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**MUSIC OF THE BAROQUE TEAMS UP WITH THE CHICAGO
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION AND
THE NORTH SHORE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
FOR THE MIDWEST PREMIERE OF CONCERT THEATRE WORKS'
"THE CHEVALIER" FEB. 18 - 20**

Dame Jane Glover Conducts Bill Barclay's Play with Music Illuminating the Life and Work of Black 18th-Century Master Composer Joseph Bologne, Friend of Mozart, Music Teacher to Marie Antoinette and Anti-Slavery Crusader

CHICAGO—In partnership with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA), the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts and Concert Theater Works, **Music of the Baroque** presents the Midwest premiere of "**The Chevalier**," a new concert theater work written and directed by Bill Barclay. "The Chevalier" is about the life and music of 18th-century Black composer Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, a master composer, virtuoso violinist, a friend of Mozart's, music teacher to Marie Antoinette, the finest fencer in Europe, general of Europe's first Black regiment and a crusader for the abolishment of slavery. Taking a "concert theater" approach, featuring the interplay of four actors with orchestral and chamber music excerpts, Barclay blends Bologne's remarkable history with his own compositions, ultimately conflating the French Revolution with the social and political unrest in society today.

"The Chevalier," features music by Joseph Bologne (1745-1799) with additional music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Christoph Willibald Glück (1714–1787). **Dame Jane Glover** will conduct the Music of the Baroque Orchestra at all three Chicago-area locations in selections showcasing the breadth of Bologne's compositional output, from violin concertos to symphonies, string quartets to ballets. Music arrangements are by Barclay.

Performances will take place Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, and 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022 at 8 p.m. at Symphony Center. A community performance will take place 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 18, 2022 at the Kehrein Center for the Arts in Chicago's Austin neighborhood.

It is 1778 and a bedridden, bankrupt Mozart is carried into the Chevalier's kitchen. In spite of obvious differences, these two men of genius forge a friendship of equals navigating the new racial politics of a city hostile to outsiders. At the same time, the Chevalier's weekly music lessons with Marie Antoinette associate him with the monarchy at a time of civil unrest, and he must choose between his loyalty to the crown and the violent pursuit of abolition while Revolution inflames France.

"In 'The Chevalier' Bill Barclay has created a concert drama that resonates in current times" says Music of the Baroque executive Director Declan McGovern. "It tells the story and presents the music of a composer of color who battled injustice in the 18th century, but whose story speaks just as strongly in today's changing world. We at Music of the Baroque are delighted to

team up with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts and the Kehrein Center for the Arts to ensure that as many people as possible, from every corner of our community, have the opportunity to experience the remarkable life and music of Joseph Bologne.”

“Music of the Baroque is such a treasured part of the performance offerings at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie,” says the Center’s general Manager Michael Pauken. “I am thrilled that we are able to collaborate on this exciting and important project. ‘The Chevalier’ will sound and look terrific on our stage and I know our audiences will enjoy learning about this fascinating historical figure.”

“The Chevalier” is also closely allied with the promotion of anti-racism in concert music. The production raises money for the Sphinx National Alliance for Audition Support, which helps young musicians of color with the cost of auditioning for jobs in American orchestras. Commissioned by The Boston Symphony Orchestra in 2018, “The Chevalier” premiered in 2019 during Tanglewood Learning Institute’s inaugural season and was a finalist in the 2020 Eugene O’Neill National Playwrights Conference and Recipient of a National Endowment of the Arts Grant in 2021.

“The Chevalier” stars Brendon Elliott as the violinist Bologne and four outstanding actors performing the roles of The Chevalier, Mozart, Marie Antoinette and Choderlos de Laclos. Full casting and the design team will be announced at a later date.

“We are pleased to join Music of the Baroque and our fellow presenters to share in this opportunity that allows audiences to discover more about the life and music of Joseph Bologne,” said CSOA President Jeff Alexander. “His significant contributions to orchestral music are something to celebrate and we look forward to hosting this program at Symphony Center.”

Tickets:

“The Chevalier,” written and directed by Bill Barclay, will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 19, at the North Shore Center in Skokie, 9501 Skokie Blvd. and 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 20, at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

Individual concert tickets are \$25-\$100 and are available now through the box offices of the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts (northshorecenter.org) and Symphony Center (cso.org). Discounts for groups, students and seniors are available.

More information about the performance at Kehrein Center for the Arts will be available at a later date.

About Music of the Baroque

Under the direction of internationally acclaimed British conductor Dame Jane Glover, Music of the Baroque occupies a special place in the rich cultural life of Chicago. Long recognized as one of the region’s top classical groups, Music of the Baroque’s professional chorus and orchestra is one of the leading ensembles in the country devoted to the performance of 18th-century works.

Over the past five decades, Music of the Baroque has presented premiere performances of many early masterpieces, including Monteverdi’s operas and 1610 Vespers, Georg Philipp Telemann’s “Day of Judgment,” Mozart’s “Idomeneo” and numerous Handel operas and oratorios. The ensemble has drawn particular praise throughout its history for its performances of the major choral and orchestral works of J. S. Bach and Handel, Mozart and Haydn.

Opera News calls Music of the Baroque “one of Chicago’s musical glories” and the Chicago Sun-Times writes, “Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra may be the big guys on the local classical music scene, but in terms of sheer quality of performance...Music of the Baroque inhabits the same stratosphere.”

Music of the Baroque draws audiences from across the Chicago metropolitan area, performing regularly at the Harris Theater in Millennium Park in downtown Chicago and the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, as well as at intimate Chicago and suburban churches. Listeners across the country enjoy the work of Music of the Baroque through radio broadcasts and recordings on 98.7WFMT Radio.

Through its "Strong Voices" program, Music of the Baroque conducts arts education to support and enhance music education programs at Chicago public high schools. Music of the Baroque is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. For more information about Music of Baroque, visit baroque.org.

BIOGRAPHIES

Bill Barclay (Writer, Director, Producer) Hailed a ‘personable polymath’ in the London Times, Barclay was director of music at Shakespeare’s Globe from 2012-2019, where he produced music for over 120 productions and 150 concerts. A director, composer, writer and producer, he is the artistic director of Concert Theatre Works. Broadway and West End credits include “Farinelli and the King,” “Twelfth Night,” and “Richard III,” all starring Mark Rylance. A passionate advocate for evolving the concert hall, he has created works of concert theatre for the LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican and six times for the Boston Symphony Orchestra (including “Peer Gynt,” “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” with Andris Nelsons, “The Magic Flute,” and “L’Histoire du soldat” with Charles Dutoit). Other credits include The Silkroad Ensemble, London Philharmonic Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Virginia Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Tanglewood, Washington National Cathedral and Buckingham Palace.

Brendon Elliott (Solo Violin) A three-time concerto competition winner, Brendon Elliott has performed with the New York Philharmonic and was recently guest soloist with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra and Richmond Symphony Orchestra. In 2015 and 2019, Brendon toured with the Sphinx Virtuosi Ensemble including Carnegie Hall. Elliott was a three-time semifinalist in the National Sphinx Competition, earning the National Sphinx Competition Achievement Award in 2012. He was also a National Finalist in the American String Teacher’s Association National Solo Competition. Elliott enjoyed a role in the feature-length film documentary “The Bridgetower” where he portrayed the young adult version of the Afro-European child violin prodigy George. Elliott received his Bachelor’s with Pamela Frank and Joseph Silverstein at The Curtis Institute of Music in 2016 and his Master’s with Sylvia Rosenberg and Ronald Copes at The Juilliard School in 2018.

Concert Theatre Works Founded to help musicians tell stories, Concert Theatre Works currently represents a wide range of touring “concert theatre” projects commissioned by some of the world’s leading venues, including The Hollywood Bowl, Shakespeare’s Globe, Broadway, The Barbican, Washington National Cathedral, Buckingham Palace and Tanglewood. Partners include The Boston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, City of London Sinfonia, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Silk Road Ensemble, Musicians of Shakespeare’s Globe, Virginia Symphony Orchestra, the BFI, Washington National Cathedral and The English Concert. Original concert theatre works have been conducted by Andris Nelsons, Charles Dutoit, Bramwell Tovey, Sakari Oramo, Trevor Pinnock, JoAnn Falletta, Hans Graf and Ken-David Masur. New collaborations include the puppetry masters Gyre & Gimple, composer Max Richter, and new works for young audiences.