CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION REVIEWS ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS AND ANNOUNCES OPERATING RESULTS OF THE 128TH SEASON

CHICAGO—The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) released the results of fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019) at its Annual Meeting on October 23, 2019, at Symphony Center. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) marked its 128th season in 2018/19 with exceptional artistic achievements, as well as education and engagement activities in Chicago and beyond, according to Helen Zell, Chair of the Board of Trustees, and CSOA President Jeff Alexander, who presented artistic highlights and operating results of the season. During the business portion of the meeting, six new CSOA Trustees were elected to three-year terms, and officers of the CSOA board were re-elected, including Helen Zell as Board Chair.

“The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has been a cultural treasure for this community for 128 years,” said CSOA Board Chair Helen Zell. “Throughout the season, the quality of the musical performances exemplified the artistic excellence for which the Orchestra is known, while efforts of the CSOA’s leadership put the organization on a path toward its long-term sustainability. The inspirational outpouring of support from the people of Chicago and fans around the world was a testament to the Orchestra’s profound impact as a beacon for the power of classical music performance.”

“The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association honors the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and is profoundly grateful for the continued loyalty and generosity of our patrons and donors who provide tremendous support for our wide-ranging activities that reach audiences in our community and beyond,” added CSOA President Jeff Alexander.

In the 2018/19 season, audiences accessed programs of the CSO in Chicago at Symphony Center and community sites, on tour in Asia and Florida, as well as through radio broadcasts, recordings and online platforms. In addition, the CSOA presented 196 free events supported by
the Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO. These events included the CSO’s annual Concert for Chicago, CSO open rehearsals with Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti for invited student, senior and community groups; All-Access chamber music concerts; partnership events with Chicago Public Schools; and programs for at-risk and incarcerated youth, as well as Civic Orchestra of Chicago performances and chamber music performances by CSO and Civic musicians.

Following a seven-week work stoppage in the early spring, a new collective agreement was reached with the musicians of the Orchestra including a comprehensive compensation package with improvements in working conditions, as well as a wage increase of 14% over five years, and a transition from a Defined Benefit (DB) Pension Plan to a Defined Contribution (DC) Retirement Plan.

Audience engagement on digital platforms increased during the 2018/19 season with Facebook video campaigns generating more than 4.5 million views, the number of Instagram followers increasing by 52% to more than 98,103, the number of Facebook followers increasing by 6% to 217,324, and the number of Twitter followers increasing by 3% to 78,504. In addition, more than 2.1 million users logged sessions on the CSO’s website, cso.org, and the CSO’s online magazine, CSO Sounds & Stories, attracting more than 450,000 page views. Audio content streams of CSO Resound recordings and broadcasts topped more than 1.8 million last year and the YouTube video of the performance of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and distinguished soloists led by Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti continued to build its total views to date, reaching 16.8 million.

At the close of the 2018/19 season, 10,247 individuals gave support to the CSO through philanthropy. Of those, 9,302 contributed to general operating support, including 2,619 individuals who contributed to the CSOA for the first time.

**Ticket Sales and Operating Revenue for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019**

- Ticket sales for the 2018/19 season totaled $18.5 million, a decline of nearly $5 million from the 2017/18 season for CSOA-presented events as a result of the seven weeks without CSOA concert presentations. 49 concerts in Chicago and 1 “run-out” concert for the Orchestra were canceled for a total of 50 canceled, paid events.

- The decline in operating revenue was offset by lower operating expenses of $3.5 million and increased support of $1.3 million, for a net increase in the deficit of $200,000 versus last year.

- In addition to ticket revenue, other revenue of $10 million included tour fees, merchandise sales, facility rentals, royalties, recording fees and miscellaneous activities.

- Total operating revenue was $28.5 million for the 2018/19 season.

- The CSO Main series subscription renewal rate in FY19 was 89%; one of the highest rates for a major U.S. orchestra.
• More than 276,000 tickets were sold for 167 ticketed concerts.

• Ticket sales for the 2018/19 season included 50 sold-out concerts, and record ticket revenues for the CSO at Wheaton series reflecting an increase of 12% over the previous year.”

**Contributed Revenues for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019**

• Overall, during the 2018/19 season, support for general operating, endowment, future year operating support and unrealized commitments totaled $40.9 million.

• General operating support to the CSO was $25.3 million, an increase of 3% over fiscal year 2018. This total included approximately $18.9 million in gifts from individuals, more than $4.1 million from corporate sponsorships, partnerships and in-kind support and almost $2.3 million in grants from foundations and government agencies.

**Financial Information for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019**

• Total revenues were $69.1 million.

• Total operating expenses totaled $70.2 million, resulting in an operating deficit of $1.1 million.

**Endowment**

• The value of endowment investments increased to $314 million in 2019.

**Total Assets**

• Total assets at year-end were $503.1 million, and net assets were $267 million.

**Artistic Highlights for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2019**

In his remarks at the 128th Annual Meeting, CSOA President Jeff Alexander shared a number of significant artistic highlights from the 2018/19 season that launched in September with a very special Concert for Chicago in Millennium Park’s Pritzker Pavilion. In a first-ever, side-by-side performance with the full rosters of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and Civic Orchestra of Chicago sharing the stage, Riccardo Muti led a performance that marked the beginning of the Civic’s centennial season and featured a program featuring works by Rossini, Verdi and Tchaikovsky.

Muti’s opening CSO residency featured powerful performances of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 14 (*Babi Yar*), as part of *A Time for Reflection—A Message of Peace*, a season-long series of programs that explored themes of reflection and remembrance. The series of programs served to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I on November 11, 1918, a moment that was commemorated with the CSO-commissioned work *Threnos* by composer Bruno Mantovani. The new work received its world premiere in an October 18 CSO program led by conductor Marin Alsop that was supported by Colonel (IL) Jennifer N. Pritzker, IL
ARNG (Retired), president and founder, Pritzker Military Foundation and the President and CEO of TAWANI Enterprises Inc. In addition to the world premiere, companion programming included offsite recitals of World War I-era songs featuring soloists from Lyric Opera’s Ryan Opera Center, as well as a special exhibit curated by the Rosenthal Archives at the CSO, and an appearance by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in a free Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Special Concert. Riccardo Muti also led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and distinguished soloists in performances of Verdi’s Requiem on November 8, 9 and 10 that anticipated the 100th anniversary of the WWI Armistice on November 11.

In October, the Orchestra welcomed Bernard Haitink, principal conductor from 2006-2010, back to the podium to lead Bruckner’s Sixth Symphony. Haitink’s series of critically acclaimed performances was immediately followed by a return to the podium by the CSO’s ninth music director Daniel Barenboim (1991-2006) after an absence of 12 years. Making his first CSO appearance since 2006, Barenboim led the Orchestra in performances of Smetana’s Má vlast, a work that he had not performed previously in its entirety with the CSO. Barenboim capped his Chicago visit with an SCP Special Concert featuring his West-Eastern Divan Orchestra that launched the group’s first-ever, coast-to-coast U.S. Tour.

The Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz Series celebrated its 25th anniversary season in 2018/19 and marked the special season with three commissions with the first created by American Ragtime pianist and MacArthur Fellow Reginald Robinson. Commemorating the centennial of the World War I Armistice, Robinson led a small ensemble in a new work that paid tribute to ragtime and jazz musician James Reese Europe, who first introduced the musical genres to Europe as a band leader for the 369th Regiment “Harlem Hellfighters,” who served in France during WWI. Other commissions included a co-commission with Carnegie Hall of a concerto performed by Israel-born clarinetist and saxophonist Anat Cohen and her tentet by Cohen’s longtime colleague Oded Lev-Ari. In May, MacArthur Fellow and pianist Jason Moran joined his wife, mezzo-soprano Alicia Hall Moran, Pastor Smokie Norful on piano and vocals, the Imani Winds and Chicago’s Kenwood Academy Jazz Band for Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration, the final SCP Jazz commission for the 25th anniversary season.

Appointed to a two-year term by Riccardo Muti for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons, CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli curated her first MusicNOW series in 2018/19 with a special focus on highlighting the works of Chicago-based, emerging and female composers. Highlights included a special series finale at the Harris Theater in May featuring the works Meredith Monk and Julius Eastman including Mazzoli’s own arrangement of Monk’s “Passage, What Does It Mean?” performed by Mazzoli on piano with CSO and guest musicians.

Riccardo Muti and the CSO made their second tour of Asia together in 2019 with critically acclaimed performances for capacity audiences in Taipei, Taiwan, Shanghai and Beijing, China and in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan. In Tokyo, Muti led the CSO, distinguished soloists and the Tokyo Opera Chorus in two, sold-out performances of Verdi’s Requiem at the Bunka Kaikan. Soon after their return to the U.S. in February, Muti and the Orchestra also traveled to Florida for a week-long tour with stops in Miami, West Palm Beach and in Naples, where the CSO is currently engaged in a multi-year residency through the 2020/21 season.
In Chicago, Muti also led the Orchestra’s first performances of Pulitzer Prize–winning composer William Schuman’s Symphony No. 9 (Le fosse Ardeatine) presented in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of this WWII tragedy in Italy. In collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy and the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago, the CSOA presented special events to inform audiences about this episode in Italy’s history, including a companion photo exhibit and special preconcert conversation with U.S. Bureau Chief of La Repubblica Federico Rampini and Professor of History at Loyola University Anthony Cardoza, as well as an exhibition in the Symphony Center Rotunda. The performance and special events were attended by Italian Ambassador to the U.S. Armando Varricchio and recognized by Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

Schuman’s Symphony No. 9 shared the program with Mozart’s Requiem as part of the season’s ongoing exploration of works of reflection and remembrance. The performance featured the Chicago Symphony Chorus, prepared by Duain Wolfe, who marked his 25th season as Chorus Director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus in 2018/19.

Audiences returned to Symphony Center for the first time after a seven-week work stoppage in the early spring for a Symphony Center Presents Chamber series concert on May 1. Featuring two giants of classical music—violinist Itzhak Perlman and pianist Evgeny Kissin—the performance for a capacity audience included violin sonatas by Mozart, Brahms and Beethoven.

The Joffrey Ballet made its CSO debut in May in a program featuring the music of Igor Stravinsky led by conductor Matthias Pintscher. The performance of Stravinsky's Dumbarton Oaks featured world-premiere choreography by Stephanie Martinez, while Stravinsky's Suite from Pulcinella featured choreographer Christopher Wheeldon's Commedia.

Several programs in the 2018/19 season also celebrated the exceptional artistry of CSO musicians as soloists including a November all-Mozart program led by and featuring Concertmaster Robert Chen in Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, as well as Principal Flute Stefán Ragnar Höskuldsson in Mozart's Flute Concerto No. 2 in D Major. In June, Riccardo Muti led a program featuring CSO Piccolo Jennifer M. Gunn in Vivaldi’s Piccolo Concerto in C Major and American composer Ken Benshoof's Concerto in Three Movements for Piccolo and Orchestra. The program also included the world premiere of American composer James Stephenson's Bass Trombone Concerto with CSO Bass Trombone Charles Vernon as soloist.

To cap his tenure as the CSO's Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, cellist Yo-Yo Ma returned to Chicago in June to perform all six unaccompanied cello suites of J.S. Bach in Millennium Park's Pritzker Pavilion to a capacity audience of 20,000. The performance, part of Ma’s international "Bach Project" was presented by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) and the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). These activities marked the conclusion of Ma’s role as the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, a position he has held since December 14, 2009. This tailor-made position was created to deepen the Orchestra’s engagement with the Chicago community and to nurture the legacy of the CSO while supporting a new generation of musicians.
The 2018/19 season came to a conclusion in June with three performance of Verdi’s *Aida*, a much-anticipated continuation of Muti’s ongoing exploration of Verdi’s operas with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and distinguished soloists. These definitive performances featured soprano Krassimira Stoyanova in the title role—and soprano Elaine Alvarez as her cover for one performance—tenor Francesco Meli as Radames and mezzo-soprano Anita Rachvelishvili as Amneris in a memorable CSO debut.

**CSOA Trustees, Governing Members and Officers Elected**

- Six new CSOA Trustees were elected to three-year terms: Lori Bradley, Senior Vice President of Global Talent Management, United Airlines; Keith Crow, Partner, Kirkland & Ellis; Stephen V. D’Amore, Partner, Winston & Strawn; Geraldine Keefe, Managing Director in the Industrials Group, Investment Banking Division, Goldman, Sachs & Co.; Thomas G. Kilroy, Partner, McKinsey & Company; and Marlon Smith, Managing Director, JLC Infrastructure.

- Two new CSOA Life Trustees were also elected: Laurence O. Booth, Founder, Booth Hansen Associates, and Earl J. Rusnak, Jr., Founding Partner, Harris Associates.

- Seven Trustees were re-elected to additional 3-year terms, and 29 new Governing Members were installed. Special acknowledgement was given to 30 individuals who have served on the CSOA Board of Trustees for 30 years or more.

- The following individuals were elected as officers of the CSOA Board of Trustees: Helen Zell, Chair; Mary Louise Gorno, Robert A. Kohl and Liisa Thomas, Vice Chairs; and Renée Metcalf, Treasurer. The following CSOA staff were re-elected as officers of the CSOA Board of Trustees: Jeff Alexander, President; Stacie Frank, Assistant Treasurer and Karen Rahn, Secretary of the Board.

- A moment of silence was observed for those Trustees who passed away during the 2018/19 season: Marshall Bennett and Ruth Ann Quinn.

- New donors now listed on the CSOA’s donor wall were recognized in remarks by CSOA Board Chair Helen Zell.

To access the CSOA’s 2019 Annual Report, click [here](#).

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**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 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.