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**CURATED BY MEAD COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE
JESSIE MONTGOMERY, THE 2022/23 SEASON OF CSO MUSICNOW
OPENS ON OCTOBER 24 WITH CELEBRATION OF LIVING
COMPOSERS AND KINDRED SPIRITS**

CHICAGO — Created to connect Chicago audiences with the widest possible range of today's new music, the CSO MusicNOW series marks its 25th season with a return to Symphony Center, where it was first presented in 1998. The CSO MusicNOW 2022/23 Season programming kicks off on October 24 with a program titled "Perspectives" that highlights the works of three Black American composers: Alvin Singleton, Carlos Simon and Jessie Montgomery. CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery curates the CSO MusicNOW series and begins the second year of her three-year appointment that continues through 2024.

Recently named Musical America's 2023 Composer of the Year and a recipient of both the Sphinx Medal of Excellence and the ASCAP Foundation's Leonard Bernstein Award, composer and violinist Jessie Montgomery has emerged as one of the most compelling and sought-after voices in new music today; as *The New York Times* noted, she is "pretty much changing the canon for American orchestras."

Reflecting on her plans for the opening program of the CSO MusicNOW 2022/23 season, Montgomery says:

"The very first concert of the season includes music by two amazing composers, Alvin Singleton, and Carlos Simon. Both composer's music share influences of the African diaspora yet branch off into very different directions. Singleton's work includes modernist European influence and experimental improvisation. Simon, who is a pianist and organist is heavily influenced by gospel and film music, while simultaneously breaking some of the traditions of both. I am looking forward to the musical conversation between their works, and one of my own on this program."

The October 24 program opens with Singleton's *Jasper Drag*, a trio for clarinet, piano and violin composed in 2000. Singleton's compositions break the mold of traditional classical music, with shifting rhythmic phrases and structures. Also featured on this program is Singleton's 1974 work, *Be Natural*, its title a pun on the B-natural note that is passed around throughout the piece. The small ensemble work for any combination of bowed string instruments will feature Jessie Montgomery performing on violin in this performance.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Singleton was a Fulbright Scholar who studied with Goffredo Petrassi at Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Italy. He was the Composer-in-Residence with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (1985-88) and Resident Composer at Spelman College in Atlanta (1988-91). In 2008, Singleton served as the Composer-in-Residence in Tirana, Albania, and was invited by the cultural organization Eurynome Corp., who presented the Albanian premieres of selected works performed by the Orchestra of Albanian Radio and Television conducted by Oleg Arapi.

The program also features three works by composer Carlos Simon, a native of Atlanta, Georgia whose music ranges from concert music for large and small ensembles to film scores with influences of jazz, gospel and neo-romanticism. Simon is the Composer-in-Residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and was recently named to *The Washington Post's* "Composers and Performers to Watch in 2022" list.

The first of the Simon works on the program is *Lickety Split*, a duo for piano and cello written in 2015 that creates a dynamic conversation and playful mood between the instruments, ultimately driving to a climactic ending. Other featured works by Simon include his 2021 string trio, *loop*, inspired by reflections on a seemingly never-ending pandemic loop, and his 2020 string quartet, *Warmth from Other Suns*, influenced by Isabel Wilkerson's book that amplifies stories of Black Americans during the Great Migration.

The piece *Lickety Split* holds special significance for Simon, who reflects: "As a young boy, I worked with my grandfather during the summers paving driveways in Rocky Mount, Virginia. He was a task master. Things had to be done the right way and with haste when he asked for it in his own playful way. He would say, 'Pull those weeds up *lickety split!*' or 'Shovel that dirt *lickety split!*' It was tortuous work during the hot summer days but ultimately proved quite lucrative at the end of the day when my grandfather paid me for the day's work."

The program concludes with a performance of *Sergeant McCauley* by Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery. The work, scored for wind quintet and string quartet, is inspired by the Great Migration and the journey of Montgomery's great-grandfather, a buffalo soldier who migrated northward before returning south to Mississippi. Each of the five movements represents a stop along Sergeant McCauley's route north. The first

movement is based on the Methodist hymn “Just Now,” which is thought to have originated in the northern seaboard slave states. The final movement, “Lay Dis Body Down,” references a funeral song thought to have come from the region surrounding South Carolina and represents Sergeant McCauley’s final resting place. The piece was commissioned for the Imani Winds and the Catalyst Quartet by Music Accord and the Sphinx Organization in 2019.

The other three concerts in the series take place on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. — [November 21](#), [February 20, 2023](#), and [April 24, 2023](#) — in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Avenue.

Commissioned CSO MusicNOW Artwork

In celebration of the 25th season of the CSO MusicNOW series, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association commissioned original artwork that corresponds to each of the four programs. Created by Chicago-area artist, illustrator and graphic designer [Donovan Foote](#), the first artwork is titled “Perspectives.”

About the first of the four works, Foote says: “For me, the music of Singleton and Simon has moments of disjointedness, is at times haunting, at times beautiful and offers up a feeling of the ethereal. Something like the sound of a memory existing somewhere between historical fact and a feeling. This first piece was important in developing the elements of language that would carry through all four. Ink splatters, brush strokes, coin rubbings and instrument shapes began with this image along with the motif of the focal instrument. Here, the assembled violin exists more like the memory of a violin.”

The CSO MusicNOW poster designs by Donovan Foote are available for purchase as framed and unframed prints at symphonystore.com/musicnow.

Post-Concert Experience

At each of the CSO MusicNOW concerts this season, audiences can mingle with CSO musicians and composers following the performance in the Rotunda at Symphony Center. This informal post-concert event includes music, refreshments and giveaways.

Tickets and Patron Information

Subscriptions for the four-concert CSO MusicNOW series at Symphony Center start at \$90 and are on sale now. Tickets for individual CSO MusicNOW concerts start at \$30. Tickets for all CSO MusicNOW concerts can be purchased by contacting Patron Services. Representatives are available to assist with ticket packages by web chat at cso.org, by calling 312-294-3000 (Tuesday–Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.), or by emailing patronservices@cso.org.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

The Mead Composer-in-Residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is endowed through a generous gift from Cindy Sargent and the late Sally Mead Hands.

Major support for CSO MusicNOW is generously provided by the Zell Family Foundation, Cindy Sargent, the Sally Mead Hands Foundation and the Julian Family Foundation.

About Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery

Jessie Montgomery, who begins her second season as the CSO's Mead Composer-in-Residence in 2022/23, serves as curator of the CSO MusicNOW series. Montgomery will also receive CSO MusicNOW commissions in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to write small ensemble works.

Montgomery has already developed a significant presence in Chicago. The CSO MusicNOW 2018/19 season featured both her string quartet *Break Away* and the world premiere of her string ensemble arrangement of Julius Eastman's *Gay Guerrilla*, while CSOtv's 2020/21 digital season saw virtual performances of her orchestral work *Starburst*, by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and her chamber piece *Strum*, the string orchestral version of which also received a live CSO performance in June 2021. Montgomery's own music was also featured in CSO MusicNOW concerts during the 2021/22 Season. In May 2022, Riccardo Muti led the world premiere of her CSO-commissioned work, *Hymn for Everyone*, the first of three works she will write for the Orchestra during her appointment as Mead Composer-in-Residence.

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CSO MusicNOW

Monday, October 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

Musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Jessie Montgomery, Mead Composer-in-Residence and violin

Lidiya Yankovskaya, Conductor

SINGLETON	<i>Jasper Drag</i>
SIMON	<i>Lickety Split</i>
SINGLETON	<i>Be Natural</i>
SIMON	<i>loop</i>
SIMON	<i>Warmth from Other Suns</i>
MONTGOMERY	<i>Sergeant McCauley</i>

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra: cso.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. Jessie Montgomery is Mead Composer-in-Residence, and Hilary Hahn is CSO Artist-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 62 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 63 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 cso.org/resound.

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (Ken-David Masur, Principal Conductor), 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.