

## 2022 WINTER ARTS PREVIEW CLASSICAL MUSIC AND JAZZ

## Winter 2022 highlights in a highly musical town

The following events are worthy of your time but far from final word

By Hannah Edgar  
For Chicago Tribune

In times like these, what's missing from a season preview might say as much as what's on it. For one, this list overrepresents large venues, many of which have planned their bookings well in advance. That's not to undersell any of the highlights therein, but merely to offer an all-too-familiar disclaimer: Now more than ever, smaller organizations are planning as they go. Watching omicron buffet the world, who can blame them?

As always, the following events are worthy of your time, but far from the final word on live music this winter, should the center hold. Check in with venues directly for the most up-to-date information and safety protocols.

**Symphony Center Presents Jazz:** Another centenary sullied by COVID: Charlie Parker's, in August 2020. Drummer Terri Lyne Carrington and saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa were supposed to co-lead "Fly Higher," a Parker tribute, at Symphony Center two seasons ago. Instead, they'll play a starry double bill featuring projects that made recording debuts in 2019 and 2020, respectively: Carrington's genre-snubbing Social Science sextet and Mahanthappa's Hero Trio, with longtime bandmates François Moutin on bass and Rudy Royston on drums. Then, a few months later at the same venue, an old project is made new again: The quartet saxophonist Joshua Redman assembled on 1994's "MoodSwing" — pianist Brad Mehldau, bassist Christian McBride, and drummer Brian Blade — plays its first Chicago gig since sauntering into its supergroup status with last year's sleek "RoundAgain." Terri Lyne Carrington and Social Science / Rudresh Mahanthappa's Hero Trio double bill, 8 p.m. Feb. 4 at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.; tickets \$28-\$89; "A MoodSwing Reunion," 8 p.m. April 20 at Symphony Center, tickets \$36-\$112; cso.org

**Echoes from the end time:** If your relationship with music has changed over the last two years, join the club — there's lots of us here. Chicago a cappella brings that transformation to the fore with "Coming Out of the Dark," a program sourced entirely of songs from singers' pandemic playlists. CAC members will share the stories behind their selections, whether an unpublished arrangement by late Chicago composer Margaret Bonds (of "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free," made famous by Nina Simone) or Dolly Parton's "Light of a Clear Blue Morning." Then, the ensemble performs world-premiere works by the winners of its first HerVoice Women Composers Competition, Sarai Hillman and Edna Yeh. 8 p.m. Feb. 11, Allen Recital Hall at DePaul University, 2330 N. Halsted St.; 8 p.m. Feb. 12, Nichols Concert Hall, 1490 Chicago Ave.,



The audience fills the concert hall at Chicago Symphony Center while the orchestra prepares to perform Dvorák's Violin Concerto A Minor, conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada, on Dec. 9. VICTOR HILITSKI/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Evanston; 8 p.m. Feb. 19, Pilgrim Congregational Church, 460 Lake St., Oak Park; 4 p.m. Feb. 20, Wentz Concert Hall, 171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville. Video highlights streamed online 7 p.m. March 3. All tickets \$33-\$45; more information at [www.chicagoacapella.org](http://www.chicagoacapella.org)

**Overlooked composer takes center stage:** Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges might have been 18th century France's most interesting man: He was not only a virtuoso violinist and composer who championed nascent forms like the string quartet and symphonie concertante, but an expert fencer, strident abolitionist and military hero. But, like so many Black composers, his accomplishments have been relegated to the margins of history. "The Chevalier," a partly staged concert theater work jointly presented by Music of the Baroque — whose musicians will play music by Bologne and his contemporaries — and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, dramatizes his story. In the play's Midwest premiere, actor R.J. Foster and violinist Brendon Elliott both play Bologne; playwright and director Bill Barclay, former music director at Shakespeare's Globe, appears as novelist (and Bologne's onetime librettist) Pierre Choderlos de Laclos. 7:30 p.m. Feb. 18 at Kehrein Center for the Arts, 5628 W. Washington Blvd.; free; 7:30 p.m. Feb. 19 at North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, Skokie, tickets \$20-\$55; 8 p.m. Feb. 20 at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.; tickets \$25-\$100; [www.baroque.org/chevalier](http://www.baroque.org/chevalier)

**Frequency Festival:** When I attended the fifth iteration of this heroic endeavor, curated by music journalist Peter Margasak, in February and March 2020, I had no idea I was witnessing an extended swan song to in-person live performances. If all goes according to plan, the festival will stage its comeback this February, presenting musicians from around the globe. Final programming details are still to come, but so far the 2022 festival promises as broad a spread as recent years:

Julius Hemphill's rarely-heard string quartet arrangements of Charles Mingus compositions, as performed by cellist Tomeka Reid and colleagues; a visit by singular pedal steel avant-gardist Susan Alcorn; and a performance by hometown sound spelunkers Ensemble Dal Niente, to name just a few acts. Feb. 22-27, venues will be Constellation, 3111 N. Western Ave., with one performance at the Logan Center for the Arts; ticketing details to be announced; [www.frequencyfestival-chicago.com](http://www.frequencyfestival-chicago.com)

**Say it ain't so, Spektral:** Last month, Spektral Quartet stunned fans when it announced plans to disband at the end of this season, with its final Chicago performance set for June 11. Until then, the ensemble has a typically beefy winter planned, starting with a hitherto-delayed commission by former CSO composer-in-residence Samuel Adams (Feb. 4). Then, in something like a sonic game of dominoes, a new quartet by Pulitzer Prize winner Bernard Rands becomes the source material for (count 'em) eight world premieres by Chicago Composers' Consortium members, all performed on the same night alongside their muse (March 2). But the Spektrals are calling their April concerts at Adler Planetarium the season's marquee event, and with good reason: Ensnored by Sigurdur Gudjonsson's projected art in the Grainger Sky Theater, the quartet plays Anna Thorvaldsdottir's "Enigma," recorded earlier this year in their desolate, devastating EP "Once More, With Feeling: Featuring Samuel Adams' 'Current,'" 8:30 p.m. Feb. 4 at Constellation, 3111 N. Western Ave.; "The Bernard Rands Effect: Nine World Premieres," 7:30 p.m. March 2 at Allen Recital Hall at DePaul University; "Enigma: A 360-Degree Video Experience," April 7-8 at Adler Planetarium, 1300 S. DuSable Lake Shore Drive, more details to come; [spektral quartet.com](http://spektralquartet.com)

**The big band celebrates a big one:** Where there's a jazz season at Symphony Center, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra is sure to be close behind. But

this visit is special, and not just because the series is back on its feet for the first time since 2020: Wynton Marsalis turned 60 in October. The JLCO's birthday bash features arrangements and familiar originals, then follows it up the following evening with "Freedom, Justice and Hope," a multidisciplinary concert featuring narration by Equal Justice Initiative founder Bryan Stevenson. "Wynton at 60," 8 p.m. Feb. 25; "Freedom, Justice and Hope," 2 p.m. Feb. 26, both at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.; tickets \$48-\$173; [cso.org](http://cso.org)

**"Ravi Shankar: Ragamala to Rock Star":** If you haven't made your way to the South Asia Institute (SAI) — which opened in 2019 at 19th Street and Michigan Avenue — for this belated centenary exhibit and affiliated programming, be sure to do so before it closes in early March. Curated by Shankar protegee Gaurav Mazumdar and biographer Oliver Craske, it features the sitarist and composer's personal effects, concert ephemera, performance footage, and more. Mazumdar leads a raga workshop for musicians of all levels on Jan. 8 (\$15 admission), followed by a concert the following week (Jan. 15, \$25 admission). Then, there's more to come in February: SAI will host screenings and discussions of the concert films "Tenth Decade: Live in Escondido" and "Ravi and Anoushka Shankar Live in Bangalore," as well as a discussion between Craske and journalist Aaron Cohen. Until March 5, South Asia Institute, 1925 S. Michigan Ave., open Thursdays through Saturdays, Sundays through Wednesdays by appointment; admission \$10 adults, \$5 students, with free admission every Friday; [www.saichicago.org](http://www.saichicago.org)

**All eyes on the Chicago Symphony's composers-in-residence:** We're wishing a speedy recovery to CSO music director Riccardo Muti, who fell ill with pneumonia in December. He's currently scheduled to lead four residencies with the orchestra in coming months, with his March-through-May showings promising to be the most intriguing: The orches-

tra makes up the COVID-stymied premiere of former composer-in-residence Missy Mazzoli's "Orpheus Undone" and unveils a still-untilled world premiere by current resident Jessie Montgomery. Gustav Mahler's heartstring-thrumming "Rückert-Lieder," sung by Latvian mezzo Elina Garanča, joins Mazzoli's "Orpheus" (March 31 to April 5), while the CSO's principal bassist, Alexander Hanna, steps into his second solo spotlight in as many years alongside Montgomery's premiere, in Giovanni Bottesini's cornerstone Double Bass Concerto No. 2 (April 28 to May 3). Montgomery will also helm her second MusicNOW program on March 14, a kaleidoscopic collection of contemporary art songs. "Night of Song," 7 p.m. March 14 at Harris Theater, tickets \$20; Muti conducts Mazzoli and Mahler with Elina Garanča, March 31 to April 5 at Symphony Center, tickets \$32-\$220; Muti conducts Montgomery and Beethoven Pastoral, April 28 to May 3 at Symphony Center, tickets \$38-\$254; [cso.org](http://cso.org)

**"Vulture Prince" touches down at Constellation:** The news that Brooklyn-based composer Arooj Aftab netted two major Grammy nominations (best new artist and best global music performance) rekindled much-deserved praise for her third album, "Vulture Prince" — a hypnotic, aching collection of Urdu songs Aftab largely composed while grieving her younger brother's death. Here, she makes her first Chicago appearance since its release in April 2021, joined by to-be-announced instrumentalists. 8 p.m. April 11 at Constellation, 3111 N. Western Ave.; tickets \$25 at [constellation-chicago.com](http://constellation-chicago.com)

**For Chicago's early music stalwart, a change of suits:** The Newberry Consort's 35th anniversary season will be artistic directors Ellen Hargis and David Douglass's last: They're succeeded by Liza Malamut, whose early music chops were sharpened on the sackbut, a predecessor to the trombone. With the help of scholars, the final concert of the season reconstructs "La Civetta" ("The Little Owl"), an obscure card game that inspired a 17th century comic intermezzo of the same name by Virgilio Mazzocchi. Extending the card theme is "Il Giuoco del Quadriglio" ("The Game of Quadrille"), an 18th century cantata that hits close to home: Its composer, Antonio Caldara, ran himself into debt from his gambling addiction. "Four Queens and a Joker," 8 p.m. April 22 at Hairpin Arts Center; 8 p.m. April 23 at International House at the University of Chicago; 3 p.m. April 24 at Galvin Recital Hall at Northwestern University. All tickets \$50; [www.newberryconsort.org](http://www.newberryconsort.org)

Hannah Edgar is a freelance writer.

The Rubin Institute for Music Criticism helps fund our classical music coverage. The Chicago Tribune maintains complete editorial control over assignments and content.

## Theater

from Page 1

1930s. The director and choreographer Kenny Ingram will heat things up from there. Jan. 15 to Feb. 27 at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St.; 773-777-9884 and [porchlightmusictheatre.org](http://porchlightmusictheatre.org)

**"Come From Away":** Although modestly scaled and conceived, this musical about what happened when a fleet of aircraft were forced to land in Newfoundland, Canada following the crisis of Sept. 11, 2001, has turned into a great popular hit, especially on this national tour of Christopher Ashley's original Broadway production. Its emotional message of togetherness, tolerance and the generosity of ordinary people has proven most applicable to this pandemic moment and if you're looking for something warm and heart-felt, this production likely will fit the bill. Feb. 22 to March 6 at the Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph St.; 800-775-2000 and [www.broadwayinchicago.com](http://www.broadwayinchicago.com)

**"Gem of the Ocean":** The Goodman Theatre was one of the first in the nation to produce all 10 of August Wilson's major plays and it's now reached the point where it is ready for Round 2. "Gem of the Ocean," which the Goodman premiered in 2003, is set in 1904 in Pittsburgh's Hill District and

thus could be seen as the beginning of Wilson's famed cycle of dramas depicting the Black experience in each decade of the 20th century. Of course, Wilson didn't write the plays in order; "Gem" came toward the end and thus is freighted with this great writer's growing interest in myth and symbol as a way of unifying his ever-richer plays. The new production will be directed by the veteran Chuck Smith. Wilson fans should note that this was the play where we finally met Aunt Ester, a character who haunts so many of the other dramas. Lisa Gaye Dixon plays that role with Sharif Atkins as Citizen Barlow. Jan. 22 to Feb. 27 at the Goodman's Albert Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St.; 312-443-3800 and [www.goodmantheatre.org](http://www.goodmantheatre.org)

**"Groundhog Day":** Now here's a title for the moment: the Broadway musical based on the iconic Bill Murray movie, as filmed in beautiful Woodstock, Illinois. The musical, poorly directed in its original 2017 production, always was better material than Broadway pundits realized and it will be fun to see it re-imagined at this frequently excellent suburban theater, where director Jim Corti takes the helm of a show that's all about doing the same thing over and over again. Sound familiar? Jan. 26 to March 13 at Paramount Theatre, 23 E. Galena Blvd., Aurora; 630-896-6666 and [www.paramountaurora.com](http://www.paramountaurora.com)

**"King James":** This new play (long postponed due to the pandemic) from Steppenwolf Theatre Company ensemble member Rajiv Joseph looks at the relationship between the basketball star LeBron James and the city of Cleveland. It's not a biography of the great man himself but more of an exploration of how and what he offered a Rust Belt city struggling to find its way toward the future. If successful, the show likely will have a Broadway future and it's the work here of Anna D. Shapiro, the former artistic director of Steppenwolf, who will be directing a cast that includes Glenn Davis, one of her two successors. March 3 to April 10 at Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St.; 312-335-1650 and [www.steppenwolf.org](http://www.steppenwolf.org)

**"Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon":** Lookingglass Theatre bows its first new, in-person show since before the pandemic with the February opening of this musical, directed by Amanda Dehnert and composed and written by one of the theater's own artistic associates, Matthew Yee. "Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon" its all about a "quintessential" young American couple, renegades both, as they journey across America to an original soundtrack drawing from both American folk and the country and Western genre. Feb. 16 to April 10 at Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave.; 312-337-0665 or [www.lookingglasstheatre.org](http://www.lookingglasstheatre.org)

**"Moulin Rouge! The Musical":** An ebullient jukebox musical that samples songs by everyone from Edith Piaf to Mick Jagger to Katy Perry, this decadent celebration and live translation of Baz Luhrmann's widely beloved 2001 movie is headed to Chicago this winter for an extended run that likely will be crucial to the Loop's hoped-for economic recovery in 2022. As I noted when I saw this red-velour extravaganza on Broadway in 2019, the show has two main attractions: One is the sheer number of songs to be heard. There are some 70 musical numbers (or fragments thereof) featuring the work of 161 songwriters of dizzying variety. The other is Derek McLane's eye-popping extravaganza of a set, a celebration of romance and glamour. Feb. 26 to April 24 at the James M. Nederlander Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St.; 800-775-2000 and [www.broadwayinchicago.com](http://www.broadwayinchicago.com)

**"Queen of the Night":** After a long pandemic pause, Victory Gardens is returning to live performance this January with a new play by Travis Tate, staged by the incoming artistic director Ken-Matt Martin. "Queen of the Night" looks at the relationship between a divorced Black father and his gay son as the two try and re-create one of their camping trips from when the young man was still a kid. A reckoning ensues that explores many complex issues of the moment. Jan. 29 to March 13 at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln

Ave.; 773-871-3000 or [www.victorygardens.org](http://www.victorygardens.org)

**"Relentless":** TimeLine Theatre returns to live performance with a new work by Tyla Abercrombie developed by the theater and directed by Ron OJ Parson. Set in Philadelphia in 1919, "Relentless" focuses on two Black sisters returning home to settle their mother's estate and also trying to reconcile themselves with their own family's past. This is a home-grown world premiere penned by a woman long known as a talented Chicago actor. Jan. 19 to Feb. 26 at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.; 773-281-8463 and [timelinetheatre.com](http://timelinetheatre.com)

**"Wife of a Salesman":** The winter offering at Writers Theatre is not Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" but Eleanor Burgess' feminist riff on the iconic Miller play. In this new work, which the playwright says also was inspired by interviews with her grandmothers, Burgess aims to re-center a play focused on the malaise of its central male character and his sons. Herein, a character inspired by Linda Loman travels to Boston to confront the woman with whom her husband is having an affair. March 3 to April 3 at Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Court, Glenview, 847-242-6000 and [writersheater.org](http://writersheater.org)

Chris Jones is a Tribune critic.

[cjones5@chicagotribune.com](mailto:cjones5@chicagotribune.com)