CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH RETURNS TO SYMPHONY CENTER TO LEAD CSO IN ROMANTIC MASTERWORKS

Program Includes works by Weber and Mendelssohn and Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2 featuring David Fray

February 22, 23, 24 and 27

CHICAGO—Esteemed conductor and former Ravinia Festival Music Director Christoph Eschenbach returns to Symphony Center to lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) in subscription concerts on Thursday, February 22, at 8:00 p.m., Friday, February 23, at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, February 24, at 8:00 p.m., and Tuesday, February 27, at 7:30 p.m. David Fray is soloist in Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2 on a program that also features Weber’s Overture to Der Freischütz and two works by Felix Mendelssohn, the Overture to A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Symphony No. 4 (Italian).

Opening the program is Weber’s Overture to Der Freischütz, a romantic era opera inspired by a supernatural tale involving magic bullets, invisible spirits and a pact with the devil. The Overture begins with a singing melody in the low brass before giving way to a haunting theme in the strings, foreshadowing the otherworldly events to come. The program continues with Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2, which highlights the composer’s distinctive compositional voice for the piano. Opening with a virtuosic first movement, the concerto shifts to a rhapsodic nocturne, and concludes with a mazurka, inspired by the traditional dance of the composer’s native Poland. Completing the program are two beloved works by Felix Mendelssohn, the Overture to A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Symphony No. 4 (Italian). Written to precede Shakespeare’s play of the same name, the Overture is beloved for its musical depictions of the play’s memorable characters. Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 4 (Italian), inspired by the composer’s travels through Italy, features some of Mendelssohn’s most brilliant melodies and rich orchestral writing and concludes with a finale written in the style of the Neapolitan saltarello, a dance form known for its lighthearted leaps and jumps.

In addition to leading the CSO in subscription concerts that month, Eschenbach leads the Civic Orchestra on Monday, February 26, 2018, at 8 p.m. in a program of works by Wagner, Schoenberg and Brahms. Wagner’s Overture to Tannhäuser, with its chorale-style Pilgrim’s Chorus, opens the program, followed by Schoenberg’s Chamber Symphony No. 1. The second
half features Brahms’s Symphony No. 2. Inspired by his summer in the picturesque town of Portschach in the Viennese countryside, Brahms’s pastoral second symphony evokes bucolic lakeside views in its warm orchestration, spirited melodies and cheerful dances.

Christoph Eschenbach is the Conductor Laureate the National Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Designate of the Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin, a post he will assume in full in September 2019. Celebrated in the U.S. and throughout the world since his 1975 debut with the San Francisco Symphony, Eschenbach is the recipient of many awards including the Ernst von Siemens Award in Music and is Commandeur dans l’Ordre des Artes et des Lettres. A prolific recording artist as both a pianist and conductor, Eschenbach has recorded a complete cycle of Mahler’s symphonies with the Orchestre de Paris, and received a 2014 Grammy award with the NDR Symphony Orchestra and violinist Midori for their recordings of works by Hindemith. Highlights during the 2017-18 season include guest appearances leading the Orchestre de Paris, London Philharmonic, Netherland Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Houston Symphony. Eschenbach also served as the music director of the Ravinia Festival, summer home of the CSO, from 1995 to 2003.

Pianist David Fray is celebrated worldwide as a recitalist, soloist and chamber musician. He has collaborated with leading orchestras under distinguished conductors such as Marin Alsop, Pierre Boulez, Semyon Bychkov, Kurt Masur, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Jaap van Zweden. Orchestral highlights have included performances with the Royal Concertgebouw, London Philharmonic, Deutsche Sinfonie Orchester, Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala, and Orchestre de Paris. Fray is also the recipient of the prestigious German Echo Klassik Prize for Instrumentalist of the Year and the Young Talent Award from the Ruhr Piano Festival. Fray’s 2017 recording of selected Chopin piano works was praised for its “considerable seriousness and beauty” (Gramophone), and his previous release of Schubert’s late piano works, Fantasie, was named Gramophone Editor’s Choice and has been called “one of the most appealing listening experiences of present times.” Fray’s appearances this season include return engagements with the Philharmonia and Cleveland orchestras and debuts with the Vancouver Symphony, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and ORF Vienna Radio Symphony.

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, February 22, 2018, 8:00 p.m.**  
**Friday, February 23, 2018, 1:30 p.m.**  
**Saturday, February 24, 2018, 8:00 p.m.**  
**Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 7:30 p.m.**

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**  
**Christoph Eschenbach, conductor**  
**David Fray, piano**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEBER</td>
<td>Overture to <em>Der Freischütz</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CHOPIN</td>
<td>Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>MENDELSSOHN</td>
<td>Overture to <em>A Midsummer Night's Dream</em>, Op. 21</td>
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<td>MENDELSSOHN</td>
<td>Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 9</td>
<td><em>Italian</em></td>
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Tickets: $36-250

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### Civic Orchestra of Chicago

**Monday, February 26, 2018, 8:00 p.m.**

**Civic Orchestra of Chicago**  
**Christoph Eschenbach, conductor**

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<td>WAGNER</td>
<td>Overture to <em>Tannhäuser</em></td>
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<td>SCHOENBERG</td>
<td>Chamber Symphony No. 1 in E Major, Op. 9</td>
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<td>BRAHMS</td>
<td>Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 73</td>
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Free and open to the public; tickets are required

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**Featured Artists for this Program:**

**Christoph Eschenbach, conductor**  
**David Fray, piano**

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**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.