



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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News

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MUSIC DIRECTOR RICCARDO MUTI RETURNS FOR FEBRUARY RESIDENCY FEATURING A PROGRAM OF WORKS TO HONOR AND REMEMBER

**Muti Leads the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in Mozart's Requiem
Featuring Soprano Benedetta Torre, Contralto Sara Mingardo and Bass Mika
Kares in their CSO Debuts and a Return Appearance for Tenor Saimir Pirgu**

**Muti Conducts the first CSO Performances of Pulitzer Prize-Winning
American Composer William Schuman's Ninth Symphony (*Le fosse Ardeatine*) as
Part of Special Observance of the 75th Anniversary of the WWII Tragedy
Presented in Collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy and the
Italian Cultural Institute in Chicago**

FEBRUARY 21–23, 2019

CHICAGO—Music Director Riccardo Muti returns to Chicago in February for his third residency of the 2018/19 season to lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and Chorus in a program that returns to the season-long theme *A Time for Reflection—A Message of Peace* with subscription concerts on [Thursday, February 21, 2019, 8:00 p.m.](#), [Friday, February 22, 2019, 1:30 p.m.](#), [Saturday, February 23, 2019, 8:00 p.m.](#) The program includes the CSO's first performances of Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer William Schuman's Symphony No. 9 (*Le fosse Ardeatine*) in a year that marks the 75th anniversary of this World War II tragedy in Italy. Ambassador of Italy to the U.S., H.E. Armando Varricchio, will be in attendance on Thursday, February 21. In collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy and Italian Cultural Institute in Chicago, the CSOA presents a special companion photo exhibit as well as a February 21 preconcert lecture on this subject with Federico Rampini, U.S. Bureau Chief for the national Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. The program concludes with Mozart's Requiem featuring the Chicago Symphony Chorus prepared by Chorus Director Duain Wolfe with soloists soprano Benedetta Torre, contralto Sara Mingardo and bass Mika Kares in their CSO debuts,

RICCARDO MUTI
Music Director

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and tenor Saimir Pirgu. Muti also leads an open rehearsal for invited senior and community groups and members of the CSOA's African American Network and Latino Alliance on February 20.

The CSO's performances and the special activities connected to the observance of the 75th anniversary of the massacre at Le fosse Ardeatine in 2019 have been recognized by Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic. The Italian President extended his gratitude to Music Director Riccardo Muti and the musicians of the CSO in a special message saying "[this] is indeed an evocative and meaningful choice. The Symphony, in fact, pays tribute to the victims of that heinous act of terror, while also honoring a composer of exceptional musical and human sensitivity and his artistic legacy."

"We need to ensure that these horrific crimes are not forgotten. We cannot remain silent. The photo exhibition and Schuman's touching symphony, conducted by Maestro Muti, are a way to speak up and preserve the memory of that tragedy for future generations" said Ambassador Varricchio.

The program opens with William Schuman's Symphony No. 9 (*Le fosse Ardeatine*). One of the composer's few programmatic works, Symphony No. 9 was written following Schuman's visit to the Ardeatine Caves, the burial site of the victims of one of Italy's most infamous massacres during World War II. "The mood of my symphony... is directly related to the emotions engendered by this visit," wrote the composer in the program notes to the work's 1968 premiere. "One must come to terms with the past in order to build a future. But in this exercise I am a foe of forgetting. Whatever future my symphony may have, wherever it is performed, audiences will remember." Symphony No. 9 is performed without pause but with three distinct sections. The austere, contemplative *Anteludium* opens the piece, leading into the fast-paced *Offertorium*, which comprises the majority of the work. This middle section explores a variety of moods, from playful to dramatic, before reaching a sonorous culmination at the end of the movement. The ensuing *Postludium*, characterized by "an emotional climate which sums up the work," brings the piece to a reflective conclusion.

Following the gripping intensity of the Schuman symphony is Mozart's Requiem. The powerful work attains fiery heights in the earth-quaking choral incantations of the *Rex Tremendae* and *Confutatis*, while the serene vocal quartet of the *Recordare* offers a promise of peace amid poignant declarations of grief. Despite being left incomplete at the time of the composer's tragically early death it remains one of Mozart's most inventive and characteristically unique works for its innovative approaches to counterpoint and orchestration.

Soprano Benedetta Torre makes her CSO debut in these performances, having previously sung the Priestess in Verdi's *Aida* under Riccardo Muti at the Salzburg Festival in 2017. Contralto Sara Mingardo also makes her CSO debut in these performances. Tenor Saimir Pirgu returns for the first time since his appearance under Muti as Fenton in Verdi's *Falstaff* with the CSO at Symphony Center in April 2016. Finnish bass Mika Kares, who has distinguished himself as a concert soloist in recent seasons in performances of Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the Munich

Radio Orchestra and Mozart's Requiem with the Vienna Philharmonic, also makes his CSO debut in these performances.

In collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy and Italian Cultural Institute in Chicago, the CSOA will present special related activities connected to the performances of William Schuman's Symphony No. 9 (*Le fosse Ardeatine*). Prior to the Thursday, February 21 performance, there will be a special preconcert lecture from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. in Orchestra Hall moderated by guest speaker Federico Rampini, U.S. Bureau Chief of national Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, in conversation with Anthony Cardoza, Professor of History at Loyola University. Mr. Rampini will also participate in a book-signing event at the Italian Cultural Institute in Chicago on Wednesday, February 20. More information about the book signing can be found at iicchicago.esteri.it

In addition, beginning February 18, a special photo exhibit about the Ardeatine massacre will be on display in the first floor lobby of the Symphony Center Rotunda. The exhibit is presented by the University of Rome, "Tor Vergata" — Department of History, Cultural Heritage, Education and Society.

The CSO's season-long theme—*A Time for Reflection, A Message of Peace*—connects to programming that seeks ways to honor the victims of war and celebrate the triumph of the human spirit through the healing and transformative power of music. More information is available at <https://csosoundsandstories.org/category/a-season-of-peace/>

Following his November CSO performances of Verdi's Requiem, Muti traveled to Naples to the Teatro di San Carlo, the world's oldest continually operating opera house, to lead Mozart's *Così fan tutte* directed by his daughter, the acclaimed director Chiara Muti. The highly anticipated return to Teatro di San Carlo – Muti's first time leading the company in 34 years – was met with wide critical and popular acclaim, including an unprecedented 10 minutes of applause following the opening night performance. *Il Giornale Italia* praised Muti for his "light touch, typical of the Neapolitan master" and *Corriere della Serra* called the production "a smashing success." Spain's *El Pais* declared that "[Muti's] version of the opera materializes, now clearer than ever, that vindication of the everyday on the stage, where we smile to cope with the tears of life."

In December, Muti led the Vienna Philharmonic in performances at Musikverein and on tour throughout Germany with stops in Munich, Berlin and Cologne. The program included Bruckner's Symphony No. 7 and Mozart's Flute Concerto No. 1 with Karl-Heinz Schütz, principal flute of the Vienna Philharmonic and Vienna State Opera, as soloist.

Muti joined the CSO in Taiwan in January 2019 to launch the Orchestra's ninth tour to Asia and their second tour to Asia together since Muti's appointment as music director in 2010. The 2019 Asia tour included return appearances for Muti and the CSO at the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan; the Oriental Arts Center in Shanghai, China; and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China. Tour repertoire included Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*, and Brahms's Symphony No. 1 and Symphony No. 2. The tour also included a multi-day residency in Tokyo, marking a return appearance for Muti and the

CSO at the Bunka Kaikan. The residency in Tokyo included performances of Verdi's Requiem with soprano Vittoria Yeo, mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona, tenor Francesco Meli, bass Dmitry Belosselskiy, and the Tokyo Opera Singers chorus. Muti and the Orchestra completed 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 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.

United Airlines is the Official Airline of the CSO.

These concerts are made possible with the generous sponsorship of Josef and Margot Lakonishok.

The appearance of the Chicago Symphony Chorus is made possible by a generous gift from Jim and Kay Mabie.

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

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.

Artists, programs and prices are subject to change.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra

[Thursday, February 21, 2019, 8:00 p.m.](#)

[Friday, February 22, 2019, 1:30 p.m.](#)

[Saturday, February 23, 2019, 8:00 p.m.](#)

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti, conductor

Chicago Symphony Chorus

Duain Wolfe, chorus director

Benedetta Torre, soprano

Sara Mingardo, contralto

Saimir Pirgu, tenor

Mika Kares, bass

SCHUMAN Symphony No. 9 (*Le fosse Ardeatine*)

MOZART Requiem

Tickets: \$35-\$224

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. 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

[Chicago Symphony Chorus](#)

[Duain Wolfe, chorus director](#)

[Benedetta Torre, soprano](#)

[Sara Mingardo, contralto](#)

[Saimir Pirgu, tenor](#)

[Mika Kares, bass](#)

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 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. 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. 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.