



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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News

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**SOUTH AFRICA'S SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR MARKS CENTENNIAL
OF NELSON MANDELA'S BIRTHDAY IN THEIR PROGRAM
*SONGS OF THE FREE***

**Grammy Award-Winning Choir Returns to Chicago for
a Symphony Center Presents Special Concert**

Friday, November 16, at 8 p.m.

CHICAGO—The Grammy Award-winning Soweto Gospel Choir returns to Chicago with an uplifting program titled *Songs of the Free* on [Friday, November 16, at 8 p.m.](#), for a Symphony Center Presents Special Concert. The South African group brings their signature blend of African gospel, freedom songs and international classics to a program inspired by their latest album, *Freedom*, which was released in September to mark the centennial of Nelson Mandela's birth.

The 20 musicians of the Soweto Gospel Choir have been spreading sheer joy and inspiration to audiences across the globe for nearly two decades. The first half of this concert features a rousing program of original songs celebrating the centennial of the birth of Nelson Mandela, for whom the choir performed on many occasions during his life. Following that, the performers share international gospel classics including their energetic take on Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," as well as "Amazing Grace."

Hailing from the town of Soweto, which is the birthplace of the South African democratic movement's struggle for freedom, the Soweto Gospel Choir is known for its captivating melodic and harmonic musical performances and mesmerizing showmanship. Since the choir emerged on the global music scene in 2002, it has won two Grammy Awards, scored two #1 Billboard World Music Chart albums and earned the distinction as the only South African music act to

RICCARDO MUTI
Zell Music Director

HELEN ZELL
Chair, Board of Trustees

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YO-YO MA
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

ever perform at the Oscars. The Soweto Gospel Choir has collaborated with several popular artists including U2, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Robert Plant, Celine Dion, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Josh Groban.

Tickets for all Symphony Center Presents Special 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
Special Concert**

Friday, November 16, 2018, at 8:00 p.m.
Songs of the Free

Soweto Gospel Choir

Program to be announced from the stage.

Tickets: \$20-\$65

Featured Artists for this Performance:

[Soweto Gospel Choir](#)

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.