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2026/27 SEASON OF SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS JAZZ PROGRAMMING ANNOUNCED

CHICAGO — The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) has announced the 2026/27 Season of Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz programming that continues its tradition of showcasing world-class improvisers and visionary ensembles. The season opens with a program by the Freedom Riders collective, joined by Kurt Elling and Lizz Wright, and concludes with a celebration of Chucho Valdés featuring Joe Lovano and Etienne Charles.

The schedule is anchored by a centennial celebration of John Coltrane featuring Branford Marsalis and Dianne Reeves, the duo of John Scofield and Dave Holland, and a tribute to Chick Corea led by Stanley Clarke and Hiromi with PUBLIQuartet. Additional highlights include the modern Chicago sound with Jeff Parker and Isaiah Collier, a centennial celebration of the vibraphone and a residency with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra that includes the satirical oratorio *The Ever Fonky Lowdown* and a special evening marking Wynton Marsalis' final season as music director, concluding his transformative 40-year tenure.

Explore program listings and ticketing information for the 2026/27 Season of SCP Jazz at cso.org/jazz.

“The 2026/27 Season of Symphony Center Presents Jazz highlights the deep legacies and the future direction of jazz, featuring artists who continue to bring a fresh perspective to the music,” stated James Fahey, Senior Director of Programming for Symphony Center Presents. “From our centennial celebrations of John Coltrane and the vibraphone’s Chicago origins to a tribute to the visionary Chick Corea, this season honors the pioneers while embracing the modern innovations of artists including Jeff Parker and Joel Ross. We are also particularly honored to host the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra for two programs celebrating Wynton Marsalis’ final season as music director. His transformative leadership has been a cornerstone of the jazz world and our jazz programming for decades, and these performances offer a meaningful opportunity for Chicago audiences to celebrate his

remarkable legacy. This season reflects the incredible breadth of the jazz tradition, bridging generations and styles to offer a truly compelling musical experience at Symphony Center.”

Freedom Riders with special guests Kurt Elling & Lizz Wright

On Friday, October 2, at 8:00 p.m., the 2026/27 Season of SCP Jazz programming opens with the **Freedom Riders** collective, featuring Sarah Elizabeth Charles, Alfredo Colón, Tomoki Sanders, Milena Casado, Carmen Staaf, Ben Williams, Makaya McCraven and Sasha Berliner. In the 1960s, Freedom Rider activists challenged racial segregation in the Southern United States. With reverence for their courage and struggle, this groundbreaking international jazz collective features a new generation of artists and composers who continue in the tradition of providing a soundtrack to the global civil rights movement. Joined by esteemed vocalists **Kurt Elling** and **Lizz Wright**, the Freedom Riders band offers vital inspiration through music that unites audiences with the energy and spirit of shared humanity.

Branford Marsalis & Dianne Reeves Celebrate John Coltrane

On Friday, October 16, at 8:00 p.m., the **Branford Marsalis Quartet** and vocalist **Dianne Reeves** celebrate the centennial of John Coltrane, an artist known for dissolving the boundaries of jazz who could “pull listeners right out of their chairs.” This one-of-a-kind program highlights Marsalis and Reeves’ own improvisational brilliance and selections from their upcoming album revisiting Coltrane’s seminal 1963 collaboration with Johnny Hartman.

Jeff Parker & The New Breed / Isaiah Collier & The Defiance

On Friday, February 5, 2027, at 8:00 p.m., Jazz programming continues with a double bill featuring guitarist **Jeff Parker** and saxophonist **Isaiah Collier** — two distinct performances from artists who embody the modern Chicago sound through rhythm, risk, and a fearless tradition of innovation. With The New Breed, Parker experiments in sample-based improvisation, combining jazz, lo-fi and instrumental hip-hop into his unmistakable sonic palette, developed over 40 years. With his group The Defiance, Collier — an alumnus of ChiArts and Jazz Institute of Chicago programs and one of today’s fresh voices — builds on the lineage of saxophone greats like John Coltrane and Ari Brown, crafting music charged with a fierce immediacy.

John Scofield & Dave Holland

Guitarist **John Scofield** and bassist **Dave Holland** join forces to present a new conversation on Friday, February 19, 2027, at 8:00 p.m. Performing as a duo, the longtime colleagues bring their diverse musical backgrounds and infinite talent to a program featuring original compositions and their take on a selection of jazz standards. Expect nothing less than a distinctive and compelling meeting of their musical minds.

Stanley Clarke & Hiromi along with PUBLIQuartet Celebrate the Music of Chick Corea & Beyond

On Friday, March 19, 2027, at 8:00 p.m., NEA Jazz Master and Grammy Award-winning bassist **Stanley Clarke** teams up with frequent collaborator **Hiromi** — described as “one of jazz piano’s most brazenly virtuosic players” — to pay tribute to their friend, the visionary

pianist and composer Chick Corea. From straight-ahead to avant-garde, bebop to fusion, Corea helped shape the sound of modern jazz. Joined by the innovative string ensemble **PUBLIQuartet**, Clarke and Hiromi perform Corea's works alongside original pieces inspired by his boundless creativity.

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis

The **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** with **Wynton Marsalis** returns to Symphony Center for its annual residency starting on Tuesday, April 20, 2027, at 8:00 p.m. Nearly 40 years after founding the orchestra, Marsalis leads his final season as music director, concluding a transformative tenure that elevated jazz to a true art of American culture. In Chicago, where it has been an honor to have Marsalis and the orchestra call Symphony Center their second home, this performance promises to swing as hard as ever as we celebrate a legend.

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis: The Ever Fonky Lowdown

On Friday, April 23, 2027, at 8:00 p.m., the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and Wynton Marsalis present ***The Ever Fonky Lowdown*** with guest narrator **Wendell Pierce** along with vocalists and dancers. Wynton Marsalis combines the rhythmic language of New Orleans funk, the melodic influence of unsung Crescent City genius James Black and a trio of soulful sirens to satirize the public's descent into supporting a sectarian, con-man leader called Mr. Game (Wendell Pierce). Set in contemporary America, Marsalis' 2018 oratorio seems to be prophetic in light of today's national climate. At times humorous, infuriating, pathetic and sobering, this non-partisan examination of the cost of apathy and the loss of empathy may provoke deeper thoughts and feelings to inspire meaningful action.

Joel Ross: Good Vibes / The Vibraphone Summit

On Friday, May 14, 2027, at 8:00 p.m., the jazz season continues with **Joel Ross: Good Vibes** and **The Vibraphone Summit with Warren Wolf, Joe Locke, Stefon Harris & Chien Chien Lu**. The modern vibraphone was born in Chicago, when J.C. Deagan, Inc., unveiled the vibraharp in 1927. A century later, that history reverberates at Symphony Center. Chicagoan Joel Ross and his band Good Vibes "treat rhythm as both fundamental and unfixed" (*The New York Times*), balancing complexity, lyricism and emotional clarity. Led by vibes master Warren Wolf and featuring today's top vibraphonists — Joe Locke, Stefon Harris and Chien Chien Lu — The Vibraphone Summit lets the instrument's past and present ring side by side, honoring pioneers from Lionel Hampton to Milt Jackson.

Chucho Valdés 85th Birthday Celebration with special guests Joe Lovano & Etienne Charles

The final SCP Jazz program of the season is Friday, June 4, 2027, at 8:00 p.m., with the **Chucho Valdés 85th Birthday Celebration**. Cuban pianist, composer, arranger and NEA Jazz Master Chucho Valdés — winner of seven Grammy and seven Latin Grammy Awards — is described by *Billboard* as "one of the most influential figures in modern Afro-Cuban jazz." Across a remarkable 60-year career, he has redefined Afro-Cuban music, "seamlessly weaving aspects of folk, jazz and classical into a singular musical vision" (*DownBeat*). This

program features Valdés alongside saxophonist and longtime collaborator **Joe Lovano** and Trinidad-born trumpeter **Etienne Charles**.

Patron Information

Subscriptions are now on sale for the 2026/27 Season of Symphony Center Presents Jazz, which include four- and eight-concert curated packages and the option to create your own subscription of three or more concerts.

Curated subscribers initially save up to 30% on standard ticket prices and save 15% on additional tickets ordered throughout the season. Additional subscriber benefits include priority seating, flexible ticket exchange privileges, access to reduced parking rates and offers at the Symphony Store. Symphony Center Presents Jazz curated subscribers also have access to a free one-year subscription to *DownBeat* and 50% off at Jazz Showcase on SCP Jazz concert nights.

Subscriptions may be ordered online, by phone, by mail or in person at the Symphony Center Box Office. A convenient payment plan option is available for purchases made by credit card. Individual concert tickets for 2026/27 Season programs go on sale to the public in August.

Patron Services representatives are available to assist with ticket purchases by web chat at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org) or by calling [312-294-3000](tel:312-294-3000), Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The walk-up Box Office at 220 S. Michigan Ave. is open Monday-Saturday 12 p.m.-6 p.m.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

Chicago Jazz, *DownBeat* Magazine, WBEZ Chicago and WDCB are media partners for the Symphony Center Presents Jazz series.

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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. In April 2024, Klaus Mäkelä was named the Orchestra's 11th music director, and he will begin an initial five-year tenure as Zell Music Director with the 2027/28 Season. Riccardo Muti, the Orchestra's 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, became Music Director Emeritus for Life at the beginning of the 2023/24 Season. Joyce DiDonato is the CSO Artist-in-Residence for the 2025/26 Season.

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 domestically, and since 1892, has made 65 international tours, performing in 30 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 65 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 Negaunee Music Institute. The [Chicago Symphony Chorus](#), founded by Margaret Hillis in 1957, is the country's largest professional chorus. Donald Palumbo is the Director of the Chicago Symphony 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.