CHORUS DIRECTOR DUAIN WOLFE TO RETIRE IN 2022
AFTER MORE THAN A QUARTER CENTURY LEADING
THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY CHORUS

CHICAGO—The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) announces that Duain Wolfe, chorus director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus (CSC) since 1994, will retire from his position in spring 2022. Wolfe is only the second director to hold the position since the Chorus was founded in 1957 by its first director Margaret Hillis at the request of Music Director Fritz Reiner. During Wolfe’s notable career he has prepared the Chicago Symphony Chorus for more than 150 programs, including Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) subscription concerts in Orchestra Hall, as well as programs at the Ravinia Festival, Pritzker Pavilion in Chicago’s Millennium Park, Carnegie Hall and the Berlin Philharmonie.

Wolfe has prepared the CSC for programs led by CSO music directors Riccardo Muti and Daniel Barenboim; Music Director Laureate Sir Georg Solti; Principal Guest Conductor and Conductor Emeritus Pierre Boulez; Principal Conductor Bernard Haitink; Ravinia Festival music directors Christoph Eschenbach and James Conlon and Artistic Curator Marin Alsop; and numerous guest conductors.

“After more than a quarter century, I remain impressed and deeply moved by the astonishing merits of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the standards it continues to set for our noble profession,” said Chorus Director Duain Wolfe. “My time with this incredible ensemble has been a gift, but it is now time for a new director who can carry the legacy of the Chicago Symphony Chorus to even greater heights of artistic achievement and awareness. I am incredibly grateful for the vision and dedication of founding director Margaret Hillis, and for the opportunity to work with the world-renowned community of music makers led so beautifully by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It has been a privilege and honor to be a part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra family.”

“The years in Chicago that include the collaboration with distinguished Chorus Director Duain Wolfe and the excellent Chicago Symphony Chorus have marked a significant artistic period,” noted Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti. “The many performances with the Chorus and Orchestra have been truly memorable for me and for our audiences.”

“The entire Chicago Symphony Orchestra family is grateful to Duain Wolfe for his steadfast commitment to the quality of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the exhilarating performances to which we have been treated, and the role he has played over the past 27 years throughout the organization,” noted CSOA President Jeff Alexander. “We look forward to celebrating these accomplishments with him in the upcoming season and wish him the very best in his retirement.”
Wolfe first prepared the Chicago Symphony Chorus as a guest for a Ravinia Festival program of opera choruses in August 1993 and again in February 1994 for subscription concert performances of Schoenberg’s *Friede auf Erden* in Orchestra Hall. Concluding a three-year search on February 10, 1994, Music Director Daniel Barenboim announced Wolfe as the successor to the Chorus’s founder and first director Margaret Hillis, who became director laureate when Wolfe assumed the role of director on June 1, 1994. Wolfe first led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus at Orchestra Hall in 1999 performances of Brahms’s *A German Requiem* for the American Choral Directors Association National Conference, and he made his subscription concert debut with the CSO and Chorus in 2002, sharing the podium with Mstislav Rostropovich in performances of Britten’s *War Requiem*.

Over the course of his tenure, Wolfe has prepared the Chorus for numerous CSO recordings on Deutsche Grammophon, London, Sony, Teldec, and CSO Resound, including three Grammy winners: Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* conducted by Sir Georg Solti (Best Opera), and Verdi’s *Requiem* (Best Classical Album and Best Choral Performance) and Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 13 (*Babi Yar*) (Best Engineered Recording–Classical) conducted by Riccardo Muti. Wolfe also prepared the Chorus for the soundtrack recording to the movie *Lincoln*, composed and conducted by John Williams.

Other artistic highlights with the Chicago Symphony Chorus include performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony; Cherubini’s *Requiem*; Orff’s *Carmina Burana*; Verdi’s *Otello, Macbeth, Falstaff and Aida*; Prokofiev’s *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*; Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana*; Mahler’s Second, Third, and Eighth symphonies; Schoenberg’s *Kol Nidre* and *Moses und Aron*; and world premieres of John Harbison’s Four Psalms and Bernard Rands’s *apókryphos*, both commissioned by the CSO. Wolfe was also the creator and conductor of *Welcome Yule!*—a popular series of holiday concerts that featured the Orchestra and Chorus along with children’s choruses, dancers, and actors—that enjoyed a twenty-year run from 1995 through 2014.

Outside of his role as Chicago Symphony Chorus Director, Wolfe directs choral works at the Aspen Music Festival, the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa and the Bravo! Vail Festival where he prepares choruses for the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Dallas Symphony. He is the founder-director of the Colorado Symphony Chorus (now in its thirty-eighth season), and is conductor laureate of the Colorado Children’s Chorale, an organization that he founded and conducted for 25 years. Also active in opera, he served as conductor of the Central City Opera Festival for 20 years.

Originally from Hammond, Louisiana, Wolfe earned a bachelor of music degree from Southeastern Louisiana University, going on to receive a master’s degree from the University of North Texas College of Music. A respected leader in the field of choral conducting, Wolfe served as president of Chorus America the national advocacy organization for professional choruses. Wolfe’s activities have earned him an honorary doctorate and numerous awards, including the Bonfils Stanton Award in the Arts and Humanities and the Colorado Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. In 2012, Wolfe received Chorus America’s Michael Korn Founders Award in recognition of his contributions to the professional choral arts.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra: cso.org and experience.cso.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. Recordings by the CSO have earned 63 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 (Ken-David Masur, Principal Conductor), 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.