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CHINA NCPA ORCHESTRA RETURNS TO SYMPHONY CENTER WITH PIPA VIRTUOSO WU MAN, A U.S. PREMIERE AND BRAHMS’ FOURTH SYMPHONY

Conductor Lū Jia Leads the Ensemble, with Soloists Ning Feng on Violin and Wu Man on Pipa

Saturday, October 28, at 8 p.m.

CHICAGO—The China National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) Orchestra, led by Lū Jia, Music Director and Chief Conductor of the NCPA Orchestra, performs on Saturday, October 28, at 8 p.m., in a Symphony Center Presents Special Concert. The China NCPA Orchestra’s Symphony Center performance in 2014 marked its North American debut, and it returns this month with a program that includes works by Harrison and Brahms, as well as the U.S. premiere of a work by Chinese composer Zhao Jiping. Featured soloists include Wu Man on pipa and Ning Feng on violin.

The program opens with the U.S. premiere of Zhao Jiping’s Violin Concerto No. 1 featuring Ning Feng as soloist. A China NCPA commission, Zhao’s violin concerto incorporates European concerto forms with traditional Chinese music. Zhao first gained international recognition through his film scores, most notably Raise the Red Lantern (1991), To Live (1994) and Farewell My Concubine (1993). In 2000, he was commissioned by Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble to compose a chamber work, Moon over Guan Mountains, scored for pipa, sheng, cello and tabla. An established performer in China, Ning Feng recently has performed internationally with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Budapest Festival Orchestra.
Composed for the four-stringed, lute-like instrument, Lou Harrison’s Pipa Concerto received its premiere in 1997 with Grammy nominee Wu Man as soloist. The premiere performance marked the 80th birthday of the American composer, who frequently drew on non-Western musical sources for his works. Wu Man previously performed this concerto at Symphony Center in 2007 on subscription concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and is featured on the Grammy-nominated 2008 CSO Resound recording Traditions and Transformations: Sounds of Silk Road Chicago.

The program concludes with Brahms’ Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98. In his final symphony, the composer demonstrates a mastery of form and thematic development, building an entire melody from the replication of a single interval. The work’s tension between tradition and innovation appeals to the musically literate while its raw energy is appealing to all.

Lü Jia is chief conductor of the China NCPA Orchestra as well as music director and chief conductor of the Macao Orchestra. He has served as music director of Verona Opera in Italy and artistic director of the Spain’s Santa Cruz de Tenerife Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted nearly 2,000 orchestral concerts and opera performances in Europe and the United States and is the first Asian conductor to be appointed music director of a prominent Italian opera house. In 2007, Italian President Giorgio Napolitano bestowed the President’s Prize on Lü for his exceptional contribution to Italian culture.

Chinese violinist Ning Feng performs regularly in his native country, as well as with major international and local orchestras, in recital and with the Dragon Quartet, which he founded in 2012. Recent highlights for Ning include debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and a European tour with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and Jaap van Zweden. Ning was first-prize winner of the 2005 Michael Hill International Violin Competition (New Zealand) and the International Paganini Competition in 2006. Ning plays a 1721 Stradivari violin, known as the “MacMillan.”

Grammy Award-nominated musician Wu Man is the world’s premier pipa virtuoso and a leading ambassador of Chinese music. Wu has paved a diverse and international career for herself, soloing with many of the world’s major orchestras and collaborating with prestigious ensembles including Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Project. Wu’s innovative approach to a traditional Chinese instrument has broken musical barriers, finding places for the pipa in new solo works, electronic and jazz music, as well as in theater productions. Wu can be heard on more than 40 albums, including the Grammy Award-winning Sing Me Home with the Silk Road Ensemble.

Established in 2010, the China NCPA Orchestra is the resident orchestra of the National Centre for the Performing Arts of China in Beijing. Its chief conductor is Lü Jia, who took up the post in 2011. The orchestra has gained critical acclaim for its performances in NCPA’s orchestral concerts and opera productions of classic repertoire, as well as newly commissioned works.
Tickets for all Symphony Center Presents Special 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.

### Symphony Center Presents
**Special Concert**

- Saturday, October 28, 8 p.m.
- China NCPA Orchestra
- Lü Jia, conductor
- Ning Feng, violin
- Wu Man, pipa

- ZHAO JIPING Violin Concerto No.1 (United States premiere)
- HARRISON Pipa Concerto
- BRAHMS Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98

Tickets: $25-$85

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**Featured Artists for this Performance:**

- **China NCPA Orchestra**
- Lü Jia, conductor
- Ning Feng, violin
- Wu Man, pipa

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

Founded in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. Since 2010, the pre-eminent 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 59 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.