

**Blake-Anthony Johnson,  
CEO & President of Chicago Sinfonietta,  
presents closing remarks  
at Toronto Stock Exchange Headquarters in visit with  
World Business Chicago & Chicago Sister Cities International**



PICTURED: (pictured left to right) Billy Ndizeye, WBC Venture Program Associate; Karissa Suarez Del Real, WBC Sr. Manager, Global Strategic Initiatives; Blake-Anthony Johnson; George Khalife, Toronto Stock Exchange Vice President- Midwest U.S.; Karla Ruth Orozco Toledano, WBC Director of Foreign Direct Investment; Kyle Schulz WBC, Executive VP of Business & Workforce Development

**CHICAGO, IL** - President and CEO of Chicago Sinfonietta believes in promoting classical music in every possible way. Today, as a member of the World Business Chicago delegation to Toronto, he had the opportunity to speak and close out the Toronto Stock Exchange and speak at the Collision Conference 2023.

"Businesses are like tapestries woven together by individuals, and culture is the thread that connects them in deep and collaborative ways. Without this cultural fabric, the City of Chicago cannot remain a global economic engine of innovation," stated Mr. Johnson.

In his speech (excerpted), Mr. Johnson also stated, "The great City of Chicago known as the "City of the Big Shoulders" is waiting with open arms to do business with you.

"... it's deeply ingrained in the Chicago culture to welcome all, especially those who wish to do business in this great global city."

Having just given not one, but two presentations at the recent League of American Orchestras annual event, and announced as one of eight Chicago leaders attending Harvard Business School's Executive Education course, Strategic Perspectives in Non-profit Management (SPNM) this July, Mr. Johnson also took time to share during conversations the cultural side of Chicago - particularly upcoming events with his Chicago Sinfonietta.

Upcoming Chicago Sinfonietta events include:

**COMMUNITY & PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

**JULY 5 - JULY 20, Wednesday from 4:30-5:30 PM | Richard M. Daley Branch Meeting Room and via ZOOM**

This event is part of Chicago Public Library's Summer Reading Program. From the Young Lords to the Black Panthers, the West Side of Chicago has a deep-rooted history of organizing in the name of activism, community building, justice, growth, and equality. Please join Chicago Public Library and the Chicago Sinfonietta, as we read, learn, and discuss the radical histories of the West Side.

Young Lords: A Radical History by Johanna Fernandez.

**JULY 14 - July 27, Thursdays from 3:30-4:30 PM | Richard M. Daley Branch Meeting Room and via ZOOM**

From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago by Jakobi Williams.

**JULY 16 | SUNDAYS ON STATE**

State Street Downtown Chicago Festival, join us for performance and giveaways 2:00 - 3:00 PM Washington Pop-Up.

**SEPTEMBER 7 | OPEN HOUSE**

Join us to preview our new venue in downtown Chicago, the Auditorium Theatre and enjoy tours, refreshments, and 40% off subscriptions! 3-7 PM.

**SEPTEMBER 23 + 24 | Chicago Sinfonietta at third annual CHICAGO LIVE! FESTIVAL**

Showcasing Chicago's vibrant arts and cultural organizations, Chicago Sinfonietta is one of 65 plus organizations that have been invited to perform Pier-wide across three stages during the FREE two-day festival.



## **ABOUT CHICAGO SINFONIETTA**

A tenured orchestra and acclaimed cultural leader that champions diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating community through curated symphonic experiences, Chicago Sinfonietta (CS) is a source of community through music, as well as ensuring and inspiring a continued investment in diversity and inclusivity in the genre of classical music to promote fairness and equity. Celebrating its 36<sup>th</sup> season this 2023-24, the orchestra is recognized as groundbreaking, dynamic and daring, with core values built around being culturally responsive and advocates of inclusivity in all aspects of its work. Chicago Sinfonietta's unrelenting commitment to being at the forefront of innovation drives its high standard of symphonic experiences. CS takes pride in leading by example with immersive audience engagement activities, impactful career development, education, and extensive community outreach programs. Learn more about RESONATE, Chicago Sinfonietta's 36th season, at [www.chicagosinfonietta.org](http://www.chicagosinfonietta.org)

## **ABOUT BLAKE-ANTHONY JOHNSON**

Noted as a "business heavyweight" by *Crain's Chicago Business*, arts executive Blake-Anthony Johnson has, throughout his career, extended the artistic, commercial, and technological boundaries of what an orchestra can be in the 21st century through creative leadership, commitment to innovation, and progressive vision. The first African American executive to guide a nationally renowned orchestra, he is President and Chief Executive Officer of the award-winning Chicago Sinfonietta, and has led the acclaimed cultural leader in the field and powerful champion of diversity, equity, and inclusion since May 2020. An active member of numerous organizational boards and committees, Johnson was appointed Co-Chair of the City of Chicago's DCASE Cultural Advisory Council in January 2023 and serves on the Cultural Arts Council for the City of Chicago, The Sir Georg Solti Foundation U.S., and the League of American Orchestras' EDI Orchestra Management Committee, amongst others. Recent honors include a *2023 Black Men in Excellence Award by the Black Professionals Network*, *Chicago Tribune's 2022 Chicagoan of the Year in Classical Music*, being named one of 2022's *Top 30 Professionals of the Year by MusicalAmerica.com*, and one of *Crain's Chicago Business* magazine's *Class of 2022 40 Under 40*. An accomplished musician, and a former professional cellist and protégé of Michael Tilson Thomas at New World Symphony, Johnson is the recipient of the 2022 Chicago Community Trust Daniel Burnham Fellowship. Former posts include two terms on the National Endowment for the Arts Music Panel.



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