YO-YO MA, STUART DUNCAN, EDGAR MEYER AND CHRIS THILE PRESENT “NOT OUR FIRST GOAT RODEO” IN FREE, PUBLIC CONCERT AT MILLENNIUM PARK

Guest Vocalist Aoife O’Donovan Joins the Quartet for this Goat Rodeo Reunion

**Thursday, August 13, at 6:30 p.m., at Millennium Park**

CHICAGO—Cellist Yo-Yo-Ma, fiddler Stuart Duncan, bassist Edgar Meyer and mandolinist Chris Thile present a free, public concert with guest vocalist Aoife O’Donovan on Thursday, August 13, at 6:30 p.m., at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion at Millennium Park, presented by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) and the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). Reuniting for the first time in nearly a decade, this group of virtuosos presents “Not Our First Goat Rodeo,” a collection of all-new music following their 2011 Grammy Award-winning album *The Goat Rodeo Sessions.*

These exceptional artists come together on stage to create a singular sound that’s part composed, part improvised and uniquely American—music so complex to pull off that the group likens it to a goat rodeo, airplane pilots’ nickname for a situation in which many different things need to go right to avoid disaster. In the words of the *Los Angeles Times,* this concert presents “unlikely musicians on unlikely instruments in concerts ... that [are] part blues, part bluegrass and a smidgen of Bach.”

This concert is part of the Year of Chicago Music. Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) have designated 2020 as the Year of Chicago Music. This citywide, yearlong focus on music is one of the first of its kind in the U.S. More information is available at [chicago.gov/music](http://chicago.gov/music).

Yo-Yo Ma’s multi-faceted career is testament to his enduring belief in culture’s power to generate trust and understanding. Whether performing new or familiar works from the cello
repertoire, collaborating with communities and institutions to explore culture’s role in society or engaging unexpected musical forms, Ma strives to foster connections that stimulate the imagination and reinforce our humanity. In August 2018, Ma began a new journey, setting out to perform Johann Sebastian Bach’s six suites for solo cello in one sitting in 36 locations around the world, including Chicago’s Millennium Park on June 20, 2019. From 2010 to 2019, Ma served as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant. Ma’s discography of more than 100 albums (including 19 Grammy Award winners) reflects his wide-ranging interests.

Fiddler Stuart Duncan has built upon his bluegrass roots to become an artist that defies categorization and surpasses the limits of any specific genre. The consummate sideman, Duncan has lent his particular taste and tone to countless artists and projects in addition to The Goat Rodeo Sessions with Ma, Meyer and Thile. Whether trading dizzying instrumental licks with the likes of Béla Fleck and Jerry Douglas, or adding complimentary fills for vocalists Alan Jackson and Barbara Streisand, Duncan’s playing and influence can be heard among many leading artists. When not active in the studio or on tour with others, Duncan can be seen and heard with the Grammy Award-winning Nashville Bluegrass Band, of which he has been a member since 1985.

In demand as both a performer and a composer, bassist Edgar Meyer has formed a role in the music world unlike any other. In 2006, he released a self-titled solo recording on which he wrote and recorded all of the music, incorporating piano, guitar, mandolin, dobro, banjo, gamba and double bass. His 1996 album Appalachia Waltz with Yo-Yo Ma and Mark O’Connor topped the charts for 16 weeks, while its follow up, Appalachian Journey, received a Grammy Award. Meyer also received a Grammy Award in 2015 for Best Contemporary Instrumental album for his Bass & Mandolin collaboration with Thile. His most recent recording is a 2017 collection of Bach Trios with Thile and Ma. In 1994 he received the Avery Fisher Career Grant, in 2000 became the only bassist to receive the Avery Fisher Prize, and in 2002 he received a MacArthur Award.

Mandolin virtuoso Chris Thile has made several appearances at Symphony Center including as host of live broadcasts of public radio’s Live from Here with Chris Thile, as well as in concerts with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, bassist Edgar Meyer, jazz pianist Brad Mehldau and with his own band, Punch Brothers. A child prodigy, Thile first rose to fame as a member of Grammy Award-winning trio Nickel Creek, with whom he released three albums and sold two million records. Thile is a frequent collaborator with all of the performers on this program, earning acclaim and awards for albums including The Goat Rodeo Sessions, Bass & Mandolin and Bach Trios. Thile is the winner of four Grammy Awards and the 2012 MacArthur Award.

Recognized for her ethereal voice and substantive songwriting, Aoife O’Donovan is also known for her collaborations across a variety of genres. Co-founder of the bands Crooked Still and I’m With Her, O’Donovan is the featured vocalist on The Goat Rodeo Sessions, the Grammy Award-winning album by Yo-Yo Ma, Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile. O’Donovan also sings in the house band on public radio’s Live from Here with Chris Thile. O’Donovan’s latest
project, titled *Songs and Strings*, features her alongside a string quartet performing the song cycle *Bull Frogs Croon*, which was written and developed with Jeremy Kittel and Teddy Abrams and set to text by Peter Sears.

Admission to the CSOA’s presentation of “Not Our First Goat Rodeo” on Thursday, August 13, at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park is free and open to the public. A limited number of reserved seats are available for supporters of the CSOA. For information, call Patron Services at 800-223-7114 or 312-294-3000 or visit cso.org.

This performance is presented in partnership with the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE).

Artists, programs and prices are subject to change.

# # #

**CSOA Special Concert**  
**Thursday, August 13, 2020, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Not Our First Goat Rodeo**  
Yo-Yo Ma, cello  
Stuart Duncan, fiddle  
Edgar Meyer, bass  
Chris Thile, mandolin  
Aoife O’Donovan, vocals

Tickets: The concert is free and open to the public. A limited number of reserved seats are available with a donation of support for the CSOA Annual Fund. More information at cso.org.

---

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