MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA MARKS HISTORIC RETURN TO SYMPHONY CENTER AFTER MORE THAN 50 YEARS AS PART OF SCP ORCHESTRAS SERIES

Music Director Osmo Vänskä leads the Minnesota Orchestra in Diverse Program of works by Sibelius, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky

Inon Barnatan is Soloist in Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1

Sunday, January 28, 3 p.m.

CHICAGO—The Minnesota Orchestra, led by its current music director, Finnish conductor Osmo Vänskä, comes to Symphony Center for the first time in more than 50 years on Sunday, January 28, 2018, at 3 p.m., as a part of the Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Orchestras series. This celebrated American orchestra was the first to perform in Cuba following the December 2014 announcement by then U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro to begin a process to normalize relations between the two governments. The orchestra’s Chicago program includes works by Sibelius and Beethoven, as well as Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with soloist Inon Barnatan, who returns to Symphony Center after his performance of Gershwin’s Piano Concerto in F with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra last season.

Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra open their diverse program with Sibelius’ tone poem En Saga, or A Fairy Tale. The 20-minute work sonically illustrates a wide range of emotions, from soaring triumph to introspective melancholy. According to the writings of the Finnish composer’s longtime private secretary and biographer, Santeri Levas, En Saga is a portrait of Sibelius’ psyche at the time it was composed, in the early 1890s. The program continues with Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1. One of the most popular concertos written for piano, it consists of rich melodies and virtuosic, sweeping gestures for the soloist. The program
concludes with Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7—a symphony Beethoven himself considered to be one of his best works. At the work’s premiere in 1813, the Viennese audience, worn down by Napoleonic rule, enthusiastically embraced the inspiring, energetic character of the symphony.

The Grammy Award-winning Minnesota Orchestra has been performing for more than 100 years, presenting acclaimed performances in its home state and around the world. The orchestra performs approximately 175 programs each season, and in recent years has completed several European tours. The Minnesota Orchestra has been producing recordings and broadcasts since the 1920s. In 2014, the orchestra received a Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Recording for its disc of Sibelius’s Symphonies No. 1 and No. 4, and was nominated in November 2017 in the same category for their recording of Mahler’s Symphony No. 5.

Osmo Vänskä has been Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra for more than a decade. Since his appointment, Vänskä has led the orchestra on several European tours, as well as a historic trip to Cuba in 2015—the first visit by a major American orchestra since the U.S. and Cuba announced steps to normalize relations between the two governments. Vänskä has also conducted many of the Minnesota Orchestra’s most acclaimed recordings, including the Grammy Award-winning recording of Sibelius’s Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4. Vänskä has conducted major orchestras all over the world including the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He is the recipient of several conducting honors including “Conductor of the Year” by Musical America in 2005.

Pianist Inon Barnatan is internationally recognized for his skillful and engaging performances. Barnatan performs frequently with high-profile orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra and the Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco symphonies. Apart from solo performances, Barnatan is also an avid chamber musician, performing with internationally acclaimed musicians such as Martin Fröst, Ralph Kirshbaum and Alisa Weilerstein. Barnatan continues to explore new avenues of his career, producing new recordings of standard repertoire and commissioning original compositions by living composers.

Tickets for all Symphony Center Presents Orchestras series 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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Symphony Center Presents

Orchestras

Minnesota Orchestra
Osmo Vänskä, conductor
Inon Barnatan, piano

SIBELIUS
En Saga, Op. 9

TCHAIKOVSKY
Piano Concerto No. 1

BEETHOVEN
Symphony No. 7

Tickets: $25-$160

Featured Artist for this Performance:

Minnesota Orchestra
Osmo Vänskä, conductor
Inon Barnatan, 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.