



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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News

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## **MUSIC DIRECTOR RICCARDO MUTI LEADS CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ON TOUR TO ASIA**

**JANUARY 19-FEBRUARY 4, 2019**

**Tour Stops in Five Cities Include Return Appearances for Muti and the CSO  
at Venues in Taipei, Shanghai and Beijing, a Multi-Day Residency in Tokyo and  
their first appearance together in Osaka, Japan**

**Tour Programs Include Symphonies by Brahms and Tchaikovsky  
and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade***

**Muti Leads CSO in Two Performances of Verdi's Requiem in Tokyo with  
Tokyo Opera Singers Chorus and an All-Star Vocal Quartet featuring Vittoria Yeo,  
Daniela Barcellona, Francesco Meli and Dmitry Belosselskiy**

**Master Classes and Community Activities Presented by the  
Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO Planned in Select Tour Cities**

CHICAGO—Music Director Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) embark on their second tour of Asia together in January and February 2019, marking the Orchestra's ninth tour to Asia and the 61<sup>st</sup> international tour in its distinguished history. The tour takes place during the Orchestra's 128<sup>th</sup> season in 2018/19 and includes 11 concerts from January 19 to February 4, 2019 with stops in five cities—Taipei, Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo and Osaka.

Muti and the CSO return to several venues for the upcoming tour including the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan on January 19 and 20; the Oriental Arts Center in Shanghai for performances on January 22 and 23; and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing for performances on January 25 and 26. For this tour, Muti and the CSO also return to Tokyo's Bunka Kaikan to perform three distinct programs across four concerts on January 30 & 31 and February 2 & 3. As part of this multi-day residency in Tokyo, Muti leads the CSO in performances of Verdi's Requiem on January 31 and February 2 with an all-star vocal quartet featuring soprano Vittoria Yeo, mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona, tenor Francesco Meli, bass

RICCARDO MUTI  
Music Director

HELEN ZELL  
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President

YO-YO MA  
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Dmitry Belosselskiy and the Tokyo Opera Singers Chorus. Muti and the CSO complete the tour with a February 4 performance in Osaka, marking the debut appearance for Muti and the CSO together at the city's Festival Hall and the Orchestra's first performance at the venue since 2003.

The three programs for the Asia Tour 2019 feature a diverse set of works including symphonies of Brahms and Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral showpiece *Sheherazade*, as well as Verdi's Requiem.

Each of the stops on the Asia Tour feature Muti leading the CSO in a program that includes Brahms's Symphony No. 1 and Symphony No. 2. The symphonies were performed as part of Muti and the Orchestra's May 2017 subscription concerts featuring the complete Brahms symphonies (Nos. 1-4) in Chicago at Symphony Center. Their account of Brahms's Second Symphony at Symphony Center was praised by the *Chicago Tribune* as a "spacious, imposing, deeply considered performance" and was later performed to critical acclaim as part of Muti and the Orchestra's domestic tours to the West and East coasts in the 2017/18 season. After the performance by Muti and the CSO in Berkeley, California, the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted that "the orchestra's expansive and keenly colored sonorities remain as impressive as ever, from the dark-hued, weighty string sections to the clarion freshness of the brass."

A program pairing Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade* is performed at the tour stops in Taipei, Shanghai, Beijing and Tokyo. Muti and the Orchestra performed a survey of Tchaikovsky's symphonies during the 2014/15 season and return to the composer's dramatic Symphony No. 5 for the Asia tour programs. The *Chicago Tribune* hailed their performance of the Fifth Symphony saying "the qualities that have marked his [Muti's] cycle all along were again in evidence: scrupulous attention to dynamic markings, elastic handling of phrasing and transitions, purposeful shaping of harmonic tension and release, a richly sonorous soundstage." Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony is followed on the program by Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral showpiece *Sheherazade*. Loosely based on the tales of *The Arabian Nights*, this work of great imagination highlights the composer's gift as a master orchestrator and musical painter whose palette contained endless colors. Performed most recently by Muti and the Orchestra in Chicago during the opening subscription concerts of the season in September 2018, it caused the *Chicago Tribune* to remark "No doubt listeners will hear *Sheherazade* many times again, but rarely with as much integrity and truth."

The third tour program on this year's Asia Tour is part of the multi-day residency in Tokyo. Here, Muti leads the CSO in two performances of Verdi's Requiem, which Muti and the CSO performed with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and a distinguished roster of vocalists during Muti's November 2018 CSO residency in Chicago. The work remains one of Verdi's best-known and widely performed works. Though its form and text adhere to a traditional liturgy, the Requiem demonstrates the composer's unrivaled use of musical drama and masterful vocal writing. The *Chicago Tribune* praised the performance noting that "a vast range of human emotion radiated from the CSO music director's reading" and the Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* called it "profoundly moving."

The performances of Verdi's Requiem in Tokyo feature an all-star roster of vocal soloists including soprano Vittoria Yeo, who made her CSO debut singing Verdi's Requiem with Muti and the CSO at Symphony Center in November 2018; mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona, who appeared with Muti and the CSO for both the November 2018 and October 2013 performances of Verdi's Requiem at Symphony Center; tenor Francesco Meli, who made his CSO subscription concert debut with Muti singing Verdi's *Macbeth* in 2013 and sang in Verdi's *Aida* under Muti at the 2017 Salzburg Festival; and bass Dmitry Belosselskiy, who appeared with Muti and the CSO in the November 2018 performance of Verdi's Requiem at Symphony Center and made his CSO debut in 2013 as Banquo in Verdi's *Macbeth* under Muti.

Muti, widely considered today's preeminent interpreter of the music of Giuseppe Verdi, first performed Verdi's Requiem with the CSO and Chorus at Symphony Center in January 2009, during his first concerts as the Orchestra's music director designate. A live recording of the work from these performances was released in 2010 on the CSO Resound label, and was later awarded two Grammy awards for Best Classical Album and Best Choral Performance. Muti and the CSO and Chorus reprised the work on October 10, 2013, as part of a concert celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Verdi's birth that was streamed live online and reached audiences of more than 60,000 within days of the initial livestream webcast. Verdi's Requiem has also been part of tour performances for Muti and the CSO, including performances at Vienna's Musikverein in 2014.

Presented by the Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO, a number of educational and engagement activities are planned during the Orchestra's 2019 Asia Tour. Activities include master classes on January 23 at the Shanghai Conservatory with Principal Clarinet Stephen Williamson and Assistant Principal Bassoon William Buchman; community performances on January 23 and 24 in Shanghai at a neighborhood senior center and the bi-lingual Little Bridge International School with CSO chamber ensembles; performances on January 29 in Tokyo at the Meguro Disability Center by three CSO musicians; and a community performance on January 31 at the Higashiyama Elementary School in Tokyo by a CSO chamber ensemble. The Negaunee Music Institute connects individuals and communities in Chicago and beyond to the extraordinary musical resources of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Under the visionary leadership of CSO Music Director Riccardo Muti and Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant Yo-Yo Ma, the Institute creates opportunities for people of all ages with diverse backgrounds to participate actively in the life of the Orchestra.

Since 2010, Muti has led seven international tours with the CSO including a 10-concert Asia tour in 2016 with sold-out performances in Taiwan, China, Japan and South Korea. Muti also led the CSO on a critically acclaimed 2017 European tour that featured a performance at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, representing the first performances in the state-of-the-art venue by a foreign orchestra during its grand opening week and concerts at Milan's Teatro alla Scala marking Muti and the Orchestra's first appearances at the venue together.

The 2017/18 season included two domestic tours for Muti and the CSO with critically acclaimed tours in October 2017 to Kansas City and the U.S. West Coast and in February 2018 to the East

Coast. The West Coast tour included the Orchestra and Muti's debut at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, and the East Coast tour featured the first appearance for Muti and the Orchestra together at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as well as a return appearance at Carnegie Hall.

The CSO's touring history in Asia dates back to June 1977, when the orchestra performed 14 concerts in venues including the Bunka Kaikan and NHK Hall in Tokyo and Festival Hall in Osaka. The CSO first performed in Hong Kong in April 1986 during their second tour to Asia, and made debuts at the Shanghai Grand Theatre in Shanghai and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing in February 2009 during their sixth Asia tour. The CSO's 2013 Asia tour – their seventh – featured debuts in Taiwan at the Chiang Kai-Shek National Concert Hall and in South Korea at the Seoul Arts Center.

Founded in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra has been touring—domestically and internationally—since the beginning of its history. First traveling to Canada in 1892, the Orchestra has since embarked on 60 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents.

For a chronological listing of the CSO's Asia Tour 2019 tour dates and programs for January 19 to February 4, 2019, click [here](#).

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

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to the Zell Family Foundation for generously sponsoring the February 2, 2019, performance

ITW is the sponsor of the Shanghai Concert on January 23, 2019.

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## **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 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 for these Performances**

[Vittoria Yeo, soprano](#)

[Daniela Barcellona, mezzo-soprano](#)

[Francesco Meli, tenor](#)

[Dmitry Belosselskiy, bass](#)

### **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.