



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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News

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MUSIC DIRECTOR RICCARDO MUTI RETURNS FOR FEBRUARY RESIDENCY FEATURING WORLD PREMIERE OF LOW BRASS CONCERTO BY PULITZER PRIZE-WINNER JENNIFER HIGDON

New Commissioned Work features the CSO's Renowned Low Brass Section and Anticipates East Coast Premiere at Carnegie Hall

February Program also features Mezzo-soprano Clémentine Margaine in her CSO Debut as Soloist in Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer*

February 1-3, 2018

CHICAGO—Music Director Riccardo Muti returns to Chicago for a February residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) featuring subscription concerts on [Thursday, February 1, at 8:00 p.m.](#), [Friday, February 2, at 1:30 p.m.](#), and [Saturday, February 3, at 8:00 p.m.](#) These concerts include the world premiere performances of the Higdon Low Brass Concerto, a CSO Commissioned work written for the Orchestra's renowned low brass section by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Jennifer Higdon. Mezzo-soprano Clémentine Margaine, who appears in these performances with support from the Nuveen Emerging Artists Fund, makes her CSO debut in Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer* on a program that also includes Stravinsky's *Scherzo fantastique* and Four Sea Interludes from Britten's *Peter Grimes*. This program is also scheduled for performances during the upcoming East Coast tour for Muti and the Orchestra, [February 7 to 17, 2018](#).

The program opens with Stravinsky's *Scherzo fantastique*, one of the composer's earliest works, which premiered in 1909 on the same program as his *Feu d'artifice* (*Fireworks*). Taking inspiration from the French writer Maurice Maeterlinck's work entitled "The Life of the Bee," Stravinsky's *Scherzo fantastique* is a brilliant orchestral show piece filled with colorful harmonies and a lively tempo that suggests the activity of the beehive. The second work on the program is Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer*, an impressionistic song cycle featuring text from two poems by French poet Maurice Bouchor. Composed over the span of 10 years,

RICCARDO MUTI
Music Director

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President

YO-YO MA
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Chausson's work sets the poet's meditations on love and the sea on a lush musical backdrop. The program concludes with Britten's Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*. The captivating score to Britten's first opera echoes the inner turmoil of the opera's title character in four movements—"Dawn," "Sunday Morning," "Moonlight" and "Storm." The vivid musical episodes capture the character of a foreboding and changeable seascape on the British coastline.

The focal point of the program is the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Jennifer Higdon's Low Brass Concerto, which was commissioned by the CSO and co-commissioned by the Philadelphia and Baltimore symphony orchestras. Written for the CSO's renowned low brass section—long-recognized for their remarkable power and ensemble playing—Higdon's concerto highlights not only their power, but also the lyrical beauty that characterizes the section's distinctive sound.

"Brass players are quick to tell you that they also can play beautiful melodies, and do so quietly and with exquisite control," Higdon notes. "So early on, I decided to create music that would emphasize the qualities of majesty, grace, and power." The through-composed, one movement work also divides the concerto's solo passages among the four members of the low brass section: Principal Trombone Jay Friedman, Trombone Michael Mulcahy, Bass Trombone Charles Vernon, and Principal Tuba Gene Pokorny. Higdon's concerto features the soloists playing together in chorales and duets, but also highlights the players' individual personalities in solo moments throughout the work, concluding with a virtuosic and thrilling finale. "After decades of writing music, I've learned that low brass players are always fun to work with," says Higdon. "They bring an infectious joy to everything they play, which in itself is inspiring." The Low Brass Concerto is a culmination of these ideals. "It is a musical portrait of four extraordinary players, each working individually and as a group, bringing to the front of the stage all of *their* majesty, grace, and power," says Higdon.

The four members of the low brass section have performed together since 1989. Appointed to the CSO in 1962 by then music director Fritz Reiner, Jay Friedman is one of the longest-serving members of the CSO. Prior to his appointment, Friedman was a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and was ultimately named Principal Trombone by Reiner in 1964. Music Director Sir Georg Solti appointed the other three members of the low brass section beginning in 1986 with Bass Trombone Charles Vernon, followed in 1989 with appointments for Trombone Michael Mulcahy and Gene Pokorny, successor to Arnold Jacobs as Principal Tuba. Together, the four musicians have performed on countless subscription concerts and tour performances around the world, as well as in the annual CSO Brass concerts. In addition to their remarkable accomplishments as a section, each musician has appeared as a soloist with the CSO, giving the world premieres of works by Christian Lindberg, John Stevens, Carl Vine and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, among others.

Jennifer Higdon is a major figure in contemporary Classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her *Violin Concerto* and a 2010 Grammy for her *Percussion Concerto*. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works, and *blue cathedral* has

become one of today's most frequently performed contemporary orchestral works, with more than 600 performances worldwide since its premiere in 2000. Her works have been recorded on more than four dozen CDs. Higdon's new opera, *Cold Mountain*, is based on the best-selling novel of the same name and was premiered by the Santa Fe Opera in August 2015. The opera travels to Opera Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera and North Carolina Opera in the next two seasons. Higdon holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.

French mezzo-soprano Clémentine Margaine has gained international acclaim in recent seasons with opera companies around the world including the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bavarian State Opera in Munich, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. After graduating from the Paris Conservatory, Margaine was named the "révélation classique" and awarded the Special Jury Prize at the Concours International de Marmande. She subsequently joined the ensemble of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where she sang her first Carmen. She has become internationally known for this role, having performed it in Munich, Rome, Naples, Washington, Dallas, and Toronto. Margaine has also appeared as a soloist in Mendelssohn's Elijah in Berlin, Mozart's Requiem in Lisbon, and Verdi's Requiem in Budapest. Opera roles for Margaine in upcoming seasons include Fides in Meyerbeer's *Le Prophete*, Zayda in Donizetti's *Don Sebastien*, Gertrude in *Hamlet* by French composer Ambroise Thomas and Amneris in Verdi's *Aida*.

Following his CSO residency in November 2017, Muti appeared with the Vienna Philharmonic in several noteworthy performances. In early December, Muti led performances of Haydn's Symphony No. 39 and Bruckner's Symphony No. 9. These performances were followed by a return to the podium for the Orchestra's celebrated New Year's concert at the Musikverein. This marked the fifth time that Muti conducted the New Year's concert after previous appearances in 1993, 1997, 2000 and 2004. The New Year's concert on January 1, 2018 was broadcast in more than 90 countries including the U.S. where it was featured on the PBS *Great Performances* program.

Immediately following his February subscription concerts in Chicago, Muti embarks on the second of [two domestic tours](#) in the Orchestra's 2017/18 season. This follows the critically heralded tour for Muti and the CSO to Kansas City and the West Coast in October 2017.

The five-city, eight-concert East Coast tour opens on February 7 with a performance at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., which represents the first appearance for Muti and the CSO together at The Kennedy Center, as well as the Orchestra's first appearance at the venue since 2005 and Muti's first appearance at the venue since 2009. The concert also marks Muti's 350th concert leading the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since his podium debut in 1973. The tour continues with a two-day residency in New York City at Carnegie Hall on February 9 and 10. Next, Muti and the Orchestra mark their first appearances together at two venues in Florida: Frances Pew Hayes Hall in Naples on February 12 and at the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach during a two-day

residency on February 14 and 15. To conclude the East Coast tour, Muti and the CSO return to Chapel Hill, North Carolina for the first time since 2015 for a two-day residency on the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill campus on February 16 and 17. The tour programs feature the East Coast premieres of Samuel Adams's *many words of love* on February 7 at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Jennifer Higdon's Low Brass Concerto on February 9 at Carnegie Hall.

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

Bank of America is the Global Sponsor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Funding for Jennifer Higdon's Low Brass Concerto comes from the Edward F. Schmidt Family Commissioning Fund.

The appearance of Clémentine Margaine is endowed in part by the Nuveen Emerging Artist Fund.

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

Artists, programs and prices are subject to change.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra

[Thursday, February 1, 2018, 8:00 p.m.](#)

[Friday, February 2, 2018, 1:30 p.m.](#)

[Saturday, February 3, 2018, 8:00 p.m.](#)

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti, conductor

Clémentine Margaine, mezzo-soprano

Jay Friedman, trombone

Michael Mulcahy, trombone

Charles Vernon, bass trombone

Gene Pokorny, tuba

STRAVINSKY

Scherzo fantastique

HIGDON

Low Brass Concerto

[World Premiere, CSO Co-commission]

CHAUSSON

Poème de l'amour et de la mer

BRITTEN

Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*

Tickets: \$34-221

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Riccardo Muti

Riccardo Muti, born in Naples, Italy, 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. In 2017, Muti led the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale in performances that were part of the historic G-7 Culture Summit which explored the use of culture as an instrument of dialogue among different peoples and nations.

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, for now 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. Muti was also invited by the Orchestra to lead his fifth New Year's concert in 2018. 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. 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.

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.

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. In March 2017, the Italian government recognized Muti with its prestigious Presidente della Repubblica award, presented to Muti for his exceptional contribution to Italian culture in the field of music. 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, including Chinese.

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.

<http://www.riccardomutimusic.com/>

Other Featured Artists for these Performances

[Clémentine Margaine, mezzo-soprano](#)

[Jay Friedman, trombone](#)

[Michael Mulcahy, trombone](#)

[Charles Vernon, bass trombone](#)

[Gene Pokorny, tuba](#)

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

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.