FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2016

Contact:
Eileen Chambers, 312.294.3092

Photos Available By Request:
PR@cso.org

MUSIC DIRECTOR RICCARDO MUTI RETURNS TO LEAD
CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IN SHAKESPEARE-INSPIRED
PROGRAMS IN APRIL

April 7–26, 2016

Berlioz’s Romeo and Juliet (April 7-9)

Tchaikovsky’s The Tempest and Romeo and Juliet on program with
Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 (April 14-24)

Muti Leads Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and
Internationally Celebrated Soloists including—Ambrogio Maestri and
Luca Salsi—in Concert Performances of Verdi’s Falstaff (April 21, 23 and 26)

CHICAGO—Music Director Riccardo Muti returns to Chicago in April for three weeks of concerts and activities April 7-26 during the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s 125th anniversary season. Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) explore music by Berlioz, Tchaikovsky and Verdi inspired by the works of William Shakespeare in three programs featuring internationally acclaimed soloists as part of the CSO’s celebration of Shakespeare in music during a year that marks the 400th anniversary of the Bard’s death.

These programs are part of the citywide SHAKESPEARE 400 CHICAGO celebration which is organized by Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and commemorates the legacy of William Shakespeare in more than 400 performances by cultural institutions across Chicago.

On April 7-9, Muti leads the CSO and Chicago Symphony Chorus in three performances of Berlioz’s unconventional third symphony Romeo and Juliet featuring tenor Paul Groves in his CSO debut and return appearances by mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubanova and bass Dmitry Belosselskiy. The landmark work utilizes the emotional power of the orchestra to portray the lead roles of the young lovers while the chorus represents the feuding families of the Montagues and Capulets and the soloists become characters including a prince, a fairy queen and Friar Laurence who guide the listeners through Shakespeare’s tragedy. The Chicago Symphony Chorus is prepared by chorus director Duain Wolfe.
On April 14-24, Tchaikovsky’s interpretations of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet* are part of Muti’s second Shakespeare-inspired program which also includes Mahler’s Symphony No. 4 with soprano Rosa Feola as soloist. The program features two of Tchaikovsky’s three single-movement orchestral works—*The Tempest*, a symphonic fantasia followed by the *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture with its soaring love theme.

On April 21, 23 and 26, Muti’s three-week CSO residency concludes with concert performances of Verdi’s final opera *Falstaff*, including one performance that occurs on April 23, Shakespeare’s birthday and the day of his death in 1616. Written when Verdi was nearly 80, *Falstaff* is recognized as one of the composer’s greatest achievements and can be viewed as autobiographical. These performances of *Falstaff* mark the culmination of Muti’s traversal of Verdi’s Shakespeare operas with the Orchestra and Chorus, which also included *Otello* in 2011 and *Macbeth* in 2013. The performances feature an internationally celebrated cast of opera soloists including today’s leading Falstaff – baritone Ambrogio Maestri, who makes his CSO debut in these performances. Laura Polverelli, Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani and Saverio Fiore also make their CSO debuts with Daniela Barcellona and Luca Dall’Amico making their subscription debuts. Baritone Luca Salsi, who appeared with Muti to critical acclaim in the CSO’s performances of *Macbeth*, returns as Ford in this production. Sopranos Eleonora Buratto and Rosa Feola, as well as tenor Saimir Pirgu mark return appearances in *Falstaff*. The Chicago Symphony Chorus is prepared by chorus director Duain Wolfe.

Other activities planned during Muti’s April residency in Chicago include an Open Rehearsal with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago on Sunday, April 17, at 7 p.m. featuring Verdi’s *The Four Seasons* which is ballet music from the opera *I vespri Siciliani* (The Sicilian Vespers). This marks Muti’s second open rehearsal with the Civic Orchestra during the 2015/16 season. Tickets for this free public event are required and available at cso.org.

Riccardo Muti returns to Chicago for the April residency with the CSO after leading the Orchestra on a successful 10-concert Asia Tour in January 2016 that included performances in Taipei, Tokyo, Shanghai, Beijing and Seoul. Muti recently opened the 2016 Tokyo Spring Festival with March concerts at Tokyo’s Bunka Kaikan and Metropolitan Theatre featuring an orchestra and chorus of young Japanese and Italian musicians from the Tokyo Harusai Festival Orchestra, Orchestra Giovanile Cherubini, Tokyo Opera Singers and The Little Singers of Tokyo. The concerts held special significance as they marked the 150th anniversary of the beginning of diplomatic relations between Japan and Italy and also coincided with Muti’s 150th performance in Japan. The landmark anniversary was also celebrated with a new commemorative stamp that honors Maestro Muti and features an image of him on the podium and is issued by the Japanese postal service.

Bank of America is the global sponsor of the CSO. The CSO gratefully acknowledges and celebrates the following Grand Patrons who have made the CSO’s 125th anniversary season possible: Rosemarie and Dean L. Buntrock, Daniel Fischel and Sylvia Neil, Judson and Joyce
Green, Kenneth C. Griffin, Verne and Judy Istock, Cathy and Bill Osborn, and Helen and Sam Zell.

The CSO’s music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation.

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines®.

Tickets for all CSOA-presented concerts can be purchased by phone at 800-223-7114 or 312-294-3000; online at cso.org, or at the Symphony Center box office: 220 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60604.

Discounted student tickets for select concerts can be purchased, subject to availability, online in advance or at the box office on the day of the concert. For group rates, please call 312-294-3040.

Artists, programs, and prices are subject to change.

# # #

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

**Thursday, April 7, 2016, 8:00 p.m.**
**Friday, April 8, 2016, 8:00 p.m.**
**Saturday, April 9, 2016, 8:00 p.m.**

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**
**Riccardo Muti, conductor**
**Ekaterina Gubanova, mezzo-soprano**
**Paul Groves, tenor**
**Dmitry Belosselskiy, bass**
**Chicago Symphony Chorus**
**Duain Wolfe, chorus director**

**BERLIOZ**  *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 17

Tickets: $36-$260

-----------------------------

Chiicago Symphony Orchestra

**Thursday, April 14, 2016, 8:00 p.m.**
**Friday, April 15, 2016, 8:00 p.m.**
**Saturday, April 16, 2016, 8:00 p.m.**
**Friday, April 22, 2016, 1:30 p.m.**
**Sunday, April 24, 2016, 3:00 p.m.**

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**
**Riccardo Muti, conductor**
**Rosa Feola, soprano**

**TCHAIKOVSKY**  *The Tempest*, Symphonic Fantasia
**TCHAIKOVSKY**  *Romeo and Juliet*, Fantasy Overture
**MAHLER**  Symphony No. 4 in G Major

Tickets: $36-$260
Civic Orchestra of Chicago
Open Rehearsal  
Sunday, April 17, 2016, 7:00 p.m.
Civic Orchestra of Chicago  
Riccardo Muti, conductor  

VERDI  
The Four Seasons from I vespri Siciliani

Free and open to the public; tickets are required.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Thursday, April 21, 2016, 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 23, 2016, 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 26, 2016, 7:30 p.m.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Riccardo Muti, conductor  
Ambrogio Maestri, baritone (Sir John Falstaff)  
Eleonora Buratto, soprano (Alice Ford)  
Luca Salsi, baritone (Ford)  
Rosa Feola, soprano (Nannetta)  
Saimir Pirgu, tenor (Fenton)  
Daniela Barcellona, mezzo-soprano (Mistress Quickly)  
Laura Polverelli, mezzo-soprano (Meg Page)  
Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani, tenor (Bardolfo)  
Luca Dall’Amico, bass (Pistol)  
Saverio Fiore, tenor (Dr. Caius)  
Chicago Symphony Chorus  
Duain Wolfe, chorus director

VERDI  
Falstaff

Tickets: $36-$260

Riccardo Muti (riccardomutimusic.com)  
Born in Naples, Italy, Riccardo Muti is one of the preeminent conductors of our day. In 2010, when he became the tenth music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), he already had more than forty years of experience at the helm of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Philharmonia Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Teatro alla Scala. He is a guest conductor for orchestras and opera houses all over the world: the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna State Opera, the Royal Opera House, the Metropolitan Opera, and many others. Muti studied piano under Vincenzo Vitale at the Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella in his hometown of Naples, graduating with distinction. He subsequently received a diploma in composition and conducting from the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan, also graduating with distinction. His principal teachers were Bruno Bettinelli and Antonino Votto, principal assistant to Arturo Toscanini at La Scala. After he won the Guido Cantelli Conducting Competition—by unanimous vote of the jury—in Milan in 1967, Muti’s career developed quickly. In 1968, he became principal conductor of Florence’s Maggio Musicale, a position that he held until 1980.

Herbert von Karajan invited him to conduct at the Salzburg Festival in Austria in 1971, and Muti has maintained a close relationship with the summer festival and with its great orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, now for forty-five consecutive years. When he conducted the philharmonic’s 150th anniversary concert in 1992, he was presented with the Golden Ring, a special sign of esteem and affection, and in 2001, his outstanding artistic contributions to the orchestra were further recognized with the Otto Nicolai Gold Medal. He is also a recipient of a silver medal from the Salzburg Mozarteum for his contribution to the music of W.A. Mozart. He is an honorary member of Vienna’s Gesellschaft der
Muti succeeded Otto Klemperer as chief conductor and music director of London’s Philharmonia Orchestra in 1973, holding that position until 1982. From 1980 to 1992, he was music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and in 1986, he became music director of Milan’s Teatro alla Scala. During his nineteen-year tenure, in addition to directing major projects such as the Mozart–Da Ponte trilogy and Wagner Ring cycle, Muti conducted operatic and symphonic repertoire ranging from the baroque to the contemporary, also leading hundreds of concerts with the Filarmonica della Scala and touring the world with both the opera company and the orchestra. His tenure as music director, the longest of any in La Scala’s history, culminated in the triumphant reopening of the restored opera house with Antonio Salieri’s Europa riconosciuta, originally commissioned for La Scala’s inaugural performance in 1778.

Throughout his career, Muti has dedicated much time and effort to training young musicians. In 2004, he founded the Orchestra Giovanile Luigi Cherubini (Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra), based in his native Italy. He regularly tours with the ensemble to prestigious concert halls and opera houses all over the world. In 2015, he founded the Riccardo Muti Italian Opera Academy in Ravenna, Italy, to train young conductors, répétiteurs, and singers in the Italian opera repertoire.

Since 1997, as part of Le vie dell’Amicizia (The paths of friendship), a project of the Ravenna Festival in Italy, Muti has annually conducted large-scale concerts in war-torn and poverty-stricken areas around the world, using music to bring hope, unity, and attention to present day social, cultural, and humanitarian issues.

Muti has received innumerable international honors. He is a Cavaliere di Gran Croce of the Italian Republic, Officer of the French Legion of Honor, and a recipient of the German Verdienstkreuz. Queen Elizabeth II bestowed on him the title of honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire, Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded him the Order of Friendship, and Pope Benedict XVI made him a Knight of the Grand Cross First Class of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great—the highest papal honor. Muti also has received Israel’s Wolf Prize for the arts, Sweden’s prestigious Birgit Nilsson Prize, Spain’s Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts, and the gold medal from Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs for his promotion of Italian culture abroad. He has received more than twenty honorary degrees from universities around the world.

Considered one of the greatest interpreters of Verdi in our time, Muti wrote a book on the composer, Verdi, l’italiano, published in Italian, German, and Japanese. His first book, Riccardo Muti: An Autobiography: First the Music, Then the Words, also has been published in several languages. Riccardo Muti’s vast catalog of recordings, numbering in the hundreds, ranges from the traditional symphonic and operatic repertoires to contemporary works. His debut recording with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of Verdi’s Messa da Requiem, released in 2010 by CSO Resound, won two Grammy awards. His second recording with the CSO and Chorus, Verdi’s Otello, released in 2013 by CSO Resound, won the 2014 International Opera Award for the Best Complete Opera.

During his time with the CSO, Muti has won over audiences in greater Chicago and across the globe through his music making as well as his demonstrated commitment to sharing classical music. His annual free concerts for the city of Chicago attract tens of thousands of people. He regularly invites subscribers, students, seniors, and people of low incomes to attend, at no charge, his CSO rehearsals. Muti’s commitment to artistic excellence and to creating a strong bond between an orchestra and its communities continues to bring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to ever higher levels of achievement and renown.

www.riccardomutimusic.com

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra: www.cso.org and www.csosoundsandstories.org/

Founded in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. Since 2010, the preeminent conductor Riccardo Muti has served as its 10th
music director. Yo-Yo Ma is the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, and Samuel Adams and Elizabeth Ogonek are its Mead Composers-in-Residence.

From baroque through contemporary music, the CSO commands a vast repertoire. Its renowned musicians annually perform more than 150 concerts, most at Symphony Center in Chicago and, each summer, at the suburban Ravinia Festival. They regularly tour nationally and internationally. Since 1892, the CSO has made 58 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents. People around the globe listen to weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings on the WFMT radio network and online at cso.org/radio. Recordings by the CSO have earned 62 Grammy Awards, including two in 2011 for Muti’s recording with the CSO and Chorus of Verdi’s Messa da Requiem (Muti’s first of four releases with the CSO to date). Find details on these and many other CSO recordings at www.cso.org/resound.

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus (Duain Wolfe, Director and Conductor) and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, a training ensemble for emerging professionals. Through its prestigious Symphony Center Presents series, the CSOA presents guest artists and ensembles from a variety of genres—classical, jazz, world, and contemporary.

The Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO offers community and education programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds. Through the Institute and other activities, including a free annual concert with Muti and the CSO, the CSO is committed to using the power of music to create connections and build community.

The CSO is supported by thousands of patrons, volunteers and institutional and individual donors. Bank of America is the Global Sponsor of the CSO. The CSO’s music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation. The Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.

Please click links below to find the biographies of the ensembles and artists listed:

Ekaterina Gubanova, mezzo-soprano (April 7, 8 and 9)
Paul Groves, tenor (April 7, 8 and 9)
Dmitry Belosselskiy, bass (April 7, 8 and 9)

Rosa Feola, soprano (April 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 26)

Ambrogio Maestri, baritone (April 21, 23 and 26)
Eleonora Buratto, soprano (April 21, 23 and 26)
Luca Salsi, baritone (April 21, 23 and 26)
Saimir Pirgu, tenor (April 21, 23 and 26)
Daniela Barcellona, mezzo-soprano (April 21, 23 and 26)
Laura Polverelli, mezzo-soprano (April 21, 23 and 26)
Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani, tenor (April 21, 23 and 26)
Luca Dall’Amico, bass (April 21, 23 and 26)
Saverio Fiore, tenor (April 21, 23 and 26)

Chicago Symphony Chorus (April 7, 8, 9, 21, 23, 26)
Duain Wolfe, director Chicago Symphony Chorus (April 7, 8, 9, 21, 23 and 26)