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Press Contact:
[Hannah Sundwall](#)
312-294-3083

THE CSO AFRICAN AMERICAN NETWORK ANNOUNCES SPECIAL PROGRAMS PLANNED FOR THE 2023/24 SEASON AT SYMPHONY CENTER

CHICAGO — The African American Network (AAN) of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) announces its 2023/24 Season, celebrating Black composers, conductors and performers across musical genres including classical, jazz, new music and gospel. The six African American Network events begin October 27 and continue through April 25, taking place at Symphony Center before and after concert performances and including artist meet-and-greet and networking opportunities. AAN program highlights include a preconcert panel discussion presented by Chicago Humanities with members of the Blacknificent 7 — a composer collective of which CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery is a member — an afterparty with the CSO Latino Alliance to celebrate the artistic collaboration between the CSO and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and more.

A volunteer group of the CSO, the [African American Network](#) (AAN) was established in 2016 and seeks to serve and encourage individuals, families, educators, students, musicians, composers and businesses to discover and experience the timeless beauty of music. The group encourages individuals and their families to discover and experience timeless music with other enthusiasts at concerts, receptions and educational events. Membership to the African American Network is free and open to all. Membership and 2023/24 Season AAN event information is available at cso.org/aan.

The CSO African American Network offers its members the chance to interact with CSO artists. Membership also includes the opportunity to develop professional contacts to broaden your network and invitations to open rehearsals to get a behind-the-scenes look at how the CSO prepares for a concert. Specially priced tickets are available for a selection of concerts throughout the season.

Below is a list of the events in the 2023/24 Season African American Network series. A season subscription package is available, allowing audiences to choose three or more

African American Network season concerts to secure the best seats now. Specially priced individual tickets are also available, with more information at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org).

Samara Joy (October 27)

Winner of the Best New Artist and Best Jazz Vocal Album at the 2023 Grammys, 23-year-old jazz vocalist Samara Joy makes her Symphony Center debut in the opening concert of the 30th season of the acclaimed Symphony Center Presents Jazz series. With a style evoking Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan, Samara Joy will offer an intoxicating contemporary twist on classic jazz artistry. To cap the evening, the AAN opens its 2023/24 Season of events with “Joy After Dark: The AAN Afterparty.” Specialty drinks and velvety desserts will be on offer for AAN guests in Grainger Ballroom following the concert.

Montgomery and the Blacknificent 7 (December 3)

Join AAN members for a preconcert panel discussion presented by Chicago Humanities with members of the Blacknificent 7, a cohort of cutting-edge contemporary composers, and moderated by WFMT’s LaRob K. Rafael. Following the performance – the first CSO MusicNOW contemporary music program of the 2023/24 Season – the AAN will host a meet-and-greet with the composers, including CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery, and the musicians.

Christian McBride’s The Movement Revisited (February 2)

Eight-time Grammy Award-winning bassist, bandleader and host of NPR’s *Jazz Night in America* Christian McBride brings his monumental musical tribute inspired by the words of Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Muhammad Ali and President Barack Obama.

Sheku Kanneh-Mason Plays Elgar (February 15)

The 24-year-old UK-based cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason, hailed by *The New Yorker* as “a cellist of blazing sensitivity,” makes his CSO debut performing Elgar’s rhapsodic Cello Concerto.

Gateways Festival Orchestra featuring Take 6 (April 19)

Comprised of the finest classical musicians in the country, the all-Black Gateways Festival Orchestra concludes its week-long Chicago residency with a Symphony Center concert featuring Take 6, the Grammy Award-winning a cappella group Quincy Jones called the “baddest vocal cats on the planet.” The program highlights works by African American composers including Chicago native Margaret Bonds, whose *Montgomery Variations* was inspired by the civil rights work of Martin Luther King, Jr.

CSO x Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis ([April 25](#))

Join members of the CSO Latino Alliance and African American Network for a postconcert event to recognize and celebrate the artistic collaboration between the CSO and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, led by legendary trumpeter and nine-time Grammy Award-winner Wynton Marsalis and six-time Grammy Award-winning conductor Giancarlo Guerrero. The evening's concert features selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, alternating between the original orchestral version performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and imaginative new jazz arrangements presented by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Ticket and Patron Information

African American Network individual tickets and season subscriptions are now available at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org) or by phone at [312-294-3000](tel:312-294-3000).

With the African American Network subscription package, patrons can **choose three or more African American Network season concerts to secure the best seats now, plus get access to additional benefits**. Individual African American Network tickets start at \$40 and include access to the AAN reception associated with the performance.

Additional subscriber benefits include:

- Access to prime seating by securing your seats for the African American Network season.
- Access to subscriber benefits, including the ability to exchange tickets into other concerts.
- Opportunity to purchase additional Symphony Center concerts for \$40 or less when purchasing an African American Network season subscription.
- Waived subscription fee.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra: [cso.org](https://www.cso.org)

Founded by Theodore Thomas in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the world's great orchestras. Riccardo Muti, the Orchestra's distinguished 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, was recently named Music Director Emeritus for Life beginning with the 2023/24 Season. Jessie Montgomery is Mead Composer-in-Residence, and Hilary Hahn is CSO Artist-in-Residence.

The CSO commands a vast repertoire, from baroque through contemporary music. Its renowned musicians perform more than 150 concerts annually, in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center in downtown Chicago and each summer at the Ravinia Festival in suburban Highland Park. The ensemble regularly tours nationally, and since 1892, has made 63 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five

continents.

Patrons around the globe enjoy weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings via the WFMT Radio Network and online at cso.org/radio. Launched in 2007, [CSO Resound](#) is the ensemble's Grammy Award-winning independent record label, featuring live performances with world-class conductors and guest artists. Since 1916, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus have amassed an extensive discography that has earned 64 Grammy awards from the Recording Academy.

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA), which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Symphony Center Presents, and the Negaunee Music Institute. The [Chicago Symphony Chorus](#), founded by Margaret Hillis in 1957, is the country's largest professional chorus. Founded by second music director Frederick Stock during the 1919–20 season, the [Civic Orchestra of Chicago](#) is a training ensemble for emerging professionals with Ken-David Masur serving as its principal conductor. [Symphony Center Presents](#) features guest artists and ensembles across an expansive array of genres, including classical, jazz, world and contemporary. The [Negaunee Music Institute](#) offers community and educational programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds throughout the Chicagoland area.

Through the Institute and numerous other activities — including annual free community concerts in Chicago neighborhoods — the CSO is committed to using the power of music to strengthen bonds with its longtime patrons and create connections with new audiences.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is supported by thousands of patrons, volunteers and institutional and individual donors. The Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.