VETERAN CSO MUSICIANS TO RETIRE AT CONCLUSION OF 2019/20 SEASON
AND TO RECEIVE THEODORE THOMAS MEDALLION IN UPCOMING SEASON

CSO Violin Paul Phillips, Jr. and Clarinet/Bass Clarinet J. Lawrie Bloom Mark 40-Year Careers

CHICAGO—On June 30, 2020, two veteran Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) musicians will retire, each marking careers that span four decades. Violin Paul Phillips, Jr. and Clarinet/Bass Clarinet J. Lawrie Bloom, who both joined the Orchestra in 1980, conclude their tenures at the end of the 2019/20 season but will be recognized with the Theodore Thomas Medallion for Distinguished Service in an upcoming season. Named for Theodore Thomas (1835–1905), the Orchestra’s founder and first music director, the medallion is presented to retiring musicians in recognition of outstanding service.

A member of the first violin section, Paul Phillips, Jr. was appointed in 1980 by music director Sir Georg Solti. Prior to his CSO appointment, he was a member of the Indianapolis and Detroit symphony orchestras, also performing as a member of the Indianapolis String Quartet. In addition to performing in the CSO, Phillips has also been a member of the Music of the Baroque, as well as several chamber music groups, including a trio with former Principal Flute Donald Peck and pianist Melody Lord, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra String Quartet with former CSO Concertmaster Samuel Magad. Phillips initially studied violin with William Taylor, father of CSO Assistant Concertmaster David Taylor, in Canton, Ohio, later attending the Cleveland Institute of Music and studying violin and chamber music with William Kroll of the Kroll Quartet and Endre Granat, assistant concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra.

Appointed in 1980 to play clarinet and bass clarinet by music director Sir Georg Solti, J. Lawrie Bloom holds the distinction of being the first bass clarinetist to solo with a major American orchestra. He has appeared with the CSO as soloist three times: in January 1995 performing Ian Krouse’s Concerto for Bass Clarinet and Large Orchestra with conductor James DePreist, in October 2011 performing the U.S. premiere of Thea Musgrave’s Autumn Sonata with conductor Susanna Mälkki, and most recently in February 2020 for the world premiere of Nicolas Bacri’s Ophelia’s Tears commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra through the generous support of Helen Zell. Prior to joining the CSO, he was a member of the Phoenix Symphony and Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra, as well as the Vancouver and Cincinnati symphony orchestras. Throughout his career, Bloom—who has been a senior lecturer at Northwestern University for 28 years—has been an active instructor and chamber musician having performed frequently on the Northwestern University Winter Chamber Music Festival, the CSO’s Chamber Music Series, and the MusicNOW contemporary music series. He is also a member of the Chicago-based chamber group Civitas whose recording Jin Yin was recognized by the Chicago Tribune as one of the 10 best of 2020. Bloom is a founder and artistic co-director of the Chesapeake Music
Festival and has also been a participant in the Ambler, Grand Teton, Ravinia, Skaneateles, Spoleto and Mostly Mozart festivals. A native of Ohio, Bloom first studied with Roger McKinney and later with Anthony Gigliotti.

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