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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES SPRING 2021 DIGITAL PROGRAMS ON CSOTV

First Season of CSO Sessions Series Concludes with Four New Episodes Including Two Curated by CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli—Premieres Set for May 6 & 27, June 10 & 24

CSO for Kids—Episode 5: Exquisite Premieres May 13 and Shares Story of Poet Gwendolyn Brooks with Music by Florence Price and Episode 6: School’s Out! Premieres June 3 featuring Singer-Songwriter and Parents’ Choice Award-Winner Justin Roberts

Civic Orchestra of Chicago Series Features New Episodes in May, June and July Including Finale Program with Civic Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur Leading Works by Mazzoli & Schumann

Orchestral Excerpt Insights Video Series with CSO Musicians Continues

CHICAGO—The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) announces details of its spring 2021 programming on CSOtv and other digital content—all designed to connect local and global audiences with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra online. Highlights include four new episodes of CSO Sessions, including two programs curated by current CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli, two new episodes in the CSO for Kids series, and three releases in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago series. All spring 2021 releases will be available on CSOtv, a portal for free and premium on-demand videos. In the months ahead, Experience CSO, a new source for music lovers to immerse themselves in the sounds and stories behind the music of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, introduces the next set of educational videos featuring CSO musicians performing orchestral excerpts.

A chronological list of spring 2021 digital programs is available here.
CSO Sessions

Launched in October 2020, the critically acclaimed series of on-demand, high-definition video recordings of chamber music performances by Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians filmed in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center continues in 2021. Programs for the CSO Sessions series are developed with artistic guidance from Music Director Riccardo Muti.

Episode 19: Elliot, Sowerby & Prokofiev (May 6)
Two works by Prokofiev bookend this episode that also includes 20th-century works for woodwind quintet by two composers who had specific connections to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Organist and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Leo Sowerby lived in Chicago throughout his career, and his works were championed by former CSO Music Director Frederick Stock. Sowerby’s Woodwind Quintet was published in 1931 and written as a work in three movements marked Jauntily, In an elegiac mood and At a steady trot. Former CSO Principal Bassoon Willard Elliot was also a versatile composer who received the distinguished Koussevitzky Foundation Award as a co-winner in 1961 for his Elegy for Orchestra and whose Bassoon Concerto was performed on CSO subscription concerts and at the Ravinia Festival. Elliot performed with other CSO musicians in the Grammy Award-winning ensemble Chicago Pro Musica during his tenure in the Orchestra and also wrote a number of pieces for winds, including his Two Sketches for Woodwind Quintet, which is part of this episode. CSO musicians featured in the wind quintet selections include Jennifer Gunn (flute), Assistant Principal Oboe Michael Henoch, Assistant Principal Clarinet John Bruce Yeh, Assistant Principal Bassoon William Buchman and Oto Carrillo (horn).

The episode also includes a performance of an arrangement of Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet Suite for wind ensemble and Prokofiev’s Quintet, a landmark chamber work, which was written in 1924, originally as music for a ballet called Trapeze. The music of the quintet is bright, but somewhat spiky and dissonant in character evoking the atmosphere of a circus and featuring an unusual combination of wind and string instruments. CSO musicians featured in the performance of Prokofiev’s Quintet include Principal Oboe William Welter, Principal Clarinet Stephen Williamson, Gina DiBello (violin), Weijing Wang (viola) and Principal Bass Alexander Hanna.

Episode 20: Mazzoli & Schoenberg (May 27)
This episode opens with current CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli’s Volume, a 2006 work scored for two percussionists. Mazzoli created this version to be performed on two vibraphones and additional percussion instruments, including kick drums for each player and bottles filled with varying amounts of water. She says the piece is “about the unique timbre of these instruments and how they ring out when played together, particularly when they are playing big chords together at the same time.” The work’s title, Volume, refers not only to the loud volume that the instruments reach when played all together but also to the volume of water in the bottles. Completing the episode is Schoenberg’s Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night), one of the composer’s earliest works, originally written for string sextet in 1899 and later scored for chamber orchestra. Inspired by Richard Dehmel’s poem “Zwei Menschen” (Two People), the work creates an intense emotional atmosphere that evokes the scene in the poem of a moonlit walk by a man and woman who move from despair and darkness to forgiveness and light. The performance features CSO musicians Matous Michal and Simon Michal (violins), Weijing Wang and Danny Lai (violas), Assistant Principal Cello Kenneth Olsen and Karen Basrak (cello).

For the final episodes of the first season of the CSO Sessions series, current CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli was invited to curate two programs as part of activities that mark the
culmination of her tenure, which concludes in June 2021. Mazzoli also joins Mead Composer-in-Residence Designate Jessie Montgomery on May 20 at 6:00 p.m. (Central Time) for “From the Composer’s Studio,” a live-streamed conversation hosted by the CSO about what it means to be a composer working with symphony orchestras in 2021. The webinar will be followed by a Q&A and is free and open to the public. Advance reservation is required, and more information is available here.

**Episode 21: Cult of Electromagnetic Connectivity** (June 10)
This episode opens with the world premiere of composer and trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith’s *Delta Blues*. Written during the mid-1990s, the work is scored for violin, flute, bass clarinet and piano and taps into Smith’s blues and world music influences. Mazzoli’s 2018 work *Dark with Excessive Bright* for solo bass and string orchestra features CSO Principal Bass Alexander Hanna as soloist and is conducted by Edwin Outwater. Inspired by her encounter with an instrument built in the 16th century, Mazzoli reflects on the idea of a Baroque concerto in this work, which takes its name from a description of the robes of God in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The world premiere of the MusicNOW commissioned work *Cult of Electromagnetic Connectivity* by composer and flutist Nicole Mitchell closes the program in a performance conducted by Michael Lewanski. Mitchell, like Smith, is a fellow artist in the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). Her work draws upon ideas within the Afrofuturism movement in arts and culture that bring traditions of the African diaspora into new forms. Her new piece for CSO musicians is written for an eclectic ensemble of winds, violin and percussion.

**Episode 22: Requiem** (June 24)
The treble vocal quartet, Quince Ensemble, is featured on several works in this episode that opens with Gilda Lyons’ *Bone Needles*, an introspective vocal duo that explores possibilities for direct communication between two voices even without words, stitching together abstract vocal sounds into a single, continuous musical tapestry. The four members of Quince Ensemble also perform the world premiere of Chicago-based composer David Reminick’s “The Pub” from *In Dreams*, a movement from a larger cycle of five pieces inspired by personal recollections of dreams. The episode also includes the 2016 string quartet *Prospective Dwellers* by Chicago-based cellist Tomeka Reid, who previously appeared on the Symphony Center Presents Jazz series. The 2020/21 season reaches a poignant conclusion with the world premiere of *Requiem*, a MusicNOW-commissioned work by composer/pianist and Rome Prize winner Courtney Bryan. Taking inspiration from death rituals of various cultures, *Requiem* combines elements of the Anglican requiem with the celebratory, exuberant sounds of a New Orleans jazz funeral across five movements that include texts from the Bible and the traditional Latin mass. Bryan’s work is scored for vocal quartet with wind, brass and percussion instruments, and the performance is conducted by Edwin Outwater.

**CSO for Kids**

**Episode 5: Exquisite** (May 13)
Before Gwendolyn Brooks became the first Black person to win the Pulitzer Prize, she was a little girl who dared to dream. Based on the Coretta Scott King Award-winning book, *Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*, by Suzanne Slade and illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera, this new animated story with music introduces viewers to one of Chicago’s most treasured poets, who found inspiration in colorful clouds and the people in her neighborhood, including children. The fifth episode in the CSO for Kids series in the 2020/21 season, and the third created through a collaboration between the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Children’s Theatre (CCT), *Exquisite* features narration by Chicago-based poet, sociologist and educator Eve L. Ewing and a performance of
selections from composer Florence Price’s String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor featuring CSO musicians Rong-Yan Tang (violin), Melanie Kupchynsky (violin), Max Raimi (viola) and Loren Brown (cello).

Jacqueline Russell, artistic director, Chicago Children’s Theatre and Jon Weber, director, School and Family Programs, Negaunee Music Institute, co-directed Exquisite with animation design by Liviu Pasare. The production team also includes Todd Rosenberg, director of photography for the CSO; and Charlie Post, Mark Alletag and Mat Lejeune, audio engineering. Exquisite is published by Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York.

**Episode 6: School’s Out! (June 3)**
The CSO for Kids series concludes with a musical celebration to mark the end of an extraordinary school year and the beginning of summer featuring performances by musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and a special appearance by multiple Grammy Award nominee, Parents’ Choice award-winner and singer-songwriter Justin Roberts. Musical selections include arrangements of Roberts’ song “School’s Out (Tall Buildings)” and the opening movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 6 (Pastoral), which is subtitled *Awakening of Cheerful Feelings on Arrival in the Countryside*. Featured CSO musicians include Susan Synnestvedt (violin), Hermine Gagné (violin), Diane Mues (viola), Richard Hirschl (cello), Principal Flute Stefán Ragnar Höskuldsson, Assistant Principal Clarinet John Bruce Yeh, Daniel Gingrich (horn) and Patricia Dash (percussion). Guest vocalists include Justin Roberts, Meagan McNeal and Leah Dexter.

**Civic Orchestra of Chicago**

**Episode 4: Stravinsky, Debussy & Martinů (May 20)**
Filmed in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center, members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago open this episode with performances of chamber music arrangements of two masterworks that brim with instrumental color—Stravinsky’s *The Firebird* and Debussy’s *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*. Completing the episode is 20th-century Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů’s Piano Quintet No. 2.

**Episode 5: Form the Fabric (June 17)**
Earlier this year, the Fellows of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago issued a call for scores and received more than 200 submissions from composers around the world. The selected composers and works include the following: inti figgis-vizueta, *Form the Fabric* for open instrumentation; Kyle Krause, *Recycled Effervescence* for flute, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin and cello; Michal Massoud, *Quintette* for piano quintet; and Nina Shekhar, *Above the Fray* for multitrack string quartet. These four works will be featured alongside Tonia Ko’s string quartet *Escape-Landscape*. Episode 5 was filmed in Buntrock Hall at Symphony Center. More information about the Civic Fellows is available [here](#).

**Episode 6: Mazzoli & Schumann (July 8)**
Led by Civic Orchestra Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur, members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago bring their virtual season to a lively conclusion in a program filmed in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center. The episode opens with CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli’s *Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres)*, a bright and energetic piece that suggests the planets of the solar system being flung recklessly into space. Completing the episode is the 1841 version of Schumann’s fourth symphony, a highly inventive work composed in one movement with several episodes of varying character including a lyrical Romanze and lively scherzo followed by an exuberant finale.
Orchestral Excerpt Insights With Musicians From the CSO

Created by the Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO, this series of educational videos features individual musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performing and sharing personal insights about orchestral music excerpts that are regularly requested in orchestral auditions. New installments in the series to be released between now and June on the Experience CSO website will feature Principal Timpani David Herbert, Principal Horn David Cooper, CSO Piccolo Jennifer M. Gunn, Principal Percussion Cynthia Yeh, Principal Tuba Gene Pokorny, Principal Cello John Sharp and Principal Oboe William Welter.

InterMISSION at the CSO and CSOradio

Free audio content includes the podcast InterMISSION at the CSO, which offers behind-the-scenes conversations about what it takes to make the CSO one of the world’s greatest orchestras. More information is available at cso.org/intermission. In addition, CSOradio offers listeners in Chicago and around the world the opportunity to connect with full-length concert broadcasts of Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances. To access complete radio program information and to listen to free, on-demand radio broadcasts of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on CSOradio, visit cso.org/radio.

Patron Information

Individual episodes of CSO Sessions are available for $15. A 20% discount is available for purchases of three or more premium online episodes. New premium episodes on CSOtv are available for on-demand streaming for 30 days after each premiere, unless otherwise noted. Audiences can watch CSOtv videos on desktop computers, tablets or mobile phones, with additional options to cast to a compatible TV from a preferred device.

Additional information about viewing and purchasing premium CSOtv episodes may be found at cso.tv. CSOA Patron Services representatives are available by web chat at cso.org, by calling 312-294-3000 (Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.) or by emailing patronservices@cso.org.

Created in spring 2020 in response to the financial impacts of the pandemic and with generous support from leadership donors, the CSOA's Music Ahead campaign continues in the 2020/21 season and will provide funds that support the CSOA and its commitment to sharing classical music with audiences in Chicago and worldwide. Gifts of donated tickets are welcomed as part of the ongoing Music Ahead campaign. More information is available at cso.org/musicahead.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

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

Sponsorship support for CSO Sessions is generously provided by the Zell Family Foundation; an anonymous donor; Kenneth C. Griffin Charitable Fund; JCS Arts, Health and Education Fund of the DuPage Foundation; the Julian Family Foundation, in honor of Cristina Rocca; Cynthia M. Sargent; Megan and Steve Shebik; Betty W. Smykal; TAWANI Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; ITW, and PNC.
The world premiere MusicNOW commission of Nicole Mitchell’s *Cult of Electromagnetic Connectivity* was made possible through the generous support of Helen Zell.

The world premiere MusicNOW commission of Courtney Bryan’s *Requiem* was made possible through the generous support of Helen Zell.

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