CONDUCTOR KENT NAGANO RETURNS TO SYMPHONY CENTER TO LEAD CSO IN MARCH SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS

Pianist Gilles Vonsattel is soloist in Bernstein’s Symphony No. 2 (The Age of Anxiety) on program that also features Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll and Schumann’s Spring Symphony

March 29 – 31

CHICAGO—Conductor Kent Nagano, Music Director of the Montréal Symphony Orchestra, returns to Symphony Center for subscription concerts on Thursday, March 29 at 8:00 p.m., Friday, March 30 at 1:30 p.m., and Saturday, March 31 at 8:00 p.m. Nagano leads a program that includes a performance of Leonard Bernstein’s landmark work for piano and orchestra, the Symphony No. 2 (The Age of Anxiety). The performance features pianist Gilles Vonsattel and is part of the CSO’s season-long centennial celebration of the works of Bernstein. The program also anticipates the arrival of spring with two works that musically depict aspects of the season—Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll and Schumann’s Symphony No. 1 (Spring). These concerts mark Nagano’s first CSO appearances back at Orchestra Hall since his critically acclaimed Ravinia Festival debut in 2017.

The program opens with Wagner’s Siegfried Idyll. Originally written as a birthday gift for his wife Cosima, it is one of the composer’s most personal works. With its lyrical love theme and musical moments that suggest the beauties of the natural world, the Siegfried Idyll has become a treasured part of the orchestra repertoire. Conductor, composer and pianist Leonard Bernstein’s Symphony No. 2 (The Age of Anxiety) was inspired by Bernstein’s encounter with W. H. Auden’s Pulitzer Prize-winning poem of the same name. Ideas from the poem about friendship, isolation and faith inform the composer’s virtuosic symphony, which prominently features the pianist throughout. Bernstein was the piano soloist at the work’s premiere in 1948 with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The six movements of the jazz-inflected work mirror the various moods and events of the poem from the brooding clarinet duet in the opening, The Prologue, to the fiery scherzo in the penultimate section, The Masque, and the peaceful resolution which is finally achieved in the quiet pianissimo section of The Epilogue. The program including
Bernstein’s Symphony No. 2 is the final of three subscription programs during the CSO’s 2017/18 season that recognize the centenary of the birth of celebrated American composer Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990). Previously this season, the Orchestra performed Bernstein’s Symphonic Suite from On the Waterfront led by conductor James Gaffigan in October and the Symphonic Dances from West Side Story led by conductor Rafael Payare in January. Completing the program is Schumann’s Symphony No. 1 (Spring). The composer’s symphonic celebration of springtime was created in response to a ballad by the German poet Adolph Böttger, to whom Schumann dedicated the work. The composer originally gave each of the four movements a programmatic title—“Spring’s Awakening,” “Evening,” “Merry Playmates” and “Spring in Full Bloom.” Each movement’s musical character assumes the qualities suggested by the titles from a majestic fanfare heralding the start of the season to the tender melody of the second movement to a sprightly scherzo and celebratory conclusion.

Kent Nagano is the Music Director of the Montréal Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of Gothenburg Symphony, and the General Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra. He has previously held positions at the Los Angeles Opera, Lyon National Opera and German Symphony Orchestra of Berlin. Nagano has appeared with some of today’s most prestigious orchestras such as the Vienna, Berlin and New York Philharmonics, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Dresden State Opera. His recordings with Sony Classical featuring the works of Busoni and Saanaho have won him several Grammy Awards. During the 2016/17 season, Nagano won the ECHO Klassik 2017 “Conductor of the Year” Award, “Distinguished Artist Award” at the 100th International Society for the Performing Arts Conference at Place des Arts, Montréal, and the Quebec Arts and Letters Council Award for his exceptional vitality and influence in Quebec culture.

Swiss-born American pianist Gilles Vonsattel is celebrated worldwide for his extraordinary versatility, originality and musical open-mindedness. Throughout his career, Vonsattel has appeared with the Geneva Chamber Orchestra, the San Francisco, Edmonton, Québec and Nashville Symphony Orchestras, and the Warsaw and Calgary Philharmonics. His 2011 recording, featuring works of Debussy, Honegger, Holliger and Ravel was named Time Out New York’s Classical Album of the Year. Additionally, his 2015 solo release featuring works by Scarlatti, Webern, Messiaen, Debussy and George Benjamin earned him rave reviews from Gramophone, The New York Times and the American Record Guide. Vonsattel was the winner of the Naumburg and Geneva competitions and recipient of the 2016 Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award and Avery Fisher Career Grant. Currently, Vonsattel is part of faculty at the University of Massachusetts at Amhurst, and lives in New York City.

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.
Bank of America is the Global Sponsor of the CSO.

United Airlines is the Official Airline of the CSO.

# # #

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

**Thursday, March 29, at 8:00 p.m.**  
**Friday, March 30, at 1:30 p.m.**  
**Saturday, March 31, at 8:00 p.m.**

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**  
Kent Nagano, conductor  
Gilles Vonsattel, piano

WAGNER  
Siegfried Idyll

BERNSTEIN  
Symphony No. 2 (*The Age of Anxiety*)

SCHUMANN  
Symphony No. 1 (*Spring*)

Tickets: $34-$221

---

**Featured Artists for this Performance:**

Kent Nagano, conductor  
Gilles Vonsattel, 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.