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RICCARDO MUTI RETURNS TO CSO FOR ONE WEEK OF CONCERTS IN DECEMBER WITH PIANIST KIRILL GERSTEIN AS CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA’S 125TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON CONTINUES

December 3–5, 2015

December 5 is Muti’s 250th Concert with CSO

CD Signing with Muti Follows December 4 Performance

CHICAGO—The CSO’s Music Director Riccardo Muti returns to Chicago for a week of subscription concerts, December 3–5, leading a varied program of music by Beethoven, Prokofiev and Scriabin with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and pianist Kirill Gerstein as soloist as the CSO continues its 125th anniversary season.

Opening and closing the program are two contrasting symphonies in the classical form: Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 1 (Classical) and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 8. Pianist Kirill Gerstein is the soloist in Scriabin’s Prometheus, The Poem of Fire, which also features the Chicago Symphony Chorus, marking the culmination of Muti’s exploration of the Russian composer’s symphonic works. The CSO gave the U.S. premiere of Prometheus in 1915, conducted by then-music director Frederick Stock. Beethoven’s Coriolan Overture rounds out the program.

Muti will sign copies of his September 2015 recording release with the CSO—Berlioz: Symphonie fantastique and Lélio—immediately following the concert on Friday, December 4.

The Saturday, December 5, performance marks Muti’s 250th with the CSO. He made his debut with the Orchestra at Ravinia Festival in 1973 and first conducted the CSO at Orchestra Hall in 1975. Since then, he has led the Orchestra in extraordinary performances here in Chicago, as
well as in many of the world’s greatest concert halls throughout the U.S., Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and the UK.

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 December 3–5 performances are made possible by a generous gift from Margot and Josef Lakonishok.

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.

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**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

**Thursday, December 3, 2015, 8:00 p.m.**

**Friday, December 4, 2015 1:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, December 5, 2015, 8:00 p.m.**

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

**Riccardo Muti**, conductor

**Kirill Gerstein**, piano

**Chicago Symphony Chorus**

**Duain Wolfe**, chorus director

**PROKOFIEV** Symphony No. 1 in D Major, Op. 25 *(Classical)*

**SCRIABIN** Prometheus, *The Poem of Fire*, Op. 60

**BEETHOVEN** *Coriolan* Overture, Op. 62

**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

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**Riccardo Muti**

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 Musikfreunde (Society of the Friends of Music), the Vienna Hofmusikkapelle, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Vienna State Opera.

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

Kirill Gerstein

With a masterful technique, discerning intelligence, and a musical curiosity that has led him to explore repertoire spanning centuries and styles, multifaceted pianist Kirill Gerstein has proven to be one of today’s most intriguing and versatile musicians. His early training and experience in jazz has contributed an important element to his interpretive style, inspiring an energetic and expressive musical personality that distinguishes his playing.

Mr. Gerstein is the sixth recipient of the prestigious Gilmore Artist Award, presented every four years to an exceptional pianist who, regardless of age or nationality, possesses broad and profound musicianship and charisma and who desires and can sustain a career as a major international concert artist. Since receiving the award in 2010, Mr. Gerstein has shared his prize through the commissioning of boundary-crossing works by Timo Andres, Chick Corea, Alexander Goehr, Oliver Knussen, and Brad Mehldau, with additional commissions scheduled for future seasons. Mr. Gerstein was awarded First Prize at the 2001 Arthur Rubinstein Piano Competition in Tel Aviv, received a 2002 Gilmore Young Artist Award, and a 2010 Avery Fisher Grant.

During the 2015-16 season, Mr. Gerstein will perform Rachmaninoff’s Concerto No. 1 with the Cleveland Orchestra. He also returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as the Cincinnati, Colorado, Dallas, Oregon, Toronto, and Utah symphonies, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. He opens the 92nd Street Y’s season in New York performing George Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue and Piano Concerto in F, both in the original jazz-band versions with Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks, and returns to the venue in the spring to perform a recital program that has a dual focus on the exploration of the fantasia and the conversation between the music of Central Europe and that of his Russian heritage with works by Beethoven, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Mussorgsky, and Balakirev. He will hold a similar residency in Houston where he will perform both with the symphony and in recital.

A significant highlight of recent seasons was the release of Mr. Gerstein’s first orchestral CD: an ECHO Klassik Award-winning world premiere recording of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in the composer’s own 1879 version of the score, and Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin led by James Gaffigan and released by Myrios Classics.

Mr. Gerstein’s recordings include Imaginary Pictures comprising Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition and Schumann’s Carnaval released by Myrios Classics in June 2014, and a solo recording with works by Schumann, Liszt and Oliver Knussen, also released by Myrios in 2010. Both recordings were chosen by The New York Times as a best recording of the year. He also collaborated with Tabea Zimmerman on two recordings of sonatas for viola and piano for Myrios, released in February 2011 and November 2012.

Born in 1979 in Voronezh, in southwestern Russia. Mr. Gerstein studied piano at a special music school for gifted children and while studying classical music, taught himself to play jazz by listening to his parents’ extensive record collection. After coming to the attention of vibraphonist Gary Burton, who was performing at a music festival in the Soviet Union, Mr. Gerstein came to the United States at 14 to study jazz piano as the youngest student ever to attend Boston’s Berklee College of Music. After completing his studies in three years and following his second summer at the Boston University program at Tanglewood, Mr. Gerstein turned his focus back to classical music and moved to New York City to attend the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with Solomon Mikowsky and earned both Bachelors and Masters of Music degrees by the age of 20. He continued his studies in Madrid with Dmitri Bashkirov and in Budapest with Ferenc Rados. An American citizen since 2003, Mr. Gerstein now divides his time
between the United States and Germany, and in the U.S, he is both Artist-in-Residence at Berklee College of Music and a member of the piano and chamber music faculty at Boston Conservatory.

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. Pierre Boulez is the CSO’s Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus, Yo-Yo Ma is its 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.

Chicago Symphony Chorus, Duain Wolfe, conductor and director

The Chicago Symphony Chorus, under the current leadership of Duain Wolfe, has earned respect, admiration and critical acclaim as one of the finest symphonic choruses in the world through its performances in the United States and abroad.

The Chicago Symphony Chorus’ storied history began in September 1957, when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra announced that Margaret Hillis, at Music Director Fritz Reiner’s invitation, would organize and train a symphony chorus. Auditions began two weeks later, and in March 1958, the Chicago Symphony Chorus made its subscription concert debut performing Mozart’s Requiem with Bruno Walter conducting. A few weeks later, Reiner himself led the Chorus for the first time in performances of Verdi’s Requiem.

Since then, the Chicago Symphony Chorus has performed and recorded virtually all the major works in the choral symphonic repertoire, given important world premieres, appeared with visiting orchestras and been a part of many noteworthy milestones in the CSO’s history. In June 1994, Duain Wolfe was appointed the second director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, succeeding Hillis, who was named director laureate.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra recordings featuring the Chorus have won 10 Grammy Awards for Best Choral Performance from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. These recordings include hallmarks of the choral repertoire, ranging from Beethoven’s Missa solemnis and Bach’s B-Minor Mass to Orff’s Carmina Burana, and two recordings each of Brahms’ A German Requiem and Verdi’s Requiem. The Chorus made its first commercial recording—Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky with Fritz Reiner conducting—with the Orchestra in 1959. Under Bernard Haitink, the Chorus has been featured on CSO Resound recordings of Poulenc’s Gloria with soprano Jessica Rivera as soloist, Ravel’s Daphnis et Chloé and Mahler’s Second Symphony. In addition, the women of the Chorus can be heard in Mahler’s Third Symphony conducted by Haitink, the debut release on the CSO Resound label in May 2007. The Chorus’ recording with the CSO—Verdi’s Messa da Requiem led by Riccardo Muti—was awarded two Grammy Awards in 2011: Best Classical Album and Best Choral Performance, the first Grammy Award for Chorus Director Duain Wolfe. In May 2012, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra along with members of the Chorus recorded John Williams’ original score for the movie Lincoln under Williams’ baton. Directed by Steven Spielberg, Lincoln was released in November 2012. The Chorus’ most recent recording with the CSO is Verdi’s Otello, which was released in 2013 on the CSO Resound label.

The Chicago Symphony Chorus made its Ravinia Festival debut in July 1960 in a performance of Mahler’s Second Symphony conducted by CSO Associate Conductor and Ravinia Festival Artistic Director Walter Hendl, and it has returned many times since, most recently in 2013 for performances of Verdi’s Aida led by Ravinia Festival Music Director James Conlon. The Chorus made its Carnegie Hall debut with the CSO in 1967, in Henze’s The Sicilian Muses and Ravel’s Daphnis et Chloé with then-music director Jean Martinon conducting. The Chorus returned to Carnegie Hall for performances of Verdi’s Otello to commemorate Sir Georg Solti’s final concerts as music director in April 1991, and again in December 2000 for performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Daniel Barenboim conducting the Staatskapelle Berlin. The Chorus performed two concerts with Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in April 2011 at Carnegie Hall and returned for a single performance of Orff’s Carmina Burana in October 2012. They will return with Muti and the CSO in January 2015.

Internationally, the Chorus first toured with the CSO to London and Salzburg in 1989 for performances of Berlioz’s The Damnation of Faust with Sir Georg Solti conducting. Ten years later, the ensemble won critical acclaim for its performances of Schoenberg’s Moses and Aron and Brahms’ A German Requiem with the CSO at the Berlin Festtage in April 1999.

Members of the Chicago Symphony Chorus are frequently featured in educational performances with members of the CSO; perform in community engagement performances at the Illinois Youth Center in Warrenville, Illinois; and, in collaboration with Chicago Public Schools, have appeared at over 40 CPS high schools, presenting programs designed to coordinate with the students’ history and literature curricula. Chorus members also have been seen in numerous performances around the city, on ABC 7 and NBC 5, and singing the national anthem for the Chicago Bulls.