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MUSIC EXCELLENCE DIVERSITY

Saturday, June 16, 2012 – Wentz Concert Hall at North Central College  
Monday, June 18, 2012 – Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center

# Passion. Tragedy. Love.

**Chicago Sinfonietta**

**Mei-Ann Chen**, Music Director and Conductor

**Harlem Quartet**

*Delights and Dances* for

Solo String Quartet & String Orchestra ..... Michael Abels

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* ..... Felix Mendelssohn

Overture

Scherzo

Nocturne

**Mayor A. George Pradel**, narrator (Wentz Concert Hall)

**Bill Kurtis**, narrator (Symphony Center)

## INTERMISSION

Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra ..... Benjamin Lees

I. Allegro con brio

II. Andante cantando

III. Allegro energico

*West Side Story* Concerto for

String Quartet and Orchestra..... Leonard Bernstein arr. R.C. Fleischer

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## PROGRAM NOTES

*"The course of true love never did run smooth."*

—William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Midsummer nights in Chicago are much like the heart-wrenching experiences of young lovers. As with young love, the passionate crackling heat of the day turns to an oppressive soupy-humidity of melodrama and angst, until a sudden passing shower and a declaration of love breaks the anxiety of each lover's heart and settles the city into a cool, breezy star-lit evening. And, like love long passed, time and nostalgia have a way of immortalizing these nights and rendering them magical, as if part of a dream.

Felix Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* exemplifies and expresses these manifold sides of youthful, tempestuous (and certainly never boring) love. Appropriately enough, Mendelssohn first composed the Overture at the age of seventeen— an age in which many of us were embroiled in our own little melodramas, tragedies, and passionate love-stories (which perhaps all turned out to be divine comedies, in retrospect). Just a few months after reading a translation of Shakespeare's play by Schlegel, Felix (forgive the first-name basis, but it serves to emphasize his youth) finished composing the overture at the height of summer in August. Cast in E Major, within the overture we can hear the evening breeze as it rustles through the Mendelssohn's garden, the light pitter-patter of fairy-feet, the journey of Shakespeare's wayward lovers into the forest, and the royal music of Athens (which, despite its pageantry, is certainly the sound of parents who just don't understand).

Sixteen years later, Mendelssohn returned to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by the request of King Frederick William IV of Prussia, composing incidental music which illustrated different scenes and could be performed along with the play. Now 33, the composer had a chance to reflect on the play and the love it embodies with a few years of perspective. What does this young love look like, after we have had a few years of distance from it? The results are some of the most iconic and frequently performed pieces of classical music: *The Scherzo* illustrates the fairy King Oberon's arrival with a flurry of strings and winds. *Nocturne* follows the young lovers' dreams as they fall to sleep with a solo horn doubled by bassoons.

Tonight, you will hear a selection of these pieces, fantastically narrated by Bill Kurtis (at the Symphony Center) and Mayor George Pradel (at the Wentz Concert Hall). Through their narration of key passages of the text, it won't be difficult to drift into that hazy, dream-like world of Shakespearean romance.

Before we get to Mendelssohn, however, we will hear from our special guests.

The Harlem Quartet - composed of Sphinx Foundation laureates Ilmar Gavilan (violin), Melissa White (violin), Juan-Miguel Hernandez (viola), and Paul Wiancko (cello) - is quickly becoming recognized as one of the best in the country, performing at Carnegie Hall consecutively in 2006, 2007, and 2008. In 2009, it performed for the First Lady and President Obama in the White House and, in the same year, Christmas morning on NBC. Not only is their mission commendable - to advance diversity in classical music while engaging young and new audiences - but they have the expertise and talent to fulfill it. With such dovetailing interests, it is no surprise that the Quartet has collaborated with the Sinfonietta before, and will continue to do so with the 2013 release of a CD featuring music you will hear tonight.



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## PROGRAM NOTES (CONT.)

Their first piece, *Delights and Dances*, was written specifically for the Harlem Quartet by Michael Abels. Abels' piece is steeped in a great American tradition of bluegrass and blues, shifting through classical and modern idioms effortlessly. From the cello's rich base tone and its gliding, glissando dialogue with the viola, to the fiddling repartee between the violins, within Abels' *Delights and Dances* one can hear the vivid passion and playfulness of love. In place of the enchanting and dream-like romance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, this piece is a roller-coaster ride of wit and bluegrass riffs- reminding the listener that rather than dulling our senses, being in the heights of love can actually make us sharper and smarter. Love can make us into our better, wittier selves with the right partner.

After the *Midsummer* interlude, the Quartet rejoins the Sinfonietta for Benjamin Lees' *Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra*. With a strong tonal core and rich rhythms and themes, Lees' piece uniquely combines the orchestral concerto with the string quartet medium. The quartet weaves in and out of the orchestra, at times together, at other times as if in solo performances. In this piece, one can perhaps be reminded of a maturing love that allows collaboration and mutual independence.

Mix Shakespearean tragic love with the compositions of Leonard Bernstein and filter it through the lively arrangements of Randall Fleisher for the Harlem Quartet and the Chicago Sinfonietta and you will get tonight's world premiere. Itself a modern retelling of the archetypal love story - Romeo and Juliet - *West Side Story* captures what it feels like to be young and in love and have the whole world at stake. As Fleisher, who studied with Bernstein as a conducting fellow at Tanglewood in 1989, says: "*West Side Story* is an utter masterpiece and, for me, the crowning achievement in American Musical Theater. It's perfect! Lush and



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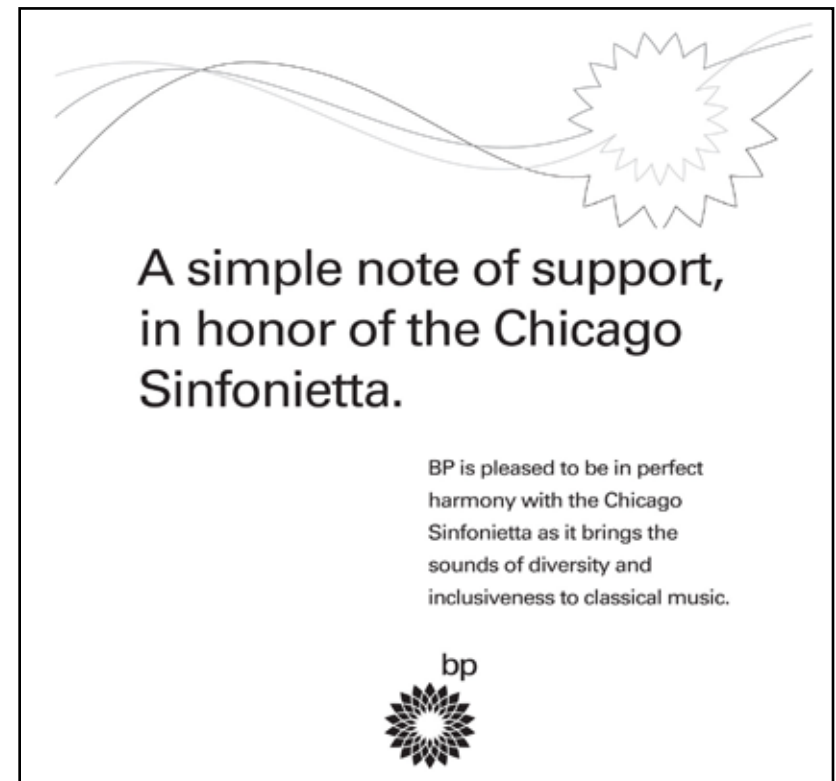
## PROGRAM NOTES (CONT.)

romantic in the love duets, edgy, vigorous, even violent in the gang scenes, this brilliant show encompasses almost the entire range of the human experience within one evening."

Fleisher approached Bernstein's composition with a clear mission. "The challenge for me in crafting this arrangement was to retain everything that is unique about the score, its sensual colors in the love duets and its edgy 'bite' in the gang scenes, the Latin jazz flavor – and transfer all of Bernstein's unique genius from voices to string instruments. While doing so, I wanted to capture aspects of the idiomatic style of solo writing typical for each string instrument. So, on my desk while I was working on this arrangement, I had the WSS full score, the WSS piano vocal score and the scores to Tchaikovsky *Violin Concerto*, Sibelius *Violin Concerto*, Dvorak *Cello Concerto* and the Bartok *Viola Concerto*, consulting each score frequently! It was a challenge but I feel much closer to *West Side Story* than ever before, spending six months of my life living with this amazing work."

"Oh to be young and feel love's keen sting." Enjoy the music and perhaps feel some of the love this summer night.


**Alexander Perry** is an arts and culture writer based in Chicago. After pursuing playwriting at the Theatre School and graduate studies in religion and literature at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Alexander decided to leave the academy and explore the world. Now a frequent contributor to *Arte Y Vida Chicago*, *Extra News*, and elsewhere, he is excited about all the artistic and cultural life Chicago has to offer, especially from great institutions like the Chicago Sinfonietta. You can find samples of his work at [lookingfortitle.tumblr.com](http://lookingfortitle.tumblr.com).



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**Mei-Ann Chen,  
Music Director and  
Conductor**

One of the most dynamic young conductors in

America, **Mei-Ann Chen** has recently begun her first season as Music Director of the Chicago Sinfonietta. Appointed in August of 2010 as Music Director Designate, she led the Sinfonietta in a concert attended by over 7,000 people in Millennium Park in August of 2011 to introduce her to the people of Chicago. Her debut season with the Sinfonietta has garnered two awards from the League of American Orchestras: The First Place ASCAP Award for Programming of Contemporary Music and the Helen M. Thompson Award for an Emerging Music Director, which honors exceptional musical leadership and commitment to organizational vitality. Also Music Director of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Ms. Chen's charismatic podium style, musicality, and personal warmth have helped fuel her meteoric rise to the top ranks of conductors in the U.S.

In great demand as a guest conductor, Ms. Chen has appeared with the symphonies of Alabama, Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Colorado, Columbus, Edmonton (Canada), Florida, Fort Worth, Honolulu, National (Washington, DC), Oregon, Pacific, Phoenix, Princeton, Seattle, Toronto, and the Grand Teton Festival Orchestra. Worldwide engagements include all the principal Danish orchestras, BBC Scottish Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, Graz Symphony, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Tampere Philharmonic, and the Trondheim Symphony. During the 2011-12 season, she will debut with the symphonies of Jacksonville, Naples, Nashville, Pasadena, Sarasota, as well as

the National Symphony of Mexico and the Netherlands Philharmonic at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw.

The first woman to win the Malko Competition (2005), Ms. Chen has served as Assistant Conductor of the Oregon Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, and Baltimore Symphony. Recipient of the 2007 Taki Concordia Fellowship, she has appeared jointly with Marin Alsop and Stefan Sanderling in highly acclaimed subscription concerts with the Baltimore Symphony, Colorado Symphony and Florida Orchestra.

In 2002, Ms. Chen was unanimously selected as Music Director of the Portland Youth Philharmonic in Oregon, the oldest of its kind and the model for many of the youth orchestras in the United States. During her five-year tenure with the orchestra, she led its sold-out debut in Carnegie Hall, received an ASCAP award for innovative programming, and developed new and unique musicianship programs for the orchestra's members. She was honored with a Sunburst Award from Young Audiences for her contribution to music education.

Born in Taiwan, Mei-Ann Chen has lived in the United States since 1989. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting from the University of Michigan, where she was a student of Kenneth Kiesler. Prior to that, she was the first student in New England Conservatory's history to receive master's degrees, simultaneously, in both violin and conducting. Ms. Chen also participated in the National Conducting Institute in Washington, D.C. and the American Academy of Conducting in Aspen.

# Congratulations Mei-Ann Chen!



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MEI-ANN CHEN, MUSIC DIRECTOR  
PAUL FREEMAN, FOUNDER

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**Harlem Quartet**

Ilmar Gavilan and Melissa White, violin; Juan-Miguel Hernandez, viola; Paul Wiancko, cello

The **Harlem Quartet**, praised for its “panache” by The New York Times, is “bringing a new attitude to classical music, one that is fresh, bracing and intelligent,” says the Cincinnati Enquirer. Its mission is to advance diversity in classical music while engaging young and new audiences through the discovery and presentation of varied repertoire, highlighting works by minority composers. In addition to performing on chamber music series around the country, they make their debuts this season at two prestigious New York venues, performing with guitarist Eliot Fisk at the 92nd Street Y and with jazz pianist/composer Chick Corea at the Blue Note.

The Harlem Quartet made its acclaimed Carnegie Hall debut in the fall of 2006, and has since gone on to grace stages around the world. In 2009, they performed for President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House and made an appearance Christmas morning on NBC’s *Today Show*. They made their European debut performing at the residence of the US ambassador to the UK, and returned to Europe as guest artists and faculty members of the Musica Mundi

International Festival in Belgium. At the beginning of 2011, they were featured guest artists at the Panama Jazz Festival in Panama City.

The Harlem Quartet’s superb artistic skills and versatility allow them to perform with such diverse artists as violinist Itzhak Perlman and pianists Misha Dichter and Chick Corea. The quartet performed by invitation with Perlman at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and completed two recording projects with Corea at the end of the 2010-11 season. Their recording career began in 2007 when White Pine Music issued *Take the “A” Train*, a release that was featured in the November issue of *Strings* magazine that year. A second CD, featuring works of Walter Piston, was released in 2010 by Naxos. The third and most recent recording by the quartet was released in early 2011; it is a collaboration with pianist Awadagin Pratt and showcases works by American composer Judith Lang Zaimont.

The Harlem Quartet has been featured on WNBC, CNN, the *Today Show*, WQXR-FM, and the *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. Each member of the quartet is a seasoned solo artist, having appeared with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Pops, and the Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, National, New World, and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras.

The Harlem Quartet was founded in 2006 by The Sphinx Organization, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to building diversity in classical music and providing access to music education in underserved communities. The quartet is managed by Sciolino Artist Management in New York City.



**A. George Pradel**, narrator

**George Pradel** was elected mayor of Naperville, Illinois in 1995 and

re-elected in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011, making him the longest-serving mayor of Naperville. A former Naperville Police officer, Pradel is known for his many public appearances, friendly demeanor and his demonstrated enthusiasm for Naperville. After graduating from what is now Naperville Central High School, he served for three years in the U.S. Marine Corps. In 1966 he joined the Naperville Police Department, where he spent much of his career visiting schools and speaking to children with the nickname “Officer Friendly,” a moniker that stuck for 28 years and became an asset in his future election as mayor.



**Bill Kurtis**, narrator

**Bill Kurtis** is co-anchor of the weekday CBS 2 News at 6 pm with Walter Jacobson.

His distinctive voice is well known to generations of Chicagoans. Kurtis is an award-winning journalist who began his Chicago television career at WBBM-TV in 1966 as a reporter. The celebrated anchor team of Kurtis and Jacobson went on to earn the number one rating position for most of the 16 years they were on air. He is the recipient of numerous honors and recognitions, including more than 20 Emmy® Awards, the 1998 Illinois Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame Award, and the 2003 Kansas Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame Award.

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2011-2012 Season

## CHICAGO SINFONIETTA HISTORY

The year was 1987, and Maestro Paul Freeman had a decidedly different vision of what a symphony orchestra could, and should be. Paul had earned an international reputation through years of guest conducting all over the world and as Music Director of a number of orchestras in the US and Canada. He was the first African American on the podium of over fifty orchestras worldwide and had a huge catalog of recordings to his credit. By the mid-1980s he concluded that the time was right for a mid-sized orchestra dedicated to promoting diversity, inclusion, and innovative programming, and luckily for all of us, he decided that Chicago was the right place to do this.

The Chicago Sinfonietta performed for the first time in October of 1987. Concerts took place in River Forest at Rosary College and downtown at Orchestra Hall. The Sinfonietta was a different type of orchestra from the very beginning. The orchestra members, staff, board of directors, guest artists, and most importantly of all, the audience were of diverse backgrounds. No one had ever seen anything quite like this in classical music. And the music was different. Yes, the Sinfonietta could, and did play the standards to great critical acclaim. But under Paul's leadership innovative concerts became a part of the Sinfonietta "experience."

The rarely performed music by composers of color became a Sinfonietta staple, and introduced these symphonic gems to generations of concert-goers. Through recordings like the three-volume African Heritage Series, these lost compositions entered the classical music mainstream and brought acclaim and attention to deserving but unrecognized composers. Unusual instruments and musical styles like the bagpipes, steel drums, sitar, Indian Ghazal music, hip hop, and yes, even the ubiquitous cell phone became the centerpieces for some of the most daring musical collaborations any orchestra was programming. And partnerships with arts organizations and ensembles including the Luna Negra Dance Theater, the Apostolic Church of God Choir, the alternative rock group, Poi Dog Pondering, and others significantly broadened the orchestra's programming palette.

## CHICAGO SINFONIETTA HISTORY (CONT.)

The Sinfonietta experience quickly caught on and the orchestra's audience and support grew through its early seasons. Due to Paul's international reputation, European tours were booked resulting in six overseas trips during the first 17 years. Other highlights included two triumphant performances at the Kennedy Center, the recording of fourteen albums and CDs, a 2008 performance at Millennium Park attended by over 12,000 people, and a nine-year relationship with the Joffrey Ballet.

Paul's passion for helping others and opening the doors of classical music to everyone was also expressed through the Sinfonietta's educational and mentoring programs. Thousands of public school students have, and continue to benefit from the organization's Audience Matters and SEED programs that place Sinfonietta musicians in classrooms, thereby inspiring the next generation of musicians and composers. The orchestra's groundbreaking Project Inclusion program that provides two-year professional development fellowships to aspiring classical musicians from under-represented communities grew out of Paul's life-long practice of mentoring and assisting young musicians. One young musician Paul helped by giving his very first professional performance opportunity to has gone on to become the most recognizable figure in classical music, Yo Yo Ma. Mr. Ma performed a concert in 2011 in honor of Paul and recognized the unique role he and the Chicago Sinfonietta have played in the development of the field. Anthony McGill and Jeremy Jordan, two young and extremely talented African American musicians, performed with Yo Yo that evening. The circle continues.

In 2009 Paul Freeman announced that he would retire at the end of the 2010-2011 Season and the Sinfonietta began its first Music Director search. The Board of Directors formed a selection committee and after a two-year, international search that began with over forty candidates and concluded with eight finalists performing podium auditions throughout the 2008-09 and 2009-2010 seasons, Mei-Ann Chen was unanimously selected as Paul Freeman's successor. In May of 2011 Paul publicly conducted the orchestra for the final time in a nationally broadcast concert, and in a particularly emotional moment, passed his baton to Mei-Ann at the conclusion of the performance. A giant had left the stage, but his legacy lives on.

Mei-Ann Chen's tenure began with a welcoming concert at Millennium Park attended by over 7,000 people. Her inaugural season in 2011-2012 also coincided with the orchestra's move from its long time west suburban home in River Forest to Wentz Concert Hall in Naperville. The reviews and audience response for Maestro Chen's first season have been extraordinary, and the season will conclude with the orchestra's first recording in ten years that will be released in 2013 on the Cedille label. In addition to these accomplishments, the Chicago Sinfonietta was named by ASCAP and the League of American Orchestras as the recipient of the 20011-12 Awards for Adventurous Programming for Mei-Ann's first season of concerts. Her work was also recognized by the League of American Orchestras by being chosen as the recipient of the Helen M. Thompson Award that recognizes early career music directors who show exceptional musical leadership and commitment to organizational vitality.

As the Chicago Sinfonietta begins the next twenty-five years of presenting one-of-a-kind concerts, inspiring young students to pursue music as a life-long passion or career, and serving as *the model* for diversity, inclusion and innovation, it is clear that Paul Freeman's dream of a special orchestra in Chicago has become a reality.

## MISSION

The Mission of the Chicago Sinfonietta is to serve as a national model for inclusiveness and innovation in classical music through the presentation of the highest quality orchestral concerts and related programs. The Chicago Sinfonietta aspires to remove the barriers to participation in, and appreciation of classical music through its educational and outreach programs that expose children and their families to classical music, and by providing professional development opportunities for young musicians and composers of diverse backgrounds enabling new, important voices to be heard. This will help America become a true cultural democracy, in which everyone can share fully in its cultural resources and in which all can contribute to its cultural richness.

# Clef Notes

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## CHICAGO SINFONIETTA EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**Audience Matters** is the Chicago Sinfonietta's core educational program. This program provides an immersive introduction to classical music for elementary school students in the Chicago Public School system. Through the program, students learn about the families of instruments in the orchestra from teaching artists – Sinfonietta musicians – who also relate composers, history, art, and architecture to the various periods of classical music. On multiple visits, musicians from different sections of the orchestra demonstrate their instruments through experiential tools, integrating visual, audio, and tactile elements to help the students learn. In addition, students and their families are invited to all Sinfonietta performances for the season. Over 1,000 students are participating in *Audience Matters* this year thanks to our generous donors.

**SEED (Student Ensembles with Excellence and Diversity)** provides mentoring for young musicians. The SEED Program identifies talented high school musicians and offers them a series of workshops and master classes taught by Chicago Sinfonietta teacher-musicians in small ensemble settings. The program concludes with a concert performed by the ensembles. The goal of this program is to both inspire and mentor these young artists, and encourage their professional growth for the future.

### **Project Inclusion: Musicians of Color Fellowship Program**

The Chicago Sinfonietta is delighted to welcome the 2011-2012 Fellows for *Project Inclusion*. This program, begun in 2007, provides professional development opportunities for talented minority musicians funded through the generous support of the Chicago Community Trust, the Joyce Foundation, and others. *Project Inclusion* addresses the Sinfonietta's long-term goal of increasing the number of minority musicians playing in orchestras across the U.S. by providing fellowships and ensemble experience for promising young musicians. Recent data shows that less than 3% of orchestral musicians performing with the top 1,000 orchestras are people of color.

*Project Inclusion* provides two-year fellowships for young musicians of color that include rehearsing and performing with the orchestra, receiving one-on-one mentoring from senior members of the Sinfonietta, attending master classes and mock auditions, and assistance in job placement after completion of the program. The 2011-2012 Orchestra Fellows are:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Instrument</b>
Jocelyn Butler	Cello
Elizabeth Diaz	Flute
Felix Petit	Violin
Renaudo Robinson	Violin
Victor Sotelo	Cello

We are also delighted welcome the 2011-2012 Project Inclusion Ensemble Fellows who will be performing in smaller ensembles at various community locations throughout the year. They are:

## CHICAGO SINFONIETTA EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH (CONT.)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Instrument</b>
Sandra Bailey	Bassoon
Brandon Patrick George	Flute
Kevin Lin	Viola
Victor Sotelo	Cello
Shawnita Tyus	Violin
Dorothy White	Viola

Project Inclusion Orchestra and Ensemble Fellows Program is managed by Renée Baker. Our mentors include orchestra members Renée Baker, Principal Viola, John Fairfield, Principal French Horn, Janice McDonald, Principal Flute, and Karen Nelson, Principal Second Violin.

We also wish to acknowledge some very important partners whose assistance has been invaluable in developing and implementing *Project Inclusion*:

Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University – Henry Fogel, Dean  
DePaul School of Music – Donald E. Casey, Dean  
Northwestern University School of Music – Toni-Marie Montgomery, Dean

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**Mei-Ann Chen**, Music Director

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Carol Lahti, *asst. concertmaster*  
Lucinda Ali  
David Belden  
Chuck Bontrager  
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David Katz  
Betty Lewis  
Todd Matthews  
Karen Nelson  
Linda Oper  
Renaudo Robinson\*  
James Sanders  
Phyllis Sanders  
Edith Yokley

### VIOLA

Renée Baker, *principal*  
Becky Coffman  
Scott Dowd  
Robert Fisher  
Matt Mantell  
Vannia Phillips

### CELLO

Ann Griffin, *principal*  
Jocelyn Butler\*  
Don Mead  
Edward Moore  
William Porter  
Andrew Snow

### BASS

John Floeter, *principal*  
Christian Dillingham  
Brenda Donati  
Alan Steiner

### FLUTE

Janice MacDonald  
Claudia Cryer  
Elizabeth Diaz\*

### OBOE

Ricardo Castaneda, *principal*  
June Matayoshi (English horn)

Note: All members of the orchestra do not play on every concert. Names of string players are listed in alphabetical order, as the Chicago Sinfonietta uses seat rotation except for principals.

\* Project Inclusion Fellow

### CLARINET

Leslie Grimm, *principal*  
Wagner Campos  
Dileep Gangolli (bass clarinet)

### BASSOON

Robert Barris, *principal*  
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Matt Lee, *principal*  
Edgar Campos  
John Burson

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Katherine Stubbins, *principal*  
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John McAllister (bass trombone)

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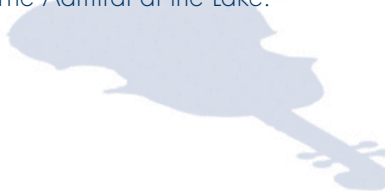
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