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RAVINIA CREATES ROLE OF CONDUCTOR LAUREATE FOR JAMES LEVINE

**Longtime Music Director will renew his summer residency,
conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra
and leading master classes at Ravinia's Steans Music Institute**

HIGHLAND PARK, IL—Ravinia has created the role of Conductor Laureate—a title reserved for an exalted musician whose eminent leadership has formed and shaped an institution's artistic quality over time—for James Levine, recognizing him as one of the most significant conductors in history, announced Ravinia President and CEO Welz Kauffman today. Levine served as Music Director of Ravinia for 21 years (1973–93), almost as long as the combined tenures of the festival's three other music directors (Seiji Ozawa, Christoph Eschenbach, and James Conlon). The five-year appointment has an evergreen renewal.

“Every presenter strives to share the world's greatest artists with their audiences, and this historic appointment is prime proof of Ravinia's devotion to the music, the listeners, and to the man himself,” Kauffman said. “Ravinia's love of Levine has shone brightly for decades, and we're thrilled that this exciting new Levine Residency demonstrates that the feeling is mutual.”

In this new role, Levine will conduct multiple programs in his two-week annual residency, as part of the CSO's six-week summer residency, beginning in 2018.

“Ravinia commands the ideal resources, a superb orchestra and chorus in a welcoming environment, for live audiences to experience music's rich and varied masterworks,” Levine said. “I look forward to sharing this music and my lifelong love for it with Ravinia audiences over the next several summers.”

Ravinia, America's oldest and most programmatically diverse music festival, has employed a music director for less than half of its 108 years of presenting the CSO. (The orchestra became a regular attraction at Ravinia in 1905, and the festival has hosted its official summer residency since 1936.) Levine made his Ravinia debut as a last-minute replacement in 1971, and he so inspired the musicians, audiences, and management that he was named the festival's second music director just months later.

In addition to conducting CSO concerts, Maestro Levine will work with participants in the festival's professional summer conservatory, Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, which he himself created with longtime Ravinia Executive Director Edward Gordon in 1988.

"The image my mind generates when I hear the word *conductor* is of James Levine. That's because I, like so many in the Ravinia Family, literally grew up watching with wonder as he made magic happen right before our eyes and ears," said Ravinia Board Chairman Jennifer Steans. "We witnessed that thrill again with the Mahler Second Symphony on his return last summer, and I am excited that a new generation of listeners will experience this magic, and especially thrilled that he will share his musical brilliance, vast experience, and unparalleled wisdom with the artists of RSMI." Ravinia's Steans Music Institute is named in honor of Jennifer Steans's mother, Lois Steans, in a gift of support to the not-for-profit festival from her father, Harrison Steans.

"This is a homecoming that few musicians are privileged to experience," Levine said. "It's an exciting amalgamation of history and my future, and how proud I am to feel at home in front of one of the world's finest ensembles in one of the world's most charming and inviting venues."

Levine returns to Ravinia on Aug. 8 this season to conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in Haydn's *The Creation*.

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