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For Immediate Release

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Announces Endea Owens as its 2023 MAC Music Innovator

CINCINNATI, OH (November 10, 2022)—The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) announced **Endea Owens** as its 2023 MAC Music Innovator. Owens is an award-winning bassist known for her vibrancy and international array of musical projects and collaborations. Endea is the bassist for singer Jon Batiste's band Stay Human, house bassist for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, and creator of The Community Cookout initiative, which brings hot meals and free music to communities in need.

The Orchestra's **MAC Music Innovator** is a year-long music residency that works to showcase and highlight Black leaders of classical music. Selected musicians embody artistic innovation and a passion for community engagement and education. With support from the Multicultural Awareness Council (MAC), a volunteer group that supports audience engagement initiatives with the CSO, the MAC Music Innovator will collaborate closely with the CSO's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) and Learning departments to create a distinctive residency with educational and community engagement programs. During her time as the MAC Music Innovator, Owens will engage with area students, community partnerships, chamber performance opportunities, and a culminating orchestra performance with the CSO.

"We are excited to have Endea Owens as our 2023 MAC Music Innovator," said **Jonathan Martin**, President and CEO of the CSO. "Her musicianship and heart for community, as evidenced by her work as the founder of The Community Cookout, are admirable. She is already a role model to young people who dream of carving a path for themselves in music, and we look forward to seeing the impact that Endea will bring to students in our schools and the greater community."

"I am deeply honored to be chosen as the 2023 MAC Music Innovator by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra," said **Owens**. "The CSO's dedication towards both music and community is nothing short of amazing, and being selected as a MAC Music Innovator is something that I hold very dear to my heart. Growing up, I rarely had the opportunity to see live performances of any kind due to many variables. Now with the help of the CSO, I can be a part of the change that I've always wanted to see. I am excited to perform alongside so many incredible musicians and bring classical music, jazz, free meals, and joy to people from so many communities. The true spirit of music always begins with the people."

Endea Owens is the 6th MAC Music Innovator since the residency's creation in 2018, following violinist Kelly Hall-Thompkins (2018), pianist Michelle Cann (2019), composer and drummer Mark Lomax (2020), composer and pianist William Menefield (2021), and conductor Antoine Clark (2022).

Endea Owens

Known as one of jazz's most vibrant emerging artists, Endea Owens is a Detroit-raised recording artist, bassist, and composer. She has been mentored by jazz icons such as Marcus Belgrave, Rodney Whitaker, and Ron Carter. She has toured and performed with Wynton Marsalis, Jennifer Holliday, Diana Ross, Rhonda Ross, Solange, Jon Batiste, Jazzmeia Horn, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Steve Turre, and many others.

In 2018, Endea graduated from The Juilliard School, and joined *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* as a member of the house band, Stay Human. Since then, Endea has won an Emmy, Grammy Award, and a George Foster Peabody Award. Endea's work has appeared on Jon Batiste's Grammy Award-winning album *We Are*, the Oscar-nominated film *Judas and the Black Messiah*, and H.E.R's widely acclaimed Super Bowl LV performance.

Endea has a true passion for philanthropy and teaching. She has taught students across the United States, South America, and Europe. In 2020, Endea founded the Community Cookout, a non-profit organization birthed out of the Covid-19 pandemic, that provides meals and music to underserved neighborhoods in New York City. To date, Endea's organization has helped feed close to 3,000 New Yorkers, and has hosted over a dozen free music concerts.

In 2022, Endea composed an original piece about the life of Ida B. Wells entitled "Ida's Crusade" for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, which was also performed by the NYO Carnegie Hall Orchestra. Endea has also written for brands such as Pyer Moss and Glossier. Endea is set to premiere a newly commissioned work with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and will serve as the 2023 MAC Music Innovator with the organization. In addition to her work with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Endea is the curator for the National Arts Club and also a fellow for *Jazz is Now!* with the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, where she presents original compositions, curates series, and headlines performances for the 2022-2023 season. Endea's debut album "Feel Good Music" is set for release in early 2023.

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

With a legacy dating back 127 years, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is considered one of America's finest and most versatile ensembles. Led by Louis Langrée since 2013, the CSO's distinguished roster of past music directors includes Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ysaÿe, Fritz Reiner, Max Rudolf, Jesús López Cobos and Paavo Järvi. Matthias Pintscher is the Orchestra's Creative Partner, and previous artistic partners have included Lang Lang, Philip Glass, Branford Marsalis and Jennifer Higdon. The Orchestra also performs as the Cincinnati Pops, founded by Erich Kunzel in 1977 and currently led by John Morris Russell with Damon Gupton serving as Principal Guest Conductor. The CSO further elevates the city's vibrant arts scene by serving as the official orchestra for the Cincinnati May Festival, Cincinnati Opera and Cincinnati Ballet.

The CSO has long championed the composers and music of its time and has given historic American premieres by Claude Debussy, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Maurice Ravel, Béla Bartók, William

Grant Still and other prominent composers. It has also commissioned many works that ultimately became mainstays of the classical repertoire, including Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*. The Orchestra continues to actively commission new work, amplifying new voices from a diverse array of backgrounds, most recently with the Fanfare Project, a series of solo instrument works written for CSO musicians to share musical reflections of time during the Covid pandemic.

Deeply committed to inclusion, relevance, and enhancing and expanding opportunities for the children of Greater Cincinnati, the Orchestra works to bring music education, in its many different forms, to as broad a public as possible. In 2020, the CSO was one of the first American orchestras to create a Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer position to ensure the absorption of best DE&I practices into every facet of the organization. The CSO/CCM Diversity Fellowship, a nationally recognized program in partnership with the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, provides a graduate degree-level education with performance and professional development opportunities for extraordinary young string players from populations historically underrepresented in American orchestras. The CSO is also an incubator for and partner to NIMAN, a consortium of American orchestras, professional musicians and educators established to address the lack of racial equity in the classical music field by aligning resources and collaborating to strengthen the trajectory of classical instrumentalists of color at all stages of their pre-careers.

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