RICCARDO MUTI RETURNS FOR A THREE-WEEK CSO RESIDENCY IN FEBRUARY WITH CONCERTS AND ACTIVITIES IN CHICAGO AND TOUR PERFORMANCES IN FLORIDA

Muti Leads the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and a Cast of Internationally Renowned Soloists in Concert Performances of Mascagni’s Cavalleria rusticana (February 6-8)

Muti and the CSO Tour Florida with a Program of Works by Prokofiev, Wagner, Dvořák and Hindemith (February 11-13 & 15)

Muti Concludes February CSO Residency in Chicago with Program Featuring Beethoven’s Symphonies Nos. 2 & 5 and World Premiere of Nicholas Bacri’s Ophelia’s Tears featuring CSO Bass Clarinet J. Lawrie Bloom as Soloist (February 20-23)

FEBRUARY 6-23, 2020

CHICAGO—Following a critically acclaimed January 2020 European Tour, Music Director Riccardo Muti returns in February for a three-week residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), that includes two subscription programs in Chicago, as well as tour performances in Florida. To open the residency, Muti leads the CSO, Chicago Symphony Chorus, prepared by Chorus Director Duain Wolfe, and a cast of internationally renowned soloists in concert performances of Mascagni’s opera Cavalleria rusticana on Thursday, February 6, at 8:00 p.m., Friday, February 7, at 8:00 p.m., and Saturday, February 8, at 8:00 p.m. Muti and the Orchestra then travel to Florida for tour performances in Miami on Tuesday.
February 11, at 8:00 p.m., Sarasota on Wednesday, February 12, at 7:30 p.m., and Naples on Thursday, February 13, at 8:00 p.m., and Saturday, February 15, at 8:00 p.m. The Florida tour programs feature works by Prokofiev, Wagner, Dvořák, and Hindemith, which were also performed on the Orchestra’s January 2020 European Tour. The residency concludes in Chicago where Muti conducts Beethoven’s Second and Fifth Symphonies—part of his 2019/20 programs that feature all nine of the composer’s symphonies—in a program that also features CSO Bass Clarinet J. Lawrie Bloom as soloist in the world premiere of the new CSO-commissioned work Ophelia’s Tears by French composer Nicholas Bacri on Thursday, February 20, at 8:00 p.m., Friday, February 21, at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, February 22, at 8:00 p.m., and Sunday, February 23, at 3:00 p.m.

During the February residency, Muti also leads a CSO open rehearsal for invited senior and community groups on February 20, and participates in a post-concert CD signing for the new CSO Resound release Shostakovich Symphony No. 13 (Babi Yar) on February 23. The critically acclaimed recording was released worldwide on January 17, 2020.

In his first subscription program (February 6-8) Muti returns to the Italian opera tradition leading concert performances of Pietro Mascagni’s Cavalleria rusticana. The one-act melodrama features the intense and tragic elements characteristic of the Italian verismo style of opera through sung scenes of emotional conflict, as well as a richly layered score including its Intermezzo, one of opera’s most recognizable orchestral excerpts.

Featured soloists for these performances include internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Anita Rachvelishvili in the role of Santuzza. Rachvelishvili, who Muti said is “without a doubt the best Verdi mezzo-soprano today” in a 2018 New York Times article, returns to perform with the Orchestra and Muti after her critically-heralded CSO debut as Amneris in Verdi’s Aida in June 2019. Tenor Piero Pretti makes both his CSO subscription and role debut as Turridu in these performances. In 2009, Muti chose him as Achille for a production of Gluck’s Iphigénie en Aulide at the Teatro dell’Opera in Rome. Since then, the tenor has performed internationally, making his Metropolitan Opera debut in Madama Butterfly in October 2019. Baritone Luca Salsi returns to perform the role of Alfio. Salsi made his CSO subscription debut in the 2012/13 season in the title role in Verdi’s Macbeth, a role he has also performed under the baton of Riccardo Muti in Florence and Ravenna. Salsi also appeared as Ford in the CSO’s 2016 subscription performances of Verdi’s Falstaff led by Muti. Mezzo-soprano Ronnita Miller makes her CSO subscription debut in the role of Lucia. Miller previously performed with the CSO at Ravinia in Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman in 2012 and in Mozart’s Die Zauberflote in 2015. Mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke, returns to perform the role of Lola. Her most recent CSO appearance was in the 2018/19 season for Handel’s Messiah, conducted by Matthew Halls.

Muti and the CSO travel to Florida for tour performances in Miami, Sarasota, and Naples (February 11-13 &15). The CSO’s 2020 Florida tour includes a debut appearance for Muti and the Orchestra together at the Sarasota’s Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, a return to Miami’s Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts and two performances at Frances Pew Hayes Hall in Naples, part of a three-year residency for Muti and the Orchestra presented by Artis—Naples. For the February 11 performance in Miami and the Saturday February 15 performance in Naples, the program includes Wagner’s Overture to The Flying Dutchman, Hindemith’s Mathis der Maler Symphony and Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9 (From the New World). The
concerts on Wednesday, February 12 in Sarasota and Thursday, February 13 in Naples feature an all-Prokofiev program, including a Suite from *Romeo and Juliet* and the Symphony No. 3. The Florida tour programs include 20\textsuperscript{th} century masterworks such as Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler* Symphony and Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 3 that Muti has reintroduced to Chicago audiences during his tenure as music director, as well as the Suite from *Romeo and Juliet* which was featured on a 2014 CSO Resound recording. During the Florida tour, CSO musicians will also participate in community engagement and education activities presented by the Negauene Music Institute at the CSO in West Palm Beach and Naples.

Concluding his February residency in Chicago (February 20-23), Muti and the Orchestra perform Beethoven’s Symphonies Nos. 2 and 5, in the next installment of programs that highlight the composer’s nine symphonies during the 2019/20 season. These programs are also part of a season-spanning celebration of the 250\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the influential composer’s birth in 2020. Despite being written around the time of Beethoven’s Heiligenstadt Testament, a time of deep despair over his loss of hearing, the music of his Symphony No. 2 communicates many moments of sheer joy and exuberance. With its recognizable four-note theme, the Symphony No. 5 is one of Beethoven’s most iconic and influential works. Muti and the CSO have performed the Symphony No. 5 throughout his tenure as music director, including subscription concert performances and performances on tour in the U.S., Europe and Asia, as well as a CSO Community Concert in Chicago’s Woodlawn neighborhood.

The program also features the world premiere of French composer Nicholas Bacri’s concerto for bass clarinet, *Ophelia’s Tears* (Concertante Elegy), op. 150. A CSO-commissioned work, it is dedicated to CSO bass clarinetist J. Lawrie Bloom, and the memory of composer Oliver Knussen. Taking inspiration from Bacri’s earlier work *Ophelia’s Mad Scene*, Op. 146 for soprano and clarinet, it offers a musical portrait of the tragic figure of Ophelia from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Divided into three sections, the work opens with “Tragedy,” written in the form of a prelude and fugue; followed by “Madness,” which conveys Ophelia’s sense of confusion and poignant reflections on carefree days of the past, and “Death,” with its intensely dramatic and lyrical passage for strings and soloist that evolves into a dreamlike musical atmosphere to conclude the work.

Nicolas Bacri is one of France’s most frequently performed and recorded living composers. Bacri’s compositions written after 1980 reflect a style rooted in Classical forms and tonality, and he is widely recognized for a substantial catalog of works written for clarinet. Since the highly acclaimed performance of his Violin Concerto op. 7 in 1985 at Radio France, Bacri’s orchestral works have been championed internationally by ensembles including the China National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony, Spanish National Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, and London Symphony Orchestra, among others. He has been commissioned by some of Europe’s leading institutions and ensembles including, most recently, the French Ministry of Culture, Radio-France, Orchestre des Jeunes de la Méditérannée, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Tapiola Sinfonietta, and Pro Quartet. An award-winning composer, Bacri has been recognized with the Grand Prix de la Musique symphonique 2006 (S.A.C.E.M.) and nominated as an "Officier des arts et lettres" in 2017.
J. Lawrie Bloom was appointed to the position of Clarinet/Bass Clarinet for the CSO in 1980 by then music director Sir George Solti after previously holding appointments with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Phoenix Symphony, and Cincinnati Symphony. During the 2011/12 season he performed the U.S. premiere of Thea Musgrave’s bass clarinet concerto *Autumn Sonata* with the CSO. He frequently performs in the CSO chamber and MusicNow series and is currently a senior lecturer at Northwestern University.

Following his previous CSO residency in November, Muti led a series of five sold-out concerts with the Vienna Philharmonic and internationally renowned pianist Rudolf Buchbinder at the Musikverein in December. He also conducted the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra in the annual Christmas concert at the Italian Senate in Rome on December 15. That program included works by Italian composers Vincenzo Bellini, Alfredo Catalani, Umberto Giordano, Giuseppe Martucci, Gioachino Rossini and Giuseppe Verdi. Distinguished guests in the audience included Sergio Mattarella, president of Italy, and Giuseppe Conti, the nation’s prime minister. Elisabetta Casellati, president of the Senate, hailed Muti for his cultural advocacy. “The Christmas Concert, entrusted to the main representative of Italian culture in the world, Maestro Riccardo Muti, is an exceptional opportunity to celebrate the art, history and beauty of Italy,” she said. “In a word: ‘Italianness’.” Proceeds from the concert went to support clean-up efforts in flood-ravaged Venice. A new Italian TV commercial featuring Muti was broadcast for the first time on December 31, 2019 in conjunction with the end of the year speech by Italian President Sergio Mattarella. In the commercial for the Italian telecommunications company TIM, Muti serves as a guide for a young traveler in the spot that also features a performance of Mascagni’s Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana* by the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra. On January 1, 2020 the Vienna Philharmonic announced that Muti will return for his sixth appearance in the New Year’s Day concert at the Musikverein on January 1, 2021. From January 9 to 23, Muti led the CSO in a critically heralded European tour with sold-out concerts in Cologne, Vienna, Luxembourg, Paris, Naples, Florence, Milan and Lugano. Following his February CSO residency, Muti returns to Tokyo to lead his second annual Opera Academy in March 2020.

Tickets for all CSOA-presented concerts can be purchased by phone at **800-223-7114** or **312-294-3000**, online at [cso.org](http://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.

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

Bank of America is the Maestro Residency Presenting 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.

The February 20-23 concerts are made possible with the generous sponsorship of Josef and Margot Lakonishok.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra thanks the following donors for generously supporting its appearances in Florida in 2020.

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The Bacri commission is underwritten through the generous support of Helen Zell.

The CSO is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Thursday, February 6, at 8:00 p.m.
Friday, February 7, at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 8, at 8:00 p.m.

Riccardo Muti, conductor
Anita Rachvelishvili, mezzo-soprano (Santuzza)
Piero Pretti, tenor (Turiddu)
Luca Salsi, baritone (Alfio)
Ronnita Miller, mezzo-soprano (Lucia)
Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano (Lola)
Chicago Symphony Chorus
Duain Wolfe, chorus director

MASCAGNI Cavalleria rusticana
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts
1300 Biscayne Blvd, Miami Florida
Tuesday, February 11, 8:00 p.m.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti, conductor
WAGNER Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*
HINDEMITH Symphony, *Mathis der Maler*
DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 9 (*From the New World*)
Tickets available at [www.arshtcenter.org](http://www.arshtcenter.org)

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall
777 N Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL
Wednesday, February 12, 7:30 pm.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti, conductor
PROKOFIEV Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*
PROKOFIEV Symphony No. 3
Tickets available at [www.vanwezel.org](http://www.vanwezel.org)

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Naples Frances Pew Hayes Hall
5833 Pelican Bay Blvd
Naples, FL
Thursday, February 13, 8:00 pm.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti, conductor
PROKOFIEV Suite from *Romeo and Juliet*
PROKOFIEV Symphony No. 3
Tickets available at [www.artisnaples.org](http://www.artisnaples.org)

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Naples Frances Pew Hayes Hall
5833 Pelican Bay Blvd
Naples, FL
Saturday, February 15, 8:00 pm.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti, conductor
WAGNER Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*
HINDEMITH Symphony, *Mathis der Maler*
DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 9 (*From the New World*)
Tickets available at [www.artisnaples.org](http://www.artisnaples.org)

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Thursday, February 20, at 8:00 p.m.
Friday, February 21, at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 22, at 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 23, at 3:00 p.m.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Riccardo Muti, conductor  
J. Lawrie Bloom, bass clarinet  

BEETHOVEN  
Symphony No. 2  

BACRI  
Ophelia’s Tears, Op. 150  
[CSO Commission, World Premiere]  

BEETHOVEN  
Symphony No. 5  

Tickets: $53-$286  

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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, as well as *Infinity Between the Notes: My Journey Into Music*, published May 2019 and available in Italian.

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.

*riccardomutimusic.com*

**Other Featured Artists for this Performance:**
- Anita Rachvelishvili, mezzo-soprano
- Piero Pretti, tenor
- Luca Salsi, baritone
- Ronnita Miller, mezzo-soprano
- Sasha Cooke, mezzo-soprano
- Chicago Symphony Chorus
- Duain Wolfe, chorus director
- J. Lawrie Bloom, bass clarinet

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra:** [cso.org](http://cso.org) and [csosoundsandstories.org](http://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 62 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 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.