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TWO MUSICIANS ANNOUNCED AS THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CHICAGO — Chicago Symphony announces the appointment of two musicians to the second violin section of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO): Jung Min Choi and Jesús Linárez join the section on January 25, 2027. Both won their final auditions in September 2026. They are the ninth and 10th CSO musicians appointed by Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä.

About Jung Min Choi
Jung Min Choi, praised by *The Strad* for her "wealth of colour and nuance," is a violinist of international acclaim. She is the first prize and a special prize winner at the 2023 Schoenfeld International String Competition and her accolades include second prize at the 2020 Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition and a special prize at the 2015 Michael Hill International Violin Competition.

Choi made her debut in the Kumho Art Hall Prodigy Series at age twelve and has since performed internationally as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player. Her notable concert appearances include Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Kimmel Center, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan and Seoul Arts Center. Her artistry has been featured in leading publications, including *Ongaku no Tomo* and *Auditorium*.

Admitted to the Curtis Institute of Music at age thirteen, Choi earned her bachelor's degree under the guidance of Joseph Silverstein, Pamela Frank and Victor Danchenko. She completed her master's degree studying with Miriam Fried at the New England Conservatory and earned an Artist Diploma under Ilya Kaler at the Cleveland Institute of Music, serving as concertmaster of both the NEC Philharmonia and the CIM Orchestra. Choi has also received mentorship from Koichiro Harada and Kyoko Takezawa.

About Jesús Linárez
A native of Venezuela, Jesús Linárez is a violinist whose artistry and leadership have earned him international recognition. He was a Chicago Symphony Orchestra Fellow from 2023 until 2026.

In addition to the fellowship, Linárez served as the concertmaster of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra for the 2025/26 season, bringing his expressive playing and orchestral expertise to one of the Southwest's premier ensembles. He was a member of the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra during the 2022/23 season and served as concertmaster of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago in 2022. That same year, he was also awarded a fellowship with the Grant Park Orchestra, reflecting his growing reputation within Chicago's vibrant classical scene.

Internationally, Linárez performed with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra on a European tour under the direction of Gustavo Dudamel in 2016 — a formative experience that shaped his artistic vision and global perspective, performing in some of the most prestigious music halls such as Berlin Philharmonie, Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, and Philharmonie Luxembourg, among others in cities including London, Munich, Cologne, Istanbul and Toulouse.

Linárez is the first-prize winner of the Chicago Violin Competition, a winner of the Concerto Competition at Roosevelt University and a recipient of the Evanston Music Club Scholarship. He was also a semi-finalist in the 2021 Sphinx Competition, a national competition that celebrates excellence among young Black and Latino classical musicians.

He earned both his bachelor and master of music degrees in violin performance from Roosevelt University in Chicago between 2018 and 2024, under the world-class violin teacher Almita Vamos. His early musical training took place at the Conservatorio de Música Vicente Emilio Sojo in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, where he studied violin, piano and music theory from 2009 until 2017.

With a unique blend of international experience, competitive accolades and strong leadership in major American ensembles, Linárez continues to establish himself as a compelling and forward-thinking musician in the classical music world.

The CSO's music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation.

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Chicago Symphony: chicagosymphony.org

Chicago Symphony is a beacon of musical excellence and inspiration, both in Chicago and around the world. The organization stewards three acclaimed classical music ensembles, including the renowned Chicago Symphony Orchestra; presents a dynamic performance series with guest artists, and comprises an embedded music education institute. At Chicago Symphony, the legendary sound of the CSO meets the future of music, inviting everyone to experience and connect with the transformative power of live performance.

The iconic Chicago Symphony Orchestra is the core ensemble, recognized worldwide for its artistic force and command of a deep, evolving repertoire. The CSO has been at the forefront of classical music since its founding in 1891, with a long history of introducing new compositions to the United States and the world. The CSO's vitality continues to inspire music lovers with nearly 150 concerts annually, weekly syndicated radio broadcasts and a catalog of celebrated recordings.

Klaus Mäkelä, a leader of classical music's next generation, begins his tenure as Zell Music Director in the 2027/28 Season, ushering in a new chapter for the CSO. His appointment as the 11th music director deepens Mäkelä's creative partnership with the musicians that began when he first conducted the Orchestra in 2022. Mäkelä succeeds Riccardo Muti, who held the position from 2010 to 2023 and now serves as the CSO's music director emeritus for life.

Chicago Symphony's other ensembles include the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the nation's largest professional chorus known for its extraordinary quality, and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, a prestigious ensemble for early-career musicians that prepares its members for multifaceted and meaningful careers in orchestral music and beyond. Chicago Symphony Presents features world-renowned guest artists in jazz, global, and chamber music and offers one of the country's most distinguished piano recital series.

Chicago Symphony Center is our primary venue and home to the historic Orchestra Hall, where the CSO has performed for over a century. Located adjacent to Millennium Park, the Center is the musical heart of the Chicago Cultural Mile. The CSO's summer home is the Ravinia Festival on the North Shore, where the Orchestra performs a popular series of outdoor concerts each year.

As a cultural leader, we provide exceptional musical experiences and education for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. The Chicago Symphony Negaunee Music Institute produces concerts for schools and families, organizes free and low -cost public programming at venues throughout Chicago, and offers world-class musical training to tomorrow's musicians. The Institute also spearheads social impact initiatives that highlight the unique ability of music to foster empathy and healing.

Whether you are a classical music aficionado, looking to discover new artists or seeking connection with your community, Chicago Symphony is where you belong.