CONDUCTOR JOHN STORGÅRDS RETURNS TO LEAD THE CSO IN DECEMBER SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS

Program Features the Orchestra’s First Performances of Jennifer Higdon’s blue cathedral and Wieniawski’s First Violin Concerto with Soloist Ray Chen in his Subscription Debut

Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4 Completes The Program

December 5-7 & 10

CHICAGO—Conductor John Storgårds, Chief Guest Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as the Principal Guest Conductor of the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, returns to lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) in December subscription concerts at Symphony Center on Thursday, December 5, 8:00 p.m., Friday, December 6, at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, December 7, at 8:00 p.m. and Tuesday, December 10, at 7:30 p.m. The program includes the Orchestra’s first performances of Pulitzer Prize–winning composer Jennifer Higdon’s blue cathedral and Wieniawski’s Violin Concerto No. 1 with Ray Chen as soloist in his subscription debut, and concludes with Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4. Violinist Ray Chen will also participate in post-concert CD signings in the first floor Rotunda at Symphony Center on December 5, 6, and 7, and a post-concert Q&A immediately following the performance on December 10.

American composer Jennifer Higdon’s blue cathedral opens the program. A work of deeply personal significance, it was dedicated to the memory of the composer’s late brother Andrew.
Blue. In the piece, Higdon utilizes the solo flute to represent herself and the solo clarinet to represent her brother in an ongoing musical dialogue, also noting that she “wanted to create the sensation of contemplation and quiet peace at the beginning, moving towards the feeling of celebration and ecstatic expansion of the soul.” The program continues with Violin Concerto No. 1 by Polish-born violin virtuoso and composer Henryk Wieniawski. Premiered in 1853, the concerto contains passages of intense lyricism, as well as dazzling technical displays that fit the composer’s own impressive skills as one of the finest violinists of his generation. Completing the program is Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4. Opening with an ominous brass fanfare that introduces the “fate” theme that returns throughout the symphony, Tchaikovsky explores the tension between happiness and melancholy before finishing with the Allegro con fuoco, a triumphant finale filled with rapid descending scales in the strings and exuberant brass passages.

John Storgårds has a dual career as a conductor and violin virtuoso and is widely recognized for his creative flair for programming. The Chief Guest Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra as well as the Principal Guest Conductor of the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Storgårds has appeared with renowned orchestras all over the world including the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin, WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne, Orchestre National de France, Vienna Radio Symphony and the London Philharmonic, as well as some of the top orchestras of North America. Storgårds has established himself as an award-winning recording artist, as well as conductor, having received a Grammy nomination and a Gramophone Award in 2012 for his interpretation of works by Finnish composers Kalevi Aho and Einojuhani Rautavaara. This marks the first CSO appearance for Storgårds since making his podium debut in subscription concerts in December 2017.

Violinist Ray Chen first came to international attention as the winner of the Yehudi Menuhin (2008) and Queen Elizabeth (2009) competitions. Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, Chen was accepted to the Curtis Institute of Music at age 15. He has gained a reputation not just for his virtuosic playing but his audience engagement and dedication to music education around the world and has been called “one to watch” by the Strad and Gramophone magazines. Chen has performed with many of the today’s leading orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Pittsburgh Symphony, as well as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in his CSO debut at the Ravinia Festival in 2017. Chen has also been featured on Forbes’ list of 30 most influential Asians under 30; made a guest appearance on Amazon’s “Mozart in the Jungle” series; performed for a live TV audience on France’s Bastille Day; and at the Nobel Prize Concert in Stockholm. He performs on the 1715 “Joachim” Stradivarius violin on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation. This instrument was once owned by the famed Hungarian violinist, Joseph Joachim (1831-1907).

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.
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. CSO tickets for select program are also available through the city’s new Teen Arts Pass (TAP) program. More information available at https://teenartspass.urbangateways.org/.

These concerts are generously sponsored by the Zell Family Foundation.

The performance of Wieniawski's Violin Concerto No. 1 is supported in part by a generous grant from the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in partnership with LOT Polish Airlines.

Artists, programs and prices are subject to change.

United Airlines is the official airline of the CSO.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Thursday, December 5, at 8:00 p.m.
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Chicago Symphony Orchestra
John Storgårds, conductor
Ray Chen, violin

HIGDON blue cathedral
WIENIAWSKI Violin Concerto No. 1
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 4

Tickets: $36-$223

Featured Conductor and Artists for this Performance:
John Storgårds, conductor
Ray Chen, violin

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra: cso.org and 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. Missy Mazzoli is Mead Composer-in-Residence.

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 61 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.