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## **OSCAR AND GRAMMY WINNER JENNIFER HUDSON MAKES CSO DEBUT AT RAVINIA GALA, JULY 14**

**HIGHLAND PARK, IL** — Chicago's own **Jennifer Hudson**, who captured the world's attention with her first appearance on *American Idol*; won an Academy Award for her first movie, *Dreamgirls*; and nabbed a Grammy for her first Broadway show, *The Color Purple*; will achieve another first at Ravinia Festival this summer. Hudson will make her **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** debut, headlining the Ravinia Women's Board annual Gala Benefit Evening on Sunday, July 14.

"Some of the most exciting artists in the world, from Leonard Bernstein to Lang Lang, first appeared with the CSO at Ravinia," said Ravinia Festival President and CEO Welz Kauffman, who books all of the festival's artists each season. "It's so rewarding to keep up that tradition, especially when we can present a multitalented artist like Jennifer Hudson, who grew up here." Kauffman previously engaged Hudson for two Ravinia-debut performances in 2011.

Cocktails begin at 4:30 p.m., followed by the once-in-a-lifetime concert at 6:00 p.m. The evening will end with a sumptuous dinner in our lavishly decorated Gala Tent. The Ravinia Women's Board extends its gratitude to Cocktail Reception Sponsor BMO Harris Bank and to Dinner Sponsor Allstate Insurance Company. The concert is sponsored in memory of Keene H. Addington II.

The black-tie-optional gala is the only performance fundraiser benefiting Ravinia and its Reach Teach Play education programs. Annually, these programs engage more than 85,000 students in Cook and Lake Counties. The all-volunteer Women's Board started the festival's education programs four decades ago and remains their largest supporter. **Marilyn Vender** of Glencoe is chairman of the Women's Board. **Mary Alice Miller** of Kenilworth and **Kathy Paleczny** of Glencoe are co-chairmen of the 2019 Gala Committee.

"My personal favorite thing in the world is seeing the difference a year makes in the growth of the children in our programs," Vender said. "Not only have they learned to play music, but they actually carry themselves differently. The joy is on their faces, and the accomplishment has certainly bolstered their self-esteem."

Individual gala tickets are \$750. Tables are available. For tickets and information, call Marie Roth at 847-266-5045. Ravinia will announce its entire 2019 season on March 14.

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