FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Chicago Philharmonic brings the holidays to life with fearless Marcus Roberts Trio

Chicago, IL – (November 11 2019) This December, Chicago Philharmonic and the Marcus Roberts Trio turn up the heat at Harris Theater with a hot take on George Gershwin’s Concerto in F. The Marcus Roberts jazz trio (Marcus Roberts, piano; Jason Marsalis, drums; Rodney Jordan, bass) is renowned for its new approach to jazz performance with each of the talented musicians contributing equally to the trio’s musical texture, form, and direction. In Chicago in 1995, the Marcus Roberts Trio electrified the classical music world with an improvised response to Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue. As the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra performed the original Rhapsody score, the Marcus Roberts Trio improvised continuously, creating a completely new piece. This new arrangement of Gershwin’s classic remained faithful to the heart of the concerto; Gershwin himself improvised piano solos on the night of the Rhapsody in Blue premiere. Now, the Marcus Roberts Trio returns to Chicago to perform a fresh arrangement of Gershwin’s second piano concerto, Concerto in F.

In addition to the Concerto in F, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Scott Speck will lead the orchestra in Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn’s reimagining of The Nutcracker Suite, complete with cheeky renditions of classic movements like Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy and Dance of the Reed-Pipes (renamed Sugar Rum Cherry and Toot Toot Tootie Toot by Ellington). Plus, the orchestra will perform classic holiday carols by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

| Holidays: Marcus Roberts Trio |
| Sunday December 8, 3pm |
| Harris Theater, Chicago |

Scott Speck Conductor
Marcus Roberts Trio

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Christmas Overture
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky The Seasons, 12. December: Christmas-Tide
Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn The Nutcracker Suite
George Gershwin Concerto in F

Tickets $25 - $75 | Students from $10
chicagophilharmonic.org | (312) 957-0000
Approximate running time 1 hour and 20 minutes with intermission. Photos and review tickets available upon request.
ABOUT THE CHICAGO PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

The Chicago Philharmonic Society is a collaboration of nearly 200 of the highest-level classical musicians performing in the Chicago metropolitan area. Governed under a groundbreaking structure of musician leadership, the Society presents concerts at venues throughout the Chicago area that cover the full spectrum of classical music, from Bach to Bernstein and beyond. The Society’s orchestra, known simply as the Chicago Philharmonic, has been called “one of the country’s finest symphonic orchestras” (Chicago Tribune), and its unique chamber music ensembles, which perform as the Chicago Philharmonic Chamber Players, draw from its vast pool of versatile musicians. The Society’s community engagement programs connect Chicago-area youth to classical music and provide performance opportunities for members of the community. Founded 30 years ago, the Chicago Philharmonic currently serves as the official orchestra of the Joffrey Ballet, continues its 25-year association with the Ravinia Festival, is a resident company of Harris Theater Chicago, and performs at Auditorium Theater, Symphony Center and all the great concert halls of the Chicago and North Shore area. In 2018, the Illinois Council of Orchestras awarded the Chicago Philharmonic “Orchestra of the Year”. In 2019, the Illinois Council of Orchestras awarded the Chicago Philharmonic with “Programming of the Year” and “Community Relations of the Year”.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Scott Speck, Artistic Director, has inspired international acclaim as a conductor of passion, intelligence, and winning personality. Speck is the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Chicago Philharmonic, and Music Director of the Joffrey Ballet, Mobile (AL) and West Michigan Symphony Orchestras.

Speck led four performances for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2014-15 and was immediately reengaged for four more concerts the following season. His concerts with the Moscow RTV Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky Hall garnered unanimous praise. His gala performances with Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Midori, Evelyn Glennie, and Olga Kern have highlighted his recent and current seasons as Music Director of the Mobile Symphony. He was invited to the White House as former Music Director of the Washington Ballet.

In past seasons Speck has conducted at London’s Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, Chicago’s Symphony Center, Washington’s Kennedy Center, San Francisco’s War Memorial Opera House, and the Los Angeles Music Center. He has led numerous performances with the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Houston, Baltimore, Paris, Moscow, Shanghai, Beijing, Vancouver, Romania, Slovakia, Buffalo, Columbus (OH), Honolulu, Louisville, New Orleans, Oregon, Rochester, Florida, and Virginia, among many others.

Previously he held positions as Conductor of the San Francisco Ballet, Music Advisor and Conductor of the Honolulu Symphony, and Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Opera. During a tour of Asia he was named Principal Guest Conductor of the China Film Philharmonic in Beijing.

In addition, Speck is the co-author of two of the world’s best-selling books on classical music for a popular audience, Classical Music for Dummies and Opera for Dummies. These books have received stellar reviews in both the national and international press and have garnered enthusiastic endorsements from major American orchestras. They have been translated into twenty languages.
and are available around the world. His third book in the series, *Ballet for Dummies*, was released to great acclaim as well.

**The Marcus Roberts Trio** is a long-term musical partnership between pianist, Marcus Roberts, the phenomenal drummer Jason Marsalis, and gifted bassist Rodney Jordan

The Marcus Roberts Trio is known for its virtuosic style and entirely new approach to jazz trio performance. While most jazz trios have the piano front and center, all members of the Marcus Roberts Trio share equally in shaping the direction of the music by changing its tempo, mood, texture, or form at any time. And they do this with lightning quick musical reflexes and creative imagination. The trio is known for having almost telepathic communication on the stage. And more than a few concert goers have been heard to say that it sounds like a lot more than three people up there on the stage!

The Marcus Roberts Trio believes in 'letting the music take over' and the result is a powerfully rhythmic and melodic sound that is filled with rhythmic, harmonic, and dynamic contrast. One of the most enjoyable aspects of watching this trio perform is that it is so evident that these three musicians are really having fun playing together and listening to each other.

"One way Roberts individualizes his sound is by utilizing orchestral devices initially borrowed from the Ahmad Jamal Trio. In the course of a single piece, he constantly modulates grooves, tempos and keys, plays separate time signatures with the right hand and the left, and, as he puts it, "flips around the roles of the piano, bass and drums by giving everyone an equal opportunity to develop the concepts and themes, to change the form, to get us where we're getting ready to go." Ted Panken, Jazziz Magazine

Added to the logic and balanced trio style of Ahmad Jamal, is the swing and virtuosity of the Oscar Peterson Trio, combined with the buoyant joyous sound of Erroll Garner. These influences provide a rich foundation for the ever evolving and expanding sound of the Marcus Roberts Trio. The musical cues combine with musical inspiration from all over the world, which guarantees that audiences never know where this trio is heading; influences from Africa, Europe, and South America are combined with American traditions to give this group an infinite palate of styles, timbres and colors to draw from.

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