



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

220 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604-2559

News

For Immediate Release:

November 1, 2018

Press Contacts:

[Eileen Chambers](#), 312-294-3092

Photos Available By Request

PR@CSO.org

MUSIC DIRECTOR RICCARDO MUTI RETURNS IN NOVEMBER FOR THREE PERFORMANCES OF VERDI'S REQUIEM

NOVEMBER 8–10, 2018

Muti Leads the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and Distinguished Soloists in Performances of Landmark Verdi Work that Anticipate the Centennial of the World War I Armistice

Soprano Vittoria Yeo Makes CSO Debut and Tenor Piotr Beczala Makes Subscription Debut Alongside Mezzo-Soprano Daniela Barcellona and Bass Dmitry Belosselskiy

CHICAGO—Music Director Riccardo Muti returns to Chicago in November for his second residency of the 2018/19 season to lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and Chorus and a roster of distinguished soloists in Verdi's Requiem in subscription concerts on [Thursday, November 8, at 8:00 p.m.](#), [Friday, November 9, at 8:00 p.m.](#), and [Saturday, November 10, at 8:00 p.m.](#) Recognized with two Grammy awards for the 2010 CSO Resound release of Verdi's Requiem, Muti and these assembled musical forces offer the first performances of the composer's landmark work since 2013. These concerts feature the Chicago Symphony Chorus prepared by Chorus Director Duain Wolfe alongside soloists, including soprano Vittoria Yeo in her CSO debut; mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona; tenor Piotr Beczala, who makes his subscription debut in these concerts; and bass Dmitry Belosselskiy.

These performances of Verdi's Requiem take on a new significance in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I on November 11, 1918. This program is part of the CSO's season-long theme of reflection and remembrance—*A Time for Reflection, A Message of Peace*—which seeks ways to honor the victims of war and celebrate the triumph of the human spirit through the healing and transformative power of music. Of these performances, Muti notes: "Music is a necessity of the spirit. It acts as a balm that allows us to remember, to heal and ultimately to grow." More information about CSOA-presented programs connected to A

RICCARDO MUTI
Music Director

HELEN ZELL
Chair, Board of Trustees

JEFF ALEXANDER
President

YO-YO MA
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Time for Reflection—A Message of Peace is available at <https://csosoundsandstories.org/category/a-season-of-peace/>

Completed several years after Verdi's opera *Aida*, the Requiem was written as a tribute to two significant figures in 19th century Italian culture, the composer Gioachino Rossini and the poet and writer Alessandro Manzoni, who the composer greatly admired and respected. Verdi conducted the world premiere performance in Milan in 1874, on the one-year anniversary of Manzoni's death, and the work remains one of his 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. Verdi's unconventional treatment of traditional sections of the mass, such as the Dies irae (day of wrath), result in a series of 10 scenes that carry the listener through a full range of emotions including grief, terror, despair and hope, utilizing powerful brass fanfares, full-throated choral declamations and soaring vocal solos.

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 200th anniversary of Verdi's birth. On that occasion, the Orchestra Hall performance was simultaneously broadcast to the Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago's Millennium Park and Benito Juarez Community Center Academy in the city's Pilsen neighborhood, as well as to a live streaming audience in the U.S. and 12 countries via cso.org and other international websites. The October 2013 performance reached audiences of more than 60,000 within days of the initial livestream webcast including concert hall attendees and livestream viewers. Verdi's Requiem has also been part of tour performances for Muti and the CSO, including performances at Vienna's Musikverein in 2014. It will also be part of performances during the Orchestra's upcoming Asia tour in Tokyo on January 31 and February 2, 2019, with the Tokyo Opera Singers chorus and soprano Vittoria Yeo, mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona, tenor Francesco Meli and bass Dmitry Belosselskiy as soloists.

The roster of soloists for November 2018 performances includes soprano Vittoria Yeo in her CSO debut. Yeo has previously performed with Muti in her 2015 debut at the Salzburg Festival singing the role of Elvira in Verdi's *Ernani* and singing the lead in Verdi's *Aida* in two performances at the 2017 Salzburg Festival. She also sang the role of Lady Macbeth in performances of Verdi's *Macbeth* with Muti and the Orchestra and Chorus of Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in 2018. These performances mark return appearances for mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona, who previously appeared with Muti and the CSO during the October 2013 performances of Verdi's Requiem at Symphony Center and critically hailed 2016 subscription concert performances of Verdi's *Falstaff*. Piotr Beczala, who makes his CSO subscription concert debut in these performances, has previously sung Verdi's Requiem under Muti in November 2014 at the Musikverein in Vienna. Russian bass Dmitry Belosselskiy made his CSO

debut in 2013 as Banquo in Verdi's *Macbeth*, and has since appeared with Muti on a number of occasions, including with the CSO in Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* at Symphony Center in April 2016.

In September and October, Muti opened the CSO's 2018/19 season with a residency that spanned five concert programs across three weeks. On September 20, he led a special side-by-side concert featuring the CSO and Civic Orchestra of Chicago in a program that also marked the opening of the Civic Orchestra's centennial season at the annual free Concert for Chicago in Millennium Park's Pritzker Pavilion. Muti led his first subscription concerts on September 21, 22 and 25 with a program featuring Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13 (*Babi Yar*) and the Orchestra's first performances of Prokofiev's Sinfonietta. Madame Irina Shostakovich, the widow of composer Dmitri Shostakovich, attended the performance on September 21 and participated in a post concert conversation onstage with Muti. The second subscription program on September 27, 28 and 29 featured works by Mozart paired with Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*, which is also part of several programs during the Orchestra's 2019 Asia Tour. Muti's fall CSO residency concluded with subscription concerts on October 4 and 5 and the annual Symphony Ball on October 6 in programs that featured pianist David Fray as soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24, respectively.

Following his three-week CSO residency, Muti traveled to Vienna to lead the Hofmusikkapelle (Vienna's Court Orchestra) in performances at the Musikverein on October 20 and 21. The program featured Mozart's Symphony No. 34 alongside a selection of sacred vocal works, including Schubert's Mass in G Major. Muti and the Hofmusikkapelle were joined by the Vienna Boys Choir and soloists Julia Kleiter (soprano), Daniela Pini (mezzo-soprano), Werner Gura (tenor) and Adrian Eröd (bass) in performances hailed by the *Kronen Zeitung* as "a feast of beautiful sound."

Later in October, Muti arrived in Tokyo for the official award ceremony for the 2018 Praemium Imperiale awards, hosted by the Japan Performing Arts Association, the nation's oldest cultural foundation. The Praemium Imperiale awards, which recognize internationally distinguished artists for extraordinary contributions to their art form, mark 30 years of excellence in 2018 and have become a significant reminder for the importance of culture in today's world in much the same way that the Nobel Prize brings attention to the sciences. Muti was one of five honorees to receive the award from His Imperial Highness Prince Hitachi at an October 23 ceremony in Tokyo. Other honorees this year were Pierre Alechinsky (painting), Catherine Deneuve (theatre/film), Christian de Portzamparc (architecture) and Fujiko Nakaya (sculpture). Prior to the ceremony, a special reception commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Praemium Imperiale was held in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress and His Imperial Highness Prince and Princess Hitachi.

Following his performances of Verdi's Requiem in Chicago, Muti returns to Italy to prepare for Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at Teatro di San Carlo in Naples (November 25-December 2). These performances mark Muti's first appearance leading the company at Teatro di San Carlo in 34

years. Teatro di San Carlo's presentation of *Così fan tutte* is directed by Chiara Muti and is a joint production with the Vienna State Opera, whose production will take place in May 2020.

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.

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

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.

#

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

[Thursday, November 8, 2018, 8:00 p.m.](#)
[Friday, November 9, 2018, 8:00 p.m.](#)
[Saturday, November 10, 2018, 8:00 p.m.](#)

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti, conductor

Vittoria Yeo, soprano

Daniela Barcellona, mezzo-soprano

Piotr Beczala, tenor

Dmitry Belosselskiy, bass

Men of the Chicago Symphony Chorus

Duain Wolfe, chorus director

VERDI

Requiem Mass

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

[Vittoria Yeo, soprano](#)

[Daniela Barcellona, mezzo-soprano](#)

[Piotr Beczala, tenor](#)

[Dmitry Belosselskiy, bass](#)

[Chicago Symphony Chorus](#)

[Duain Wolfe, chorus director](#)

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.