Yo-Yo Ma  The Bach Project

JUNE 20, 2019, JAY PRITZKER PAVILION, MILLENNIUM PARK
This performance is presented in partnership with the

City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

[Image]

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COVER ARTWORK BY SERGIO FARFAN

City’s Beautiful Chaos, by Sergio Farfan, engages with the Bach Project’s Chicago theme of confronting gun violence through culture. Artist Sergio Farfan writes, “Chicago has built a reputation because of its high rates of gun-related violence, yet many people still call it home and live on to create beautiful memories in this city. The lines create hidden faces—expressions of those who have lost (on the bottom half) but also those who live on (the top half). . . . Look too closely and the design may appear like a mess—where there is no order and only chaos. But if you look at it as a whole, the disorder of lines and colors starts to blend together and make sense, which is a message that many of us need to see: that without the chaos, there is no beauty.”

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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA | RICCARDO MUTI | ZELL MUSIC DIRECTOR
SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS 220 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO, IL 60604 312-294-3000 CSO.ORG/Subscribe
Tonight we come together to celebrate the artistry of Yo-Yo Ma. This is an extraordinary opportunity to hear him perform Johann Sebastian Bach’s six suites for unaccompanied cello, seminal works with which he has had a profound relationship for the past sixty years.

This occasion also marks the conclusion of his role as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, a position he has held since December 14, 2009. With the visionary and generous support of the Greens, 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. It is without question that Yo-Yo Ma has excelled in this role.

As Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, Ma has served as a catalyst in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association’s continued commitment to the belief that music can bridge gaps between people, create community, and inspire and transform lives. With guidance from Ma and the support of the CSO’s Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti, this core belief has sparked a variety of programs both within and outside of Symphony Center, the Orchestra’s home, by involving musicians of the CSO and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago as well as the programs of the CSO’s Negaunee Music Institute. Since 2010, program sites, in addition to Symphony Center, have included prisons, schools, hospitals, community centers, and other public spaces in the city, as well as a wide variety of sites when the CSO is on tour in the United States and abroad.

Leading by example, Yo-Yo Ma leaves a profound mark on the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association as a performer, educator, and humanitarian, who has inspired and influenced millions. We are sure he will do so again tonight and as he continues to connect with audiences and create music at the highest level.

With every good wish and sincere thanks,

Helen Zell
Chair, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association
Board of Trustees

Jeff Alexander
President, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association

On behalf of the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), it is my great pleasure to welcome Yo-Yo Ma and his Bach Project to the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park. We are grateful that he has chosen Chicago as a fitting destination for one of the Bach Project’s thirty-six performances as he has had a profound relationship with the city for many years.

In addition to his roles as a celebrated musician and Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA), Yo-Yo Ma has been an advocate for the value of arts education in the lives of Chicago students. His involvement, on behalf of the CSOA, was influential in the swift development of the city’s first Arts Education Plan, approved by the Chicago Board of Education in October 2012. This visionary plan was grounded in research that revealed the importance of arts education and provided specific recommendations to improve, expand, and strategically coordinate arts education across the district. Ma joined countless civic and neighborhood leaders, along with numerous cultural institutions—including the Negaunee Music Institute of the CSOA—and community organizations in this united effort to provide Chicago’s children with a strong public education. The success of this program has been felt across the city and touched the lives of more than 250,000 students who attend schools with ratings of “Strong or Excelling” in the most recent CPS State of the Arts report. To add to all this, Yo-Yo Ma’s many personal appearances in our schools have made him a living, breathing role model for youth across the city.

DCASE extends its thanks to Yo-Yo Ma for his performance tonight and all the ways he has enriched the cultural life of Chicago and to the enthusiastic audiences present here tonight for their continued support of the arts.

Mark Kelly
Commissioner, City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Generously sponsored by

Judson and Joyce Green

Major support provided by

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THE BACH PROJECT
Yo-Yo Ma Cello

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello

Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Menuets 1 and 2
Gigue

Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Menuets 1 and 2
Gigue

Suite No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1009
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Bourrées 1 and 2
Gigue

(continued)
Suite No. 4 in E-Flat Major, BWV 1010
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Bourrées 1 and 2
Gigue

Suite No. 5 in C Minor, BWV 1011
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gavottes 1 and 2
Gigue

Suite No. 6 in D Major, BWV 1012
Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande
Gavottes 1 and 2
Gigue

The music will be performed without an intermission and will last approximately two hours and thirty minutes.

This concert is generously sponsored by Judson and Joyce Green with major support provided by Randy L. and Melvin R. Berlin, Rosemarie and Dean L. Buntrock, The Negaunee Foundation, Sylvia Neil and Dan Fischel, the Theckla Fund, Helen Zell, and an anonymous donor.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association extends special thanks to the City of Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Millennium Park, and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.
These reflections from Yo-Yo Ma at the start of the Bach Project in August 2018, are adapted from the liner notes to Six Evolutions, Yo-Yo Ma’s new recording of the suites, available now from Sony Classical.

Bach’s cello suites have been my constant musical companions. For almost six decades, they have given me sustenance, comfort, and joy during times of stress, celebration, and loss. What power does this music possess that even today, after three hundred years, it continues to help us navigate through troubled times? What did Pablo Casals find in this music that made him devote his life to bringing it to the world? And why am I sharing it with you, today?

Three memories from early life return whenever I play or hear the suites. My father taught me the first suite, measure by measure, when I was four years old, and I remember as a child the aesthetic pleasure of finding just the right space and timing between the gentle landing of the last note of the Sarabande and the slight increase of energy in the Minuet’s initial lift. The second memory is from my father, a violinist who spent World War II in both China and France. He used to tell me about the utter loneliness he felt in occupied Paris during the blackout, and how he would spend his days memorizing Bach’s sonatas and partitas, then play them to himself at night. The final memory is of discovering the words of Pablo Casals, my musical hero. I was a teenager when I first read the memoirs of Pablo Casals and found a philosophy for music and life that resonated then as it does now, even more strongly: I am a human being first, a musician second, and a cellist third.

Over the years, I came to believe that, in creating these works, Bach played the part of a musician–scientist, expressing precise observations about nature and human nature. He did so, in the first three suites, by experimenting with all that the cello can do as a solo instrument. In the final three, he demanded even more of the cello, and of himself, asking a single-line instrument to speak in multiple voices. His compositional invention is at once explicit and implicit, requiring the listener’s unconscious ear to fill in what the cello can only suggest, achieving a sonic and architectural richness that ultimately transcends the instrument itself.

I’ve just finished my third recording of these works. The first time I recorded the suites I was in my late twenties; it was a time of new purpose in my life: thanks to the extraordinary support and devotion of my wife, Jill, I had successfully undergone major spinal surgery, and we were looking forward to starting a family. Sheldon Gold, the visionary founder of ICM Artists and my manager at the time, challenged me to perform and record the suites. I felt it was a somewhat brazen idea: who was I to do what many older artists waited decades to accomplish? But I believed then, as I still do, that a recording is a snapshot of a moment, and it was music that I had been living with since I was a child. The recording captured my deep gratitude for a new lease on life.

I was entering my forties when I recorded the suites a second time. For years, I had been receiving letters from children and adults writing to say how this music inspired them. I wanted to share the suites’ creative force with more people, so I decided to perform an experiment. What if I asked a number of deeply imaginative artists—choreographers, filmmakers, and a garden designer—to each immerse themselves in a different suite? What would emerge from their art forms? The result was Inspired by Bach, six films documenting this process of immersion and creation. So, why a third time?

Now that I’m in my sixties, I realize that my sense of time has changed, both in life and in music, at once expanded and compressed. I am conscious of the fact that my grandson Teddy, my daughter Emily’s firstborn, will be eighty-three in the year 2100, and that, as I write this, we are just months away from the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, the Great War that was meant to end all wars.

My son, Nicholas, recently reminded me that when Fred Rogers, of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood, was asked where he turned in times of crisis, he repeated his mother’s advice to “look for the helpers.” Casals, my father, and I, and countless others found a helper in Bach. Music, like all of culture, helps us to understand our environment, each other, and ourselves. Culture helps us to imagine a better future. Culture helps turn “them” into “us.” And these things have never been more important.

This concert is just one stop on a journey to share this music with people seeking equilibrium and solace at a moment of unprecedented change. I share this music, which has helped shape the evolution of my life, with the hope that it might spark a conversation about how culture can be a source of the solutions we need. It is one more experiment, this time a search for answers to the question: What can we do together that we cannot do alone?

I invite you to join me on this adventure, to listen and be inspired by the helpers in your own life.

—Yo-Yo Ma

For more about the Bach Project, visit BACH.YO-YOMA.COM and explore how #CULTURECONNECTSUS.

For an additional essay on Bach’s Cello Suites by conductor Michael Stern, please visit CSOSOUNDSANDSTORIES.ORG.
Yo-Yo Ma Cello

Yo-Yo Ma's multifaceted 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 social impact, or engaging unexpected musical forms, Yo-Yo Ma strives to foster connections that stimulate the imagination and reinforce our humanity.

With partners from around the world and across disciplines, Yo-Yo Ma creates programs that stretch the boundaries of genre and tradition to explore music-making as a means not only to share and express meaning, but also as a model for the cultural collaboration he considers essential to a strong society. Expanding upon this belief, in 1998 he established Silkroad, a collective of artists from around the world who create music that engages their many traditions. In addition to presenting performances in venues from Suntory Hall to the Hollywood Bowl, Silkroad collaborates with museums and universities to develop training programs for teachers, musicians, and learners of all ages.

In addition to his work as a performing artist, Yo-Yo Ma partners with communities and institutions from Chicago to Guangzhou to develop programs that champion culture's power to transform lives and forge a more connected world. Among his many roles, he is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, artistic director of the annual Youth Music Culture Guangdong festival, and UN Messenger of Peace. He is the first artist ever appointed to the World Economic Forum’s board of trustees.

Yo-Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris. He began to study the cello with his father at age four and three years later moved with his family to New York City, where he continued his cello studies with Leonard Rose at the Juilliard School. After his conservatory training, he sought out a liberal arts education, graduating from Harvard University with a degree in anthropology in 1976. He has performed for eight American presidents, most recently at the invitation of President Obama on the occasion of the 56th Inaugural Ceremony.

opus3artists.com
How can we use culture to confront gun violence in Chicago?

Alongside each Bach Project concert, Yo-Yo and his team partner with artists and culture makers, cultural and community organizations, and leaders from across sectors to design conversations, collaborations, and performance in Days of Action. These public events and creative experiences are different in every location; they aspire to local relevance and global significance; they demonstrate culture’s power to create positive change; they inspire new relationships, connect partners across locations, and ask us all to keep culture at the center of our efforts to build a shared future.

Chicago’s Day of Conversation and Action, on June 21, focuses on the question: How can we use culture to confront gun violence in the city? For more information, visit bach.yo-yoma.com/events/chicago-il/.

All events are free and open to the public. They include:

**THE GREENING OF NORTH LAWNLAND**

Together with the North Lawndale neighborhood, the City of Chicago, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), the community comes together to plant trees and site stones, continuing the construction of Unity Park. The project builds on a partnership between artist Pedro Reyes and SAIC that reproduced Reyes’s work *Palas por pistolas* (Guns into Shovels). North Lawndale–based gardeners, artists, and musicians will lead volunteers using shovels crafted from donated weapons to continue the beautification of Unity Park at 19th Street and Kostner Avenue.

A special program at 10:00 a.m. will include a welcome from community leadership; a presentation of the project by Pedro Reyes and SAIC; and musical performances by Yo-Yo Ma, Civic Orchestra of Chicago flutist Alexandria Hoffman, and student guests.

**CULTURAL CONVERSATION IN PILSEN**

A special installation of the artist JR’s living mural *The Gun Chronicles: A Story of America* kicks off a conversation about culture’s role in combating violence. The discussion will be moderated by WBEZ’s Natalie Moore and will include Yo-Yo Ma, Mayor Lori Lightfoot, author and activist Jahmal Cole, and artist Hailey Love. The event will feature performances by OpenMike artists from SocialWorks, Chance the Rapper’s youth empowerment organization. Explore *The Gun Chronicles* on your own or download JR.Murals from your app store or visit time.com/guns-in-america.

**MAKE MUSIC CHICAGO**


All events are free and open to the public. More information available at bach.yo-yoma.com/events/chicago-il.
On December 14, 2009, cellist Yo-Yo Ma was appointed the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, a position designed with him in mind in an effort to deepen the Orchestra’s engagement with the Chicago community and to nurture the legacy of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) Symphony Orchestra’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant have included multiple world premieres of CSO commissions such as the May 2010 premiere of Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky’s Cello Concerto; the 2014 premiere of Giovanni Sollima’s Antidotum Tarantulae XXI Concerto for Two Cellos and Orchestra, which was conducted by Riccardo Muti and performed with Sollima as the other soloist; and the March 2017 premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen’s Cello Concerto, conducted by the composer. In addition, Ma has performed cello concertos by Schumann, Haydn, Dvořák, Lutoslawski, and Lalo; the aforementioned Suite for Cello and Orchestra (Memoirs of a Geisha) by Williams at the 2011 Corporate Night benefit performance; and Shostakovich’s First and Second cello concertos. The latter, a rarely performed and particularly challenging late work by the composer, was one of the artistic highlights of last season on a concert of music exclusively by Shostakovich and Prokofiev conducted by Riccardo Muti.

In addition to performances with the Orchestra, Yo-Yo Ma has been featured on the Symphony Center Presents (SCP) series in several recital and chamber music performances since December 2009. In 2012 and 2015, Ma performed with the Silkroad Ensemble, the pioneering group he founded in 1998 to promote multicultural artistic exchanges, having made their first SCP appearance in May 2002 and a later collaboration with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the City of Chicago, and Art Institute of Chicago for Silkroad Chicago during the entire 2006–07 season. Ma’s chamber music collaborators at Symphony Center have included pianists Kathryn Stott (2010) and Jorge Federico Osorio (2012); clarinetist Anthony McGill (2011); bassist Edgar Meyer and mandolinist Chris Thile (2017); and pianist Emanuel Ax on multiple occasions, including Ax’s 2014 Brahms Project concert and a trio performance featuring Ax, Ma, and violinist Leonidas Kavakos in 2018 (returning March 2, 2020).

Over the years, Ma has also developed SCP Chamber Music series programs with musicians of the Chicago Symphony and Civic orchestras featuring performances of small and large chamber works. In his first official complete season as Creative Consultant, members of the Chicago Symphony, Civic, and Lyric Opera orchestras joined Ma to perform the Allegro from Mendelssohn’s Octet. Other concerts featured Martinů’s Suite from La revue de cuisine; Yanov-Yanovsky’s arrangement of Bach’s two-part inventions; the world premiere of an SCP commission entitled Dual by composer and CSO Solti Conducting Apprentice Matthew Aucoin; and the 2016 program entitled A Distant Mirror, explored the musical worlds and contemporary resonances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the influence of two of the period’s celebrated literary figures: Shakespeare and Cervantes.

One of Ma’s most important projects—launched in January 2011, during Riccardo Muti’s first season as music director—was the Citizen Musician initiative, encouraging people of all ages, interests, skill levels, and backgrounds to generously use...
and promote the power of music to make meaningful contributions to their communities. Over the course of the initiative and with Ma’s leadership, Citizen Musician activities engaged tens of thousands of people in schools, hospitals, churches, youth detention centers, prisons, universities, and conservatories in Chicago and around the world.

In collaboration with the staff of the Negaunee Music Institute (NMI), the education and outreach division of the CSOA, Ma has worked extensively with the musicians of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, developing a variety of artistic challenges, including residencies at Chicago Public Schools, in-depth explorations of core orchestral repertoire (including Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony, Strauss’s Don Quixote, and Tchaikovsky’s symphonies), and performances of Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos in community venues across the city. He has been an advocate for the value of arts education in the lives of students, and his involvement, on behalf of the CSOA, was influential in the swift development of the district’s first Arts Education Plan, approved by the Chicago Board of Education in October 2012.

Much of Ma’s work as creative consultant has focused on mentoring the musicians of the Civic Orchestra, the only training orchestra of its kind affiliated with a major American orchestra for the nation’s finest emerging professional musicians. An inspiring mentor, Ma has encouraged Civic members to make their musical journey bigger than themselves—to go beyond the practice room and concert hall to hone their craft informed by perspectives from many different communities. It is this philosophy that served as the impetus for numerous creative projects formulated and produced by NMI. These have included the Initiative for a More Peaceful Chicago that empowers families who have lost children to gun violence to create original music; Once Upon a Symphony, an interactive concert series designed for ages 3–5; and the Civic Fellowship, which empowers participants to realize their full potential as artistically excellent, civically engaged, and entrepreneurial musicians.

While Ma’s tenure as the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant concludes at the end of 2018–19, the positive impact of his creative leadership will be felt for decades to come. During a recent NMI event, he performed the first movement from Bach’s Cello Suite no. 1. He immediately repeated the passage, but asked the audience to sing and sustain the implied pedal note. It was Ma’s hope that this would illustrate humanity’s function—“be the bass note, the support that is felt but not always heard.”

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is grateful to Judson and Joyce Green for the exceptional leadership and generous support they have provided since 2009 for the creative consultant position held by Yo-Yo Ma.
THE COMPLETE BEETHOVEN SYMPHONIES
MASCAGNI CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA HOLST
THE PLANETS VIVALDI
THE FOUR SEASONS
GERSHWIN RHAPSODY IN BLUE RAVEL BOLÉRO
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