CONDUCTOR SEMYON BYCHKOVS RETURNSTO SYMPHONY CENTER TO LEAD CSO IN MAY SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS

Katia and Marielle Labèque are Soloists in Bruch’s Concerto for Two Pianos on Program that also features Tchaikovsky’s Manfred Symphony

May 3 – 5

CHICAGO—Conductor Semyon Bychkov, the recently appointed Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Czech Philharmonic beginning in the 2018/19 season, returns to Symphony Center for subscription concerts on Thursday, May 3 at 8:00 p.m., Friday, May 4 at 8:00 p.m., and Saturday, May 5 at 8:00 p.m. Bychkov leads a program that includes the CSO’s first performances of Bruch’s Concerto for Two Pianos featuring pianists and sisters Katia and Marielle Labèque in their first solo appearances with the Orchestra since 2011, as well as Tchaikovsky’s Manfred Symphony. This program is repeated in a performance on Sunday, May 6, at 3:00 p.m. at the University of Iowa’s Hancher Auditorium.

The program opens with Bruch’s Concerto for Two Pianos, composed in 1911 for the American piano duo of sisters Rose and Otilie Sutro. Largely neglected and even rewritten by pianists including the Sutros, Bruch’s work was rediscovered in the 1970s and has come to be a valued part of the keyboard repertoire. Bruch’s virtuosic work is steeped in the grand romantic tradition and employs rich orchestration and sweeping themes, as well as tender melodies and a majestic processional that concludes the work.

The program continues with Tchaikovsky’s Manfred Symphony. Written in 1885 between his fourth and fifth symphonies, it is one of the composer’s most ambitious programmatic works. Bychkov, who along with the Czech Philharmonic has embarked on a multi-phase Tchaikovsky Project that includes a critically hailed 2017 recording of the Manfred Symphony, calls it “an opera without words, and one of Tchaikovsky’s great operas at that.” Tchaikovsky took inspiration from Lord Byron’s gothic dramatic poem of the same name, writing themes for the character Manfred and his dearly departed Asarte. Manfred’s despair is evoked through the
music’s turbulent and tender emotional character set amidst an ominous alpine landscape. Bychkov adds that “when you think of the music [of the Manfred Symphony] in dramatic terms, as a piece about real people, it suddenly acquires more power, more dimensions, more meaning, more everything.”

Semyon Bychkov is the newly appointed Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Czech Philharmonic, a role he will assume at the beginning of the 2018/19 season. Bychkov and the Czech Philharmonic come to Symphony Center in November 2018 for the first time since 2003 as part of an international tour with an all-Czech program of works by Dvořák and Luboš Fišer. Bychkov's fruitful relationship with the Czech Philharmonic has produced The Tchaikovsky Project, a series of concerts, residencies, and studio recordings surrounding the work of Tchaikovsky that culminates in 2019 with residences in Vienna and Paris, and Decca’s release of several landmark works by the composer, including Tchaikovsky's complete symphonies.

Born in St. Petersburg in 1952, Bychkov emigrated to the United States in 1975 and has been based in Europe since the mid-1980s. In common with the Czech Philharmonic, Bychkov has one foot firmly in the cultures both of the East and the West. Prior to his post with the Czech Philharmonic, he held positions of similar distinction at the Orchestre de Paris, WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne, and Dresden Semperoper, and today regularly appears with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic and the Berlin Philharmonic, as well as American orchestras including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Bychkov’s 30-year recording career has produced an extensive discography with several distinguished orchestras, notably those from his 13-year association with WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne which include a recording of Wagner’s Lohengrin voted BBC Music Magazine’s Disc of the Year in 2010. Bychkov was named 2015’s Conductor of the Year by the International Opera Awards.

Widely considered among the world’s leading piano duos, Katia and Marielle Labèque are sibling pianists renowned for their ensemble of synchronicity and energy. They are regular guests with the most prestigious orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, London Symphony, Filarmonia della Scala, Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Vienna Philharmonic, under the direction of such luminaries as Gustavo Dudamel, Paavo Järvi, Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa, Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas and Jaap van Zweden. They have worked with numerous distinguished composers as Thomas Adès, Louis Andriessen, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Philip Glass, Osvaldo Golijov, György Ligeti and Olivier Messiaen. Their recent recordings for Deutsche Grammophon include Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring and Debussy’s Epigraphes Antiques, and their latest album, Moondog Minimalist Dream House, will be released in spring 2018.

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, May 3, at 8:00 p.m.**
**Friday, May 4, at 8:00 p.m.**
**Saturday, May 5, at 8:00 p.m.**

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**
Semyon Bychkov, conductor
Katia Labèque, piano
Marielle Labèque, piano

BRUCH  Concerto for Two Pianos
TCHAIKOVSKY  *Manfred* Symphony

Tickets: $34-$221

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**Featured Artists for this Performance:**

Semyon Bychkov, conductor
Katia and Marielle Labèque, piano

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra: [www.cso.org](http://www.cso.org) and [www.csosoundsandstories.org](http://www.csosoundsandstories.org)

Founded by Theodore Thomas 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 60 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](http://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 eight releases with the CSO to date). Find details on these and many other CSO recordings at [www.cso.org/resound](http://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 led by Muti, 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.