RENOVED SOUTH AFRICAN PIANIST ABDULLAH IBRAHIM MAKES HIS SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS JAZZ SERIES DEBUT

Program Features Blend of Traditional African Songs and American Jazz

Friday, February 28, at 8:00 p.m.

CHICAGO— NEA Jazz Master Abdullah Ibrahim and his longtime septet Ekaya make their Symphony Center debut on Friday, February 28, at 8:00 p.m., for a concert on the Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz series. Ibrahim and Ekaya perform a program that showcases their unique style that combines South African jazz, bebop, post-bop and folk music styles.

Now more than 25 years after the end of the apartheid, the 85-year-old South African-born pianist Ibrahim continues to perform music that is influenced by traditional songs from his homeland, as well as gospel and American jazz. This program features hits from across his career, as well as selections from his critically acclaimed 2019 album The Balance. Ibrahim’s playing is a seamless give and take with the members of Ekaya, who include Noah Jackson, bass and cello; Will Terrill, drums; Cleave Guyton Jr., alto saxophone, flute, clarinet and piccolo; Lance Bryant, tenor saxophone; Andrae Murchison, trombone and trumpet; and Marshall McDonald, baritone saxophone.

Iconic South African pianist Abdullah Ibrahim is an NEA Jazz Master and the recipient of a 2017 German Jazz Trophy, South Africa’s Order of Ikhamanga, an honorary doctorate from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and the South African Music Lifetime Achievement Award. His storied career includes membership in one of South Africa’s first major jazz ensembles, the Jazz Epistles. The group’s two-year stretch of success included the first recording of a full-length jazz LP by black South African musicians before the group was broken up under targeted pressure from the pro-apartheid government. Ibrahim left the country and remained in exile for much of the ensuing three decades, performing with renowned musicians across the U.S. and Europe. Ibrahim founded the jazz septet Ekaya in 1983 and the M7 Academy for South African Musicians in Cape Town in 1999. Ibrahim’s singular career includes more than 100 album credits and performances across the globe. When he is not touring,
Ibrahim splits time between New York and Cape Town, spearheading efforts to make music and music education more accessible for children.

Abdullah Ibrahim’s Ekaya (“Home”) septet is heralded as one of his most popular musical ventures. Founded in 1983, the group began as a vehicle for Ibrahim’s powerful musical statements of protest during South Africa’s Apartheid era. In the ensuing decades, Ekaya has prevailed as a leading voice in the jazz world.

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.

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**Symphony Center Presents Jazz**

**Friday, February 28, at 8:00 p.m.**

**Abdullah Ibrahim, piano**

**Ekaya**

Cleave Guyton Jr., alto saxophone, clarinet, flute and piccolo
Lance Bryant, tenor saxophone
Marshall McDonald, baritone saxophone
Andrae Murchison, trombone and trumpet
Noah Jackson, bass and cello
Will Terrill, drums

**Tickets:** $28-$89

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**Featured Artists for this Performance:**

Abdullah Ibrahim, piano

**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. Missy Mazzoli is Mead Composer-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 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. 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. 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.