CHICAGO-BASED DRUMMER MAKAYA MCCRAVEN BLURS BOUNDARIES OF JAZZ AND ELECTRONIC MUSIC FOR HIS DEBUT ON SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS JAZZ SERIES

In These Times Program Features Matt Gold, Marquis Hill, Junius Paul, Greg Ward and Brandee Younger

Friday, January 31, at 8:00 p.m.

CHICAGO—Chicago-based drummer and producer Makaya McCraven makes his Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz series debut on Friday, January 31, at 8:00 p.m., with a new program titled In These Times. This multimedia program that blends jazz and electronic music with a video collage also features several guest artists, many with Chicago ties.

McCraven brings a musical vision with influences of West African and hip-hop rhythms to his experiments with beats and tape loops of improvised music. For this appearance, McCraven invites several special guests including guitarist Matt Gold, trumpeter Marquis Hill, bassist Junius Paul, saxophonist Greg Ward and harpist Brandee Younger to perform a new program titled In These Times. The multimedia performance features free jazz and improvisation that incorporates the musical experiments these musicians developed in the studio weaving in socio-political themes, as well as a video collage created by Kim Alpert that includes archival footage of black activists and influential music innovators.

Based in Chicago for more than a decade, prolific producer of “organic beat music” Makaya McCraven experiments with the bounds of jazz and electronic music, exploring the frontiers of...
both genres and pushing back against conventional categorization. His breakthrough album, *In the Moment*, was released in 2015 and received widespread acclaim, proving to be a dramatic statement that quickly launched McCraven into the vanguard of not only internationally-known jazz artists, but also a niche genre of next-wave composer-producers. His recently released *Universal Beings*, a 2xLP album featuring an A-list of “new” jazz players from New York, Chicago, London and Los Angeles, has been named among the best jazz albums of 2018 by Rolling Stone, The New York Times, Billboard, NPR Music, Chicago Tribune and many others.

Matt Gold is a guitarist and composer based in Chicago whose work pulls from diverse traditions of electric and acoustic music. He has performed in venues across North America, Europe and Asia and also has written music for films. Gold’s trio music features electric bassist Bryan Doherty and drummer Jeremy Cunningham, and draws on folk and experimental music to create wide-reaching sonic atmospheres that surround his clear, deliberate melodies. He also co-leads the instrumental duo Sun Speak (with drummer Nate Friedman) and the singer/songwriter duo Storm Jameson (with vocalist/guitarist Jim Tashjian). As a guitarist and collaborator, Gold performs and records with artists including Makaya McCraven, Greg Ward, Sara Serpa, Hood Smoke and Jamila Woods. He co-curates the Flood Music concert series and record label.

Chatham native Marquis Hill blends a career of exceptional performance with a passion for teaching and music-based outreach. As a young musician growing up in Chicago, Hill participated in the South Shore Youth Jazz Ensemble, Ravinia Jazz Scholars program and the Ravinia Steans Jazz Institute. Hill holds an undergraduate degree from Northern Illinois University and a Master of Music degree in jazz pedagogy from DePaul University and regularly performs with his ensemble, the Blacktet, across the country. Hill’s list of accolades includes first prizes from the 2012 International Trumpet Guild Jazz Competition and the 2014 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Trumpet Competition.

Greg Ward regularly composes for and performs with some of the most esteemed music institutions in Chicago. Born in Peoria, Ward’s relocation to Chicago allowed for numerous compositional collaborations including two pieces for the International Contemporary Ensemble, another for the Peoria Ballet Company, a commission from the Jazz Institute of Chicago and a quartet composition for the CSO Chamber Series.

Harpist Brandee Younger continues to build on the sonic legacies of Dorothy Ashby and Alice Coltrane with unparalleled musicianship and a fearless exploration of the avant-garde. As the leader of the Brandee Younger Jazz Harp Quartet, she has appeared on six recordings including 2019’s *Soul Awakening*. Her career as a collaborative musician includes appearances on another 21 recordings and performances with numerous artists including Ravi Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, Jack DeJohnette, Reggie Workman, Common, John Legend and Lauryn Hill.

Artist Kim Alpert believes in human-centric design and integrating technology with strategy in her time-based projects. With a background in fine art, music and carpentry, Alpert brings an attention to detail and diverse styles to both her art and commercial work. Her art has been
exhibited at the Stony Island Arts Bank, SOFA Expo, the Modern Wing at the Art Institute of Chicago and Facets Cinematheque, and she has an interactive room to visualize and create sound as part of the permanent collection at the National Music Center/Studio Bell in Canada. Alpert also tours internationally with performance projects building digital and analog video systems.

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://www.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, January 31, at 8:00 p.m.**

Makaya McCraven *In These Times* featuring Matt Gold, Marquis Hill, Junius Paul, Greg Ward and Brandee Younger

Makaya McCraven, drums
Matt Gold, guitar
Marquis Hill, trumpet
Junius Paul, bass
Greg Ward, saxophone
Brandee Younger, harp
Macie Stewart, violin
Lia Kohl, cello

Tickets: $24-$76

**Featured Conductor and Artists for this Performance:**

Makaya McCraven, drums
Matt Gold, guitar
Marquis Hill, trumpet
Junius Paul, bass
Greg Ward, saxophone
Brandee Younger, harp

**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 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. 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.