



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

220 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60604-2559

News

**For Immediate Release:**  
November 8, 2018

**Press Contacts:**  
[Eileen Chambers](#), 312-294-3092

**CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RELEASES NEW RECORDING  
WITH RICCARDO MUTI ON CSO RESOUND LABEL—  
RICCARDO MUTI CONDUCTS ITALIAN MASTERWORKS**

**Available for Pre-Order Now**

**CD Release Available Internationally November 30 and in  
North America on January 4, 2019**

CHICAGO—The Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) releases its ninth recording with Music Director Riccardo Muti on its own CSO Resound label—*Riccardo Muti Conducts Italian Masterworks*—via international retail outlets, including the CSO’s Symphony Store and symphonystore.com, on November 30, 2018, and in other North American retail outlets on January 4, 2019. The recording will be available for digital download worldwide on December 7, 2018.

*Riccardo Muti Conducts Italian Masterworks* features a selection of works by 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian composers Verdi, Puccini, Mascagni and Boito, whose works epitomize one of the most important periods of Italian opera. The works were recorded live in Orchestra Hall in June 2017 during the final concert of the CSO’s 126<sup>th</sup> season. On the recording, the Chicago Symphony Chorus, prepared by Duain Wolfe, is featured on choruses from Verdi’s *Nabucco* and *Macbeth*, as well as in Boito’s Prologue to *Mefistofele* along with internationally acclaimed Italian bass Riccardo Zanellato as soloist and the Chicago Children’s Choir prepared by Josephine Lee.

Under Riccardo Muti, the CSO and Chorus have performed a number of landmark works in the Italian repertoire with one of today’s most important interpreters of Italian music. Throughout Muti’s tenure as music director, he has led the CSO in performances of Verdi’s *Requiem*, *Otello*, *Macbeth* and *Falstaff* previously as part of an ongoing survey of Italian masterworks with the Orchestra. Muti notes that performing Italian opera is important for large orchestras because, “Orchestras learn to develop the concept that every note must be sung.”

*Riccardo Muti Conducts Italian Masterworks* highlights Muti with the CSO and Chorus performing multiple works by Verdi including the Overture and the opening chorus “Gli arredi festivi” from Verdi’s *Nabucco*, followed by the powerful chorus “Patria oppressa” from Verdi’s *Macbeth* and the Overture to Verdi’s grand opera *I vespri siciliani*. The remaining works on this

RICCARDO MUTI  
Music Director

HELEN ZELL  
Chair, Board of Trustees

JEFF ALEXANDER  
President

YO-YO MA  
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

release point to Verdi's musical influence on other important Italian opera composers of that period and include Puccini's Intermezzo from *Manon Lescaut*, Mascagni's Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana*, and Boito's Prologue to *Mefistofele*. The concluding work by Arrigo Boito, who is known better as Verdi's exceptional artistic partner and librettist for the composer's final operas *Otello* and *Falstaff*, represents an important musical achievement for the composer. The Prologue to the complete opera, has the distinction of being a work that served as the finale of a historic concert led by Arturo Toscanini in 1946 to reopen the restored La Scala Theater in Milan after World War II. Its grand drama unfolds in one extended episode that opens with a chorus of singing angels followed by the demon Mefistofele addressing God defiantly about his quest to win the soul of Faust before vanishing. A combined chorus, including cherubs, raise their voices in a thrilling song of praise to conclude the work.

From its very first season in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra has performed symphonic repertoire and operatic music, including Mascagni's Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana*, one of the works on this new recording, and a work the Orchestra performed on its second program in 1891. In that same season, Theodore Thomas, the Orchestra's first music director, led the Orchestra from the opera pit at Chicago's historic Auditorium Theatre in a month of performances by the touring Metropolitan Opera of nearly a dozen operas including Mascagni's new opera *Cavalleria rusticana*. Since that time, the CSO has returned to operatic repertoire regularly, but with particular significance since 2010 with its current music director Riccardo Muti who is widely recognized as today's preeminent interpreter of the music of Giuseppe Verdi.

In response to the CSO's June 2017 performance of this repertoire at Symphony Center, the *Chicago Tribune* declared that Muti is "close to unassailable in this repertory," and adds that the "polish and impassioned commitment of the performances undeniably brought ample blood and operatic thunder to close the orchestra's 126th season." The *New York Times* affirms Muti's mastery of this Italian opera repertoire, hailing him as "the king of Verdi conductors."

*Riccardo Muti Conducts Italian Masterworks* was recorded live in 2017 at Orchestra Hall in Chicago. The recording was produced, edited and mixed by 16-time-Grammy® Award winner David Frost, who also won the 2018 Producer of the Year at the 60<sup>th</sup> Grammy Awards, and mastered by two-time-Grammy® Award winner Silas Brown. Previously with the CSO, Frost produced CSO Resound albums of music by Bruckner, Verdi, Berlioz and Prokofiev, and by former CSO Mead Composers-in-Residence Mason Bates and Anna Clyne, all conducted by Riccardo Muti, as well as a collection of works performed by the CSO Brass.

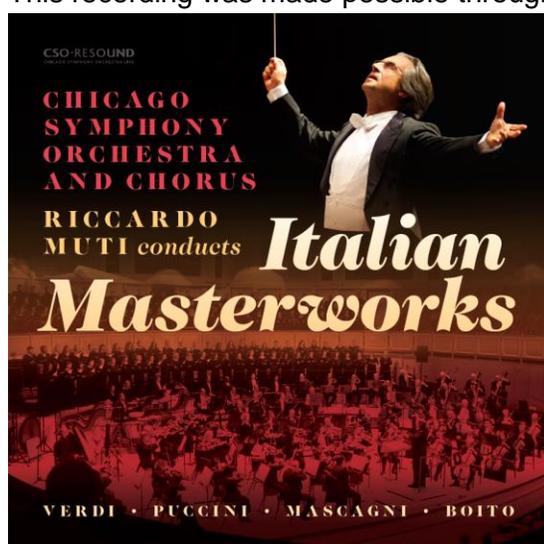
Muti and the CSO's first recording together—Verdi's Requiem with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, released in 2010—won two Grammy awards for Best Classical Album and Best Choral Performance. Their second, Verdi's *Otello*, also with the Chorus, was released in 2013, and won an International Opera Award. Additionally, Muti's September 2015 release of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique and L'Éléonore* was met with worldwide critical praise. Muti and the CSO's 2016 world premiere recording of Mason Bates's *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology* received a Grammy nomination. Muti's recording with the CSO titled *Schoenberg: Kol Nidre and Shostakovich: Suite on Verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, was released in September 2016, and was named one of the Best Classical Albums of 2016 by *The New York Times*, who called

the album “gripping” and “compelling”. Muti and the CSO’s most recent CSO Resound recording, *Bruckner: Symphony No. 9 in D Minor*, was released in June 2017 and met with critical acclaim. The *Chicago Tribune* lauded the recording’s performance for its “power, grandeur and lyrical expansion from the score, along with a thoughtful regard for beauty of texture and resilience of contour.”

The CSO’s commercial recording history began more than 100 years ago on May 1, 1916. More information can be found [here](#).

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

This recording was made possible through the generous support of The Davee Foundation.



**Riccardo Muti conducts Italian Masterworks  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus**

1 VERDI Overture to <i>Nabucco</i>	6.57
2 VERDI Gli arredi festivi from <i>Nabucco</i>	6.10
3 VERDI Patria oppressa from <i>Macbeth</i>	7.30
4 VERDI Overture to <i>I vespri siciliani</i>	9.16
5 PUCCINI Intermezzo from <i>Manon Lescaut</i>	6.18
6 MASCAGNI Intermezzo from <i>Cavalleria rusticana</i>	4.32
BOITO Prologue to <i>Mefistofele</i>	
7 Ave, Signor degli Angeli e dei Santi (Falangi Celesti)	11.22
8 Ave, Signor (Mefistofele / Chorus Mysticus / Falangi Celesti)	7.06
9 Siam Nimbi Volanti dai Limbi (Cherubini / Mefistofele)	2.15
10 Salve Regina! (Le Penitenti / Falangi Celesti / Cherubini)	7.07
TOTAL	1:08:37

Producer: David Frost  
Recording Engineer: Charlie Post  
Editing and Mixing: David Frost  
Mastering: Silas Brown  
Photography: Todd Rosenberg

Recorded live in Orchestra Hall  
at Symphony Center, Chicago

June 2017

###

---

### **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 more than forty-five 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. 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. In 2018, he received Japan's prestigious *Praemium Imperiale* award, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to 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 on this Recording**

[Riccardo Zanellato, bass](#)

[Chicago Symphony Chorus](#)

[Duain Wolfe, chorus director](#)

[Chicago Children's Choir](#)

[Josephine Lee, chorus director](#)

### **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 pre-eminent conductor Riccardo Muti has served as its 10th music director. Yo-Yo Ma is the Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, Missy Mazzoli is Mead Composer-in-Residence and Erina Yashima is the Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice.

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. 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.