generation. Beasley is currently Music Director for the Thelonious Monk Institute, directing UNESCO's International Jazz Day global concerts. To celebrate Thelonious Monk's Centennial Year (2017), Beasley and his big band MONK'extra embarked on a year-long international tour with stops in Berlin, Tokyo, Paris and New York.

Grégoire Maret is one of the most sought-after harmonica players in the world, often compared to legends Toots Thielemans and Stevie Wonder. After receiving a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Jazz Album with the Pat Metheny Group in 2005, Maret embarked on a two-year tour with the world-class bassist Marcus Miller and later joined Herbie Hancock’s band. Maret has served as a sideman for most of his career and is the subject of Frédéric Bailleul’s documentary Sideman. In 2012, Maret released his first, self-titled album as a leader, featuring jazz artists like Cassandra Wilson, Marcus Miller and Toots Thielemans.

A native of Santiago, Chile, saxophonist Melissa Aldana and her band perform an opening set. Joined by bassist Pablo Menares, drummer Jochen Rueckert and trumpeter Philip Dizack, Aldana performs selections from her 2016 release, Back Home, which explores the influences of her early saxophone heroes, from Sonny Rollins to her own father, saxophonist Marcos Aldana. In the piano-less ensemble setting, the tightly-knit rhythm unit supports Aldana’s cool, laid-back solo stylings, underscoring their collective groove and melodicism.

Melissa Aldana discovered her passion for jazz at a young age, studying with her father, renowned saxophonist Marcos Aldana. She emigrated from Chile in 2007 to pursue jazz in the United States, and in 2013, became the first female instrumentalist to win the prestigious Thelonious Monk Competition. She is also a recipient of the Martin E. Segal Award from Jazz at Lincoln Center and a double recipient of the Altazor Award, Chile’s highly prestigious national arts prize. Aldana has released four albums over the course of her young career, most recently Back Home (2016) – an album inspired by her first encounter with a saxophone. Aldana and her band, Crash Trio, tour extensively worldwide, performing at both large outdoor stages and intimate clubs, constantly expanding and exploring their sound.

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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Symphony Center Presents
Friday, January 26, 2018, 8 p.m.
John Beasley's MONK'extra
Melissa Aldana

Program to be announced from the stage.

John Beasley's MONK'extra
John Beasley, piano
Grégoire Maret, harmonica

Melissa Aldana, tenor saxophone
Pablo Menares, bass
Jochen Rueckert, drums
Philip Dizack, trumpet

Tickets: $24 - $76

Featured Artist for this Performance:
John Beasley
Grégoire Maret
Melissa Aldana

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. 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.