



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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News

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**THE BAD PLUS WELCOMES SPECIAL GUEST KURT ROSENWINKEL  
ON A SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS JAZZ SERIES DOUBLE BILL  
WITH SINGER JOSÉ JAMES**

**The Bad Plus Performs Selections from their Latest Album *Never Stop II*  
Featuring Guitar Virtuoso Kurt Rosenwinkel**

**Genre-Crossing Singer José James Makes Symphony Center Debut with  
Tribute to R&B Singer-Songwriter Bill Withers**

**Friday, March 15, at 8 p.m.**

CHICAGO—The 2018/19 Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz series continues on [Friday, March 15, at 8 p.m.](#) with the return of innovative jazz trio The Bad Plus, featuring special guest guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel. Vocalist José James makes his Symphony Center debut with a tribute to legendary R&B singer-songwriter Bill Withers in a program titled *Lean on Me*.

Since their inception in 2000, The Bad Plus has brought their genre-defying sound that melds rock, pop, modern jazz and classical influences to a diverse repertoire that ranges from Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and Black Sabbath's "Iron Man" to Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. This Symphony Center appearance of The Bad Plus follows the release of their 13th studio album, *Never Stop II*, a new collection of all-original material. Conceived as a sequel to their 2010 album *Never Stop*—their first collection of completely self-penned compositions—*Never Stop II* also introduces Orrin Evans, who took up the group's piano chair after the departure of pianist Ethan Iverson in early 2018. In this special SCP performance, the group invites like-minded guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel, whose angular improvisation is tempered by a shimmering, crystalline tone and a fluidly lyrical approach to his instrument.

RICCARDO MUTI  
Zell Music Director

HELEN ZELL  
Chair, Board of Trustees

JEFF ALEXANDER  
President

YO-YO MA  
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Vocalist José James has forged a unique sound by bridging elements of R&B and hip-hop with modern jazz. In his Symphony Center debut, he celebrates the 80th birthday of R&B legend Bill Withers with the singer's most beloved hits such as "Use Me," "Ain't No Sunshine" and "Lovely Day." Though Withers' music gets an updated treatment in the hands of James and his bandmates, the timelessness of his songs shines through their irresistibly catchy melodies and messages of the power of human connection. James' soulful baritone is backed by a versatile, grooving band that includes keyboardist Takeshi Ohbayashi, guitarist Marcus Machado, bassist Aneesa Strings and drummer Aaron Steele.

José James' unique brand of vocal jazz infused with soul, R&B and spoken word has earned him the title of "a jazz singer for the hip-hop generation." His music draws as much from the likes of jazz greats John Coltrane and Billie Holiday as iconic R&B singers Marvin Gaye and Terry Callier, bridging these idioms into a sound uniquely his own. James has released eight albums as a leader or co-leader, including two volumes dedicated to the music of Billie Holiday and Bill Withers. The latter, titled *Lean On Me*, was released on Blue Note Records in September 2018.

Hailing from Minneapolis, The Bad Plus has avoided easy categorization since their formation nearly two decades ago, winning critical acclaim and a legion of fans worldwide with their creativity, unique sound and flair for live performance. The intensely collaborative trio has constantly searched for rules to break and boundaries to cross, bridging genres and techniques while exploring the infinite possibilities of three exceptional musicians working in perfect sync. The band consists of founding members Reid Anderson on bass and Dave King on drums, with new member Orrin Evans on piano—a group of passionate collaborators with no single "leader." *Never Stop II* is the first full-length release from this lineup, featuring all original music with each member contributing fresh compositions.

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](http://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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**Symphony Center Presents  
Jazz**

**Friday, March 15, 2019, at 8:00 p.m.**

**Lean on Me: José James Celebrates Bill Withers**

**José James**, vocals

**Takeshi Ohbayashi**, keyboards

**Marcus Machado**, guitar

**Aneesa Strings**, bass

**Aaron Steele**, drums

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**The Bad Plus featuring Kurt Rosenwinkel**

**Orrin Evans**, piano

**Reid Anderson**, bass

**David King**, drums

**Kurt Rosenwinkel**, guitar

Tickets: \$34-\$221

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**Featured Artists for this Performance:**

[The Bad Plus](#)

[Kurt Rosenwinkel, guitar](#)

[José James](#)

**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 pre-eminent conductor Riccardo Muti has served as its 10th music director. Yo-Yo Ma is the Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, Missy Mazzoli is Mead Composer-in-Residence and Erina Yashima is the Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice.

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 61 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. 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.