

UCHICAGO • presents •



Akropolis Reed Quintet • Alarm Will Sound • Alcee Chriss III • Bantu Continua
Uhuru Consciousness • Ben Wendel High Heart • CSO Chamber Music at the
University of Chicago • Eighth Blackbird • Emmet Cohen Trio • Fire and Water
Quintet • Grossman Ensemble • Isidore Quartet • Jeff Parker & The New Breed
• Le Consort • Lyracle • Natalie Clein • OpenEndedGroup with Tom Chiu and
Jodi Melnick • Pacifica Quartet • Schumann Quartet • Spanish Brass • Theon
Cross • Vadym Kholodenko • Wu Fei

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS
IMPACT REPORT
2023/24



LISTEN **BOLDLY**



Pacifica Quartet

Alarm Will Sound



CELEBRATING 80 YEARS

Jodi Melnick and Maya Lee-Parritz



Tomeka Reid



TABLE OF CONTENTS

05	Letter from the Executive Director
06	Season at a Glance
07	Season Summary
08	Sponsor-A-Student Program
08	Education & Community Engagement
09	Stories from Students and Staff
10	Celebrating 80 Years of UChicago Presents
13	Donors and Partners



MISSION

The University of Chicago Presents concert series endeavors to present music on an intimate scale at the highest level, creating for audiences of all ages experiences that transform, entertain, educate, and enlighten, inspiring a powerful sense of shared humanity. Advancing the values of its home at the University, UCP engages audiences throughout the Chicago region – the student, the Nobel Laureate, the uninitiated, the dedicated musician, and everyone in between – to nurture curiosity through great music-making.

OUR 80TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

HONORING OUR PAST AND FORGING NEW PATHWAYS



Dear Friends and Supporters of UChicago Presents,

It is my honor to introduce the Impact Report for UChicago Presents' remarkable 2023-2024 season—a year that stands out not only for its exceptional artistry and vibrant programming, but also as a milestone in our history. This year, we celebrated 80 years of connecting world-class musicians with audiences—from the University of Chicago campus and from across the city—an enduring legacy that has shaped Chicago's cultural landscape since 1943.

For me, this anniversary held personal significance as it also marked my first year serving as Executive Director. Stepping into this role, I was keenly aware of the series' rich tradition and the responsibility to honor its past while forging new pathways for the future.

In reflecting on UChicago Presents' 80th year, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to steward this beloved series and for the trust you have placed in our organization. As you will see in the following pages, our impact last season was expansive, reaching thousands of concertgoers and students while advancing the values of artistic excellence, intellectual curiosity, and community engagement that have defined us for eight decades.

Thank you for celebrating 80 years—and this exciting new chapter—with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Curran".

Sarah Curran
Executive Director



2023/24 SEASON AT A GLANCE

CLASSIC CONCERT SERIES

- CSO Chamber Music at the University of Chicago:
Music in the Vernacular
 - Dvořák, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky
 - Haydn, Bartók, Brahms
- Vadym Kholodenko, piano
- Spanish Brass
- Akropolis Reed Quintet
- Schumann Quartet
- Natalie Clein, cello
- Isidore Quartet

PACIFICA QUARTET SERIES

- Pacifica Quartet
 - Prokofiev, Sean Shepherd, Beethoven
 - Gruenberg, Shostakovich, Dvořák

HOWARD MAYER BROWN INTERNATIONAL EARLY MUSIC SERIES

- Alcee Chriss III, organ
- Le Consort: *A Journey Through Baroque Europe*
- Lyracle: *Musicians of the Tenshō Embassy*

MUSIC WITHOUT BORDERS

- Bantu Continua Uhuru Consciousness
- Wu Fei, guzheng

JAZZ AT THE LOGAN

- Ben Wendel High Heart
- Theon Cross, tuba
- Jeff Parker & The New Breed
- Emmet Cohen Trio
- Fire and Water Quintet

CONTEMPORARY SERIES

- Grossman Ensemble World Premieres

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Eighth Blackbird: *composition as explanation*
- Alarm Will Sound: *Land of Winter* by Donnacha Dennehy
- OpenEndedGroup with Tom Chiu and Jodi Melnick

WU FEI

OUR SEASON BY THE NUMBERS

29

PERFORMANCES

19

UCHICAGO PRESENTS DEBUTS

168

UNIQUE WORKS

18

US PREMIERES

7,258

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

ATTENDEES AT PRE/POST
CONCERT DISCUSSION

121

16

WORLD PREMIERES

17

27

375

SPONSOR-A-STUDENT PROGRAM

UChicago Presents grew our efforts to ensure access to cultural enrichment for all members of the university community through its Sponsor-a-Student program. The program, made possible by support from the UChicago Arts Pass Program and from UChicago Presents' donors, offered 478 free student tickets to concerts throughout the 2023/24 season. In exchange for free tickets, UChicago students wrote thank-you notes to donors who underwrote their tickets.

Free student tickets are provided as a joint venture of the Sponsor-a-Student Program and UChicago Arts Pass. The UChicago Arts Pass is made possible with the support of Joan and Robert Feitler through the Smart Family Foundation, other alumni and friends, the College, the Office of the Provost, the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, and the generosity of partnering cultural institutions. Sponsor-a-Student is supported through the generosity of individual Chicago Presents donors.

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

UChicago Presents offers free educational and community engagement events each season, all of which offer invaluable opportunities for local community members, students, and patrons to connect with visiting artists.

DURING THE 2023-24 SEASON, 15 ARTISTS ENGAGED 386 ATTENDEES ACROSS 11 EVENTS, INCLUDING:

- 3 masterclasses & workshops
- 2 school matinees
- 2 lunch talks with faculty and artists
- 2 UChicago Lab School class visits
- 1 symposium
- 1 backstage Q&A

From jazz to contemporary, early music to classical, UChicago Presents is dedicated to bringing world-renowned artists to Chicago and creating transformative musical and educational experiences for our community.

CAMPUS IMPACT

11

Educational & Community Events

386

Attendees

478

Sponsor-A-Student Free Tickets Awarded

1,178

Student Tickets Sold

STUDENT AND STAFF SPOTLIGHT

PRAISE FROM SPONSOR-A-STUDENT RECIPIENTS

"Being from a small town in Texas, I was never given the opportunity to immerse myself in the arts. However, today your kindness changed that and blessed me with an unprecedented experience. Thank you for changing my life for the better!"

"I've studied jazz piano for many years and have followed Emmet Cohen's amazing work for as long as I can remember. This was my first opportunity to see him perform in person, and **the experience was phenomenal**. One week later, and I'm still at the piano working out some ideas I heard that night."

"This was my first time hearing Guzheng outside of China. Growing up in China I've always associated it with opera and something I would eventually enjoy when I retire. But **this concert really changed my mind** and it was so cool seeing all Wu Fei's interpretations of what Guzheng can do."

"I got healed by the masterpieces and very touched by the connection I built when I listened to the live performance. I **connected with the musicians, I connected with the audience, and most importantly, I re-connected with myself.**"

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



"I had the privilege of designing a residency for Bantu Continua Uhuru Consciousness (BCUC), a vibrant band from Soweto, South Africa, during their transformative week in Chicago. Their passionate engagement with the community was highlighted through two powerful performances, an inspiring backstage Q&A with local youth, a thought-provoking lunch talk with faculty and community members, and an energizing workshop with the university choirs.

Side-by-side BCUC during the week, I noticed that through every interaction, they were contagiously joyful, cultivating a sense of community with authentic connection and story sharing. Never before have I seen audiences dance with such energy and life in the aisles of our concert hall.

Working with BCUC served as a powerful reminder of why I am dedicated to this work—building bridges and creating spaces for artist connection leads to unforgettable moments of shared music and community making."

—Jessica Wolfe, *Director of Production and Education*

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF UCHICAGO PRESENTS!

Our 80th anniversary season was one to remember, filled with extraordinary performances that celebrated the rich legacy of UChicago Presents on campus and across the city. From rediscovering classical gems to being a part of a world premiere's first ever audience, we took patrons on an unforgettable journey through time, genre, and culture.

CLASSIC CONCERTS

For eight decades, the Classic Concert Series has been the heart of UChicago Presents, and this season was no exception. Audiences were treated to a wide range of performances—from the vivacious **Isidore Quartet**'s energetic takes on classics to pianist **Vadym Kholodenko**'s moving tribute to Ukraine during his encore. **Pacifica Quartet**, our Don Michael Randel Ensemble-in-Residence, explored masterpieces from Beethoven to Dvořák, delivering stunning interpretations that deepened our connection to classical music's enduring legacy. **Spanish Brass** and chamber musicians from the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** also captivated audiences with their brilliant performances, making this past season truly special.

JAZZ AT THE LOGAN

This season's Jazz at the Logan series continued to innovate with genre-bending collaborations. From **Ben Wendel**'s upbeat *High Heart* and **Emmet Cohen**'s skillful piano riffs, to supergroup **Fire and Water Quintet**'s original masterwork inspired by artist Cy Twombly and **Jeff Parker and the New Breed**'s "new Chicago sound," jazz audiences experienced a rich and varied musical offering.

EARLY MUSIC

Our Early Music Series provided rare opportunities to experience historically informed music. Organist **Alcee Chris III**

made Bond Chapel's Reneker Organ sing as he played works by J.S. Bach, Rameau, and Buxtehude. Audience favorite **Le Consort** lit up Logan Center in the dead of winter with their warmth and effervescence in their Journey through Baroque Europe, and **Lyraclle** chronicled the music of Japan's Tenshō Embassy with a unique blend of dramatic readings and music.

MUSIC WITHOUT BORDERS

This season's Music Without Borders series took listeners on a global musical journey. South African band **Bantu Continua Uhuru Consciousness** brought a high-energy performance and had the audience dancing in the aisles of Logan Center, and guzheng virtuoso **Wu Fei** showed off what her ancient instrument could do with side-by-side songs and storytelling.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The 80th season offered a dynamic, eclectic array of music and multi-disciplinary performances that broke new ground. Highlights included the world premiere of *Blackletter*, a 3-D film and concert event based on the writings of Martin Luther, merging music, film, and history. Chamber orchestra **Alarm Will Sound** delivered a thoughtful and sonically surprising U.S. premiere of *Land of Winter*, an exploration of the Irish landscape and seasonal change. We welcomed the return of Chicago Center for Contemporary

Composition's (CCCC) **Grossman Ensemble**, which showcased multiple world premieres, continuing their mission to push the boundaries of contemporary music. We partnered with Court Theatre to present GRAMMY-winning ensemble **Eighth Blackbird** in three performances of David Lang's composition as explanation (directed by Anne Bogart with text by Gertrude Stein).

PACIFICA QUARTET, OUR 2023/24 DON MICHEL RANDEL ENSEMBLE IN RESIDENCE

Each year, our series features the University's Don Michael Randel (DMR) Ensemble-in-Residence. This season, we were thrilled to welcome the beloved, multiple GRAMMY Award-winning **Pacifica Quartet** back to campus. Pacifica Quartet has a longstanding relationship with UChicago Presents' audiences and the Hyde Park community, and their 2023-24 residency celebrated ten years since the quartet was named the first-ever DMR Ensemble in 2013.

Pacifica Quartet visited campus three times for weeklong residencies during the University's autumn, winter, and spring academic quarters. Highlights of their residency included public concerts, interdisciplinary panels and discussions, visits to UChicago music classes, masterclasses, workshops with Department of Music ensembles, and engagement with school and community music programs in the city.

The autumn residency featured an electric performance of works by Prokofiev, Beethoven, and UChicago's own Visiting Assistant Professor Sean Shepherd in Mandel Hall. Audiences were invited to dive deeper into this program at a pre-concert lecture by Sean Shepherd, as well as at a Lecture Demonstration of Sean Shepherd's String Quartet No. 3 at the International House the previous day, in which Pacifica Quartet answered questions in an intimate setting. The quartet returned in January for an encore performance of works by Gruenberg, Shostakovich, and Dvořák to a packed Logan Center Performance Hall.

In addition to delighting our audiences, the Pacifica Quartet also engaged deeply with the students in UChicago's Department of Music. In January, Pacifica Quartet joined forces with the University of Chicago Symphony Orchestra for a performance of Stephen Paulus's *Three Places of Enlightenment*. They collaborated with UChicago students once again in the spring, when they workshopped and performed two movements of Mendelssohn's Octet in E-flat Major alongside students from the Department of Music's Chamber Music Program. This side-by-side performance was the crown jewel of Pacifica's final residency event—a colloquium investigating the life cycle of a string quartet, in which they were joined in conversation by Professor Emeritus Don Michael Randel himself—and was the perfect way to cap off a year of community enrichment.

PACIFICA QUARTET

697 individuals reached through 24 events, including:

- 8 class visits
- 6 masterclasses/workshops/lecture demonstrations

- 1 school matinee
- 6 UChicago Lab School class visits
- 3 community performances

LOOKING AHEAD

As we reflect on the remarkable 80th anniversary season, we are filled with gratitude for the continued support of our community. With your enthusiasm and dedication, UChicago Presents will continue to bring the best of the world's music to Chicago. We look forward to the future with excitement as we curate new performances, discover emerging talent, and celebrate music's power to connect and inspire.

Thank you for joining us in this historic season. We can't wait to share what's next!

For more information and to stay up to date with upcoming events,
visit chicagopresents.uchicago.edu or call 773.702.2787.



Fire and Water Quintet



Bantu Continua
Uhuru Consciousness



Jeff Parker



Lyracle



**UChicago Presents celebrates
80 seasons of extraordinary music**

– Scan QR code to read UChicago News article –

Photos by Michael Jenks and Yuanjian Liu.

2023/24 DONOR LIST

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SPECIAL THANKS

The Saints, Volunteers for the Performing Arts

We gratefully acknowledge the many donors whose contributions under \$100 are not individually listed.

We are grateful to all of our partners and supporters, including:



The background image shows the interior of a Gothic-style concert hall. The seating consists of wooden pews arranged in a semi-circular pattern, facing a stage area that is mostly out of view. Large, arched windows with intricate tracery are visible on the left and right walls, letting in natural light. The walls are a dark, muted green color. The overall atmosphere is grand and historical.

**BRINGING THE WORLD'S BEST
MUSIC TO CHICAGO FOR
80 REMARKABLE YEARS.**

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ON COVER: CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO