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Our Donors and Volunteers, continued
The 2018–19 season draws to a close with concerts that exemplify the artistry and vitality of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association.

Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti concludes the season with two weeks of subscription concerts. The first program includes the CSO’s Jennifer Gunn performing two piccolo concertos, one by Vivaldi and the other by Ken Benshoof, and Charles Vernon premieres a newly commissioned bass trombone concerto by James Stephenson. The program concludes with Gershwin’s *An American in Paris.*

Next, Muti closes the season with three highly anticipated performances of Verdi’s *Aida* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and distinguished soloists, including Krassimira Stoyanova in the title role, Francesco Meli as Radamès, and Anita Rachvelishvili as Amneris.

The Joffrey Ballet joins the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in late May for performances of two choreographed works set to the music of Stravinsky. Conducted by Matthias Pintscher, the program also includes works by Rossini and Ravel. In June, Australian conductor Simone Young makes her CSO debut with works of Liszt and Wagner as well as Schoenberg’s lush orchestration of Brahms’s Piano Quartet no. 1. Finally, Emil de Cou leads the Orchestra and women of the Chicago Symphony Chorus in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* in concert.

In addition, the CSOA presents the thirtieth annual Corporate Night on June 3 with Grammy and Academy Award–winning artist Common and members of the CSO. On June 5, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago joins forces with singers from the Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center for scenes conducted by Michael Christie. CSO Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant Yo-Yo Ma performs J.S. Bach’s complete cello suites at Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park on June 20, and participates in the city-wide “Day of Action,” which focuses on the theme of culture as a means for creating peace, on June 21, and the Negaunee Music Institute’s annual Concert for Peace on June 22.

The twenty-fifth anniversary season of the Symphony Center Presents Jazz series closes with a double-bill performance by Hammond B-3 organist Dr. Lonnie Smith and the Jon Faddis Quartet with special guests, while Rudolf Buchbinder concludes the SCP Piano series with sonatas by Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert. In addition, there are opportunities to hear members of the CSO in chamber music performances at the Art Institute of Chicago on June 2 and June 16.

Thank you to all our subscribers, donors, volunteers, and sponsors for your generous support throughout the 2018–19 season. We look forward to seeing you at Ravinia this summer and back at Symphony Center in September!

Helen Zell Chair, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association Board of Trustees

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Riccardo Muti speaks with CSO program annotator Phillip Huscher about Aida and his devotion to the music of Giuseppe Verdi.
**PHILLIP HUSCHER**  
Your personal history with *Aida* goes back to your childhood, perhaps even before your first memories!

**RICCARDO MUTI**  
I lived in Molfetta, twenty-five kilometers north of Bari. My father, who was a medical doctor, had a fantastic tenor voice, and he loved opera very much. In Bari there is a theater called Teatro Petruzzelli. My father wanted to hear *Aida* there, but they didn’t know where to leave their little boy—I was three years old—so they asked the driver to hold the little boy during the performance. The driver was sitting in the last row of the theater, and I was in his arms. Apparently, for the entire opera, I never cried or gave signs of being uncomfortable. So that was the first time I heard *Aida*, but I don’t remember what kind of performance it was!

**PH**  
You conducted *Aida* for the first time at the Vienna Staatsoper in 1973—some thirty years later—and you made a historic recording in 1974. You returned to *Aida* in Salzburg in the summer of 2017, and now you lead it in Chicago. Over these many decades, has your understanding of *Aida* changed in any significant way?

**RM**  
When I conducted *Aida* in 1973, it was at the beginning of my career, and my Verdi was much more matter-of-fact. Then I did many other operas of Verdi—not only early Verdi—*Nabucco*, *Atilla*, *Macbeth*, *I due Foscari*, *Simon Boccanegra*—but late Verdi—*Don Carlos*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*. Returning to *Aida* after conducting so many Verdi operas, you approach it in a different way. You know more about the process throughout Verdi’s entire life as a composer, and you realize that what is in *Aida*—the structure, the harmonies, the dramatic concept—is already there in the first operas. In the recent performances of *Aida* in Salzburg, I paid more attention to the fact that *Aida* is not just an opera of triumph. It is one of Verdi’s most refined scores. Most of the time it’s chamber music: many times there is just one person on stage—*Aida* alone, *Radamès* alone—or two, *Aida* and *Amneris*—or three. It is a very intimate opera.
The instrumentation is very sophisticated, very delicate, and most of the time the dialogue between the singers should be intimate—not like you are a big square telling everybody your personal problems. But it is generally played in a heavy way, because when people think of Aida, they think of the Arena di Verona, with elephants and lions in cages. And Amonasro, the father of Aida, comes out dressed like Tarzan, as a sort of slave, when in fact the Ethiopians were a cultivated people. There are some clichés in this opera that are very difficult to eliminate.

PH
Isn’t this a problem for stage directors today?

RM
I did Aida in Salzburg with Shirin Neshat, a great and very famous lady. She was born in Iran—she has since left—and she did a lot to help the situation of women in Iran. So I thought of her for this opera, considering the situation of Aida before Amneris—Amneris the daughter of the pharaoh and Aida the slave—even if she’s the daughter of the king of Ethiopia, she’s treated like many women today are treated in that world. In this respect, the relationship between Aida and Amneris becomes an actual problem of today.

PH
What will the Chicago Symphony Orchestra bring to Aida?

RM
I consider the Chicago Symphony today one of the best, if not the best, Verdi orchestra. We have done a lot of Verdi together—Macbeth, Otello, Falstaff, the Requiem—so the orchestra has approached this composer without bad traditions—the bad habits that affect even many of the important orchestras in important theaters. Of course, this is a war that has been going on since I started to conduct, and it will continue until the end of my life.

PH
Of all the opera composers you have performed in your career, which now spans more than fifty years, why is it that Verdi speaks to you the most profoundly?

RM
Because he speaks to us—about us. Like Mozart. I always stress the relationship between Verdi and Mozart. They speak about our defects, our love, our jealousy—all the human aspects. I have repeated many times the words spoken by Gabriele d’Annunzio, the great Italian poet, when Verdi died: “Diede una voce alle speranze e ai lutti. Pianse ed amò per tutti.”—“He gave a voice to all our hopes and sorrows. He cried and he loved for all of us.” This is Verdi.

TOP TO BOTTOM
Riccardo Muti conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in Falstaff with soprano Eleonora Buratto (Alice Ford) and baritone Ambrogio Maestri in the title role, April 21, 2016

Following reports of the shooting in Thousand Oaks, California, Riccardo Muti addressed the audience at the November 8, 2018, performance of Verdi’s Requiem, which, he said, was designed, “to ask for peace for the dead.” Muti dedicated the performance to victims of violence.
A FOND FAREWELL TO
Erina Yashima, Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice 2016–2019

In September 2015, a jury headed by Riccardo Muti unanimously chose Erina Yashima as the CSO’s third Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice. For her apprenticeship, which began officially in February 2016, Yashima spent at least ten weeks each season studying with and assisting Muti during his Chicago residencies in addition to guest conducting the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and various community engagement programs of the Negaunee Music Institute. She also worked with CSO musicians, guest artists, and conductors. Her ability to adapt and excel at myriad musical landscapes quickly made Yashima an invaluable asset to the CSO family throughout her tenure.

While initially a two-year position, in April 2018, Muti announced the extension of Yashima’s position for another season. In April 2019, the Philadelphia Orchestra announced her appointment as its new assistant conductor. In addition to many engagements as conductor in Chicago and her native Germany, Yashima participated in the Italian Opera Academy with Muti in Ravenna, Italy, in 2015. She made her Italian opera debut in February 2017, conducting Rossini’s La Cenerentola with the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra in Lucca and Ravenna and again in Piacenza in 2018. In February 2019, she led the orchestra in a production of Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro in Novara and Ravenna. She has also conducted at the Salzburg Festival and in Venezuela with El Sistema, among other notable venues and ensembles.

Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association are grateful for her service and wish Erina Yashima well in her ongoing artistic endeavors.

A note from Erina Yashima

Words cannot express my gratitude for what the years in Chicago with the CSO family have meant to me. I can say with certainty that meeting Maestro Muti and winning the Solti Apprenticeship have made the biggest impact in my career, and I will always look on this as a crucial moment in my life. There is so much I have learned from Maestro Muti and the CSO, and also by taking part in the great community-outreach projects of the Negaunee Music Institute and by working with the Civic Orchestra—an orchestra that will always remain close to my heart. I will miss everyone tremendously, and am very glad that I will come back to Chicago to conduct the CSO Family and School Concerts in November next season!

“Ms. Yashima has demonstrated great commitment to her role as our Solti Conducting Apprentice and an excellent level of artistry that she shares with our young musicians of the Civic Orchestra. I have respect and appreciation for her artistic qualities that she has demonstrated in Chicago and Europe. I wish her much success in her career.”

—RICCARDO MUTI

PHOTOS BY TODD ROSENBERG

PHOTOS BY TODD ROSENBERG

TOP TO BOTTOM
Yashima makes her Orchestra Hall debut, in April 2017, leading the Civic Orchestra in Mozart’s Symphony no. 34 and Stravinsky’s The Rite of Spring. Yashima leads a mega ensemble during the 2018 Chicago Youth in Music Festival. The side-by-side rehearsal featured Civic musicians alongside community music students.

The Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice program is named for the CSO’s music director (1969–91), and honors his commitment to working with young musicians. Established in 2009, the apprenticeship is a program of the CSO’s Negaunee Music Institute.

JUNE 2019 7
Jennifer Gunn  Piccolo and Flute

June 13–15, Jennifer Gunn performs Ken Benshoof’s Concerto in Three Movements for Piccolo with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Riccardo Muti.

You perform eighteenth- and twenty-first-century concertos on this program. How do you make the switch stylistically or technically?
The two styles are so different that it is easy to switch gears between them—almost natural in a way. Vivaldi concertos for most, if not all, instruments can be quite athletic in nature. What I mean by this is that there are a lot of notes! The Benshoof is a modern concerto, only written a few years ago, and although it also has its fair share of notes, it is very lyrical in nature. Both pieces are a joy to play and showcase different personalities of the piccolo.

When did you first hear the music of composer Ken Benshoof?
I was introduced to Ken Benshoof’s music through his piccolo sonata called Spindrift, and I fell in love with the piece. Fast forward many years: I was asked by the National Flute Association to premiere his concerto.

Describe the experience of working with the composer and bringing the piece to life.
It was just wonderful working through all the corners of the piece and smoothing things out—I just felt like he wrote it for me. It was something I could sing through. It’s very audience-friendly, it’s fun for me to play, and I’m really excited to bring his music to the Chicago Symphony. To play it with Maestro Muti is a dream come true.

What should the audience particularly listen for in either of these concertos?
I think when most people hear the word “piccolo,” they immediately start thinking of fireworks, the Fourth of July, and the Stars and Stripes Forever March by Sousa. Well, I hope after hearing these two concertos, they will come away thinking that this little instrument has a much bigger personality than that! The two concertos that I will play are quite different: they were written hundreds of years apart. While both are delicately orchestrated, the Vivaldi is a real solo effort for the piccolo player, and the Benshoof will be a team effort with the piccolo player out in front leading the way. I think both concertos will demonstrate the beautiful sound and technical ability of the instrument!

How were you introduced to the music of James Stephenson?

Jim, a trumpet player himself, is a prolific composer of pieces for brass. I’ve played his piece for bass trombone and trombone choir, The Road Not Taken, on recitals many times. He has a good knowledge of the instrument. I’ve played and heard his music for orchestra and band, and it’s really exciting to listen to and to play. His orchestrations are fantastic, and in this new concerto, it makes it go over the top!

Describe the experience of working with the composer and bringing this piece to life.

Jim lives in Lake Forest, Illinois, so we had regular contact. He was very responsive to my feedback. I shared my idea of what the bass trombone should be like, sound-wise—range, tessitura, how long you play in a certain register, where rests were needed, etc. I also told him that I want something that sounds great, that’s beautiful to listen to; it’s all about the quality of sound, legato, legatissimo, singing and playing smoothly. I just wanted this to be the greatest piece that has ever been written for the trombone, or especially the bass trombone—one that will stand the test of time over the years and be a piece that every bass-trombone player should play. So, you can see, I had some big demands, but I think he’s done it, and I’m really happy about it.

What should the audience listen for in this concerto?

There are some unbelievably exciting moments and beautiful, soft, sensual music in the concerto. The orchestration that he has provided for the orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, will just blow this apart. And with Riccardo Muti, it just doesn’t get any better than that. It’s the luckiest thing that’s ever really happened to me—actually being able to put out there the best that I can play, with the greatest orchestra in the world, with the greatest conductor ever. This is an outstanding opportunity, and I’m just . . . I’m excited! It’s going to be a tremendous thing.
Celebrating Yo-Yo Ma’s Tenure as Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Yo-Yo Ma doesn’t shake hands, he hugs. He remembers names, makes eye contact, and asks, “How have you been?” When he arrives at an elementary school, Ma walks up to students, introduces himself, and piques their interests with his focused attention. He is a force of positive energy and optimism in an often cynical world. And although his tenure as the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant concludes this season—a post held by the world-renowned cellist since its creation in 2010—his impact will long be felt.

“We should not just hope for immediate success,” said Ma, at a recent Negaunee Music Institute event, “but envision what success should look like twenty years later.” Ma’s ideas on impactful change have been at the foundation of the Negaunee Music Institute’s mission since his arrival. Said Ma, “the Institute should be about building things—things that embolden change.”

Over these past nine seasons, Ma inspired and oversaw a purpose-driven approach to Institute programing. Much of Ma’s work as creative consultant has focused on mentoring the musicians of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He encourages them to make their musical journey bigger than themselves—to get outside of the ever-solitary practice.
room and hone their craft, organically, in their communities. “If you want to expand your musicianship, explore your humanity,” says Ma.

It is this philosophy—that growth is stifled in a confined place and needs to occur outside, in areas that offer new energies and perspectives—that served as the catalyst for many of Ma’s “artistic challenges” presented to the Negaunee Music Institute:

■ **Bach Marathon**
   Since 2014, the Civic Orchestra has presented a city-wide, day-long marathon of performances of J.S. Bach’s six *Brandenburg* Concertos, which provides the orchestra with an opportunity to share the joy of music with diverse audiences during the holidays.

■ **Concerts for Peace**
   In March 2017, Ma led the creation of the Initiative for a More Peaceful Chicago, which empowers people through numerous projects that engage families that have lost loved ones to gun violence, those

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**Top to Bottom**

Ma discusses the importance of arts education with then Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel and Lyric Opera of Chicago Creative Consultant Renée Fleming, December 11, 2013.

Yo-Yo Ma, soloist Takesha Meshé Kizart, and musicians from the Civic Orchestra perform during an inspiring afternoon of music at the CSOAs second Concert for Peace. The concert featured songs composed by family members in the Purpose Over Pain program, which strives to promote healing for families that have been victims of violence, June 10, 2018.


Ma gives an impromptu performance outside the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, May 14, 2013.
incarcerated at Illinois Youth Center Centers, and young parents supported by social service organizations.

- **Once Upon a Symphony**
  Designed for the youngest concertgoers, the CSO’s *Once Upon a Symphony* weaves together live music performed by members of the Orchestra, vivid storytelling, sets, and costumes to create a unique and magical experience. These concerts enhance a child’s development as a life-long learner, cultivating skills such as problem solving, focus, perspective, and engaged learning.

- **Civic Fellowship**
  This program immerses emerging professional musicians in rigorous training that enhances their membership in the Civic Orchestra. The fellowship empowers participants to realize their full potential as artistically excellent, civically engaged, and entrepreneurial musicians. Fellows serve as facilitators for special projects led by Ma, perform at Symphony Center as well as in schools and communities across the city, mentor young musicians, design and implement community engagement projects, and more.

The end of Ma’s tenure as the Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant is really just a beginning to the next chapter of his long and storied work with the Chicago

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**TOP TO BOTTOM**

Ma shares a stand with a Civic musician during the culminating concert of Civic Orchestra’s annual Bach Marathon, held at Fourth Presbyterian Church, December 3, 2015.

Ma studies a student’s project at the culminating CSO-Connect showcase at Disney Magnet School and later performs for the students, May 9, 2017.
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Symphony Orchestra—as a world-class soloist and mentor. During a recent Negaunee Music Institute 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 2010 for the creative-consultant position held by Yo-Yo Ma.

Yo-Yo Ma performs Bach’s complete suites for unaccompanied cello at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park on June 20. He also participates in the Concert for Peace on June 22. For more information, please visit CSO.ORG.
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June

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CSO: June 1
Stravinsky &
The Joffrey Ballet
Matthias Pintscher conductor
The Joffrey Ballet
Ashley Wheater The Mary B. Galvin artistic director
Works by Ravel & Stravinsky

CSO Chamber Music: June 2
THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
Modern Beauty
Guadagnini Ensemble
David Taylor violin
Simon Michal violin
Ni Mei violin
Weijing Wang viola
Richard Hirschl cello
Brian Lee piano
Works by Mozart & Chausson

CSO: June 3
Common with
Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Steven Reineke conductor

Civic Orchestra: June 5
Season Finale: Civic and the Ryan Opera Center
Michael Christie conductor
Members of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago

CSO: June 6–11
Simone Young Conducts
Wagner & Brahms

Jazz: June 7
Dr. Lonnie Smith Trio
—
Jon Faddis Quartet
with special guests

CSO Chamber Music: June 9
BEVERLY ARTS CENTER
Chicago Pro Musica
Jennifer Gunn flute
Michael Henoch oboe
John Bruce Yeh clarinet
William Buchman bassoon
Oto Carrillo horn
Works by Nielsen, Hindemith & Schoenberg

Piano: June 9
Rudolf Buchbinder
Works by Haydn, Beethoven & Schubert

CSO: June 13–15
Muti Conducts Beethoven & Gershwin
Riccardo Muti conductor
Jennifer Gunn piccolo
Charles Vernon bass trombone
Also featuring concertos by
Vivaldi, Benshoof & Stephenson

CSO Chamber Music: June 16
THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
Celebrating Latin American Art
Winter Quartet
Gina DiBello violin
Danny Lai viola
Katinka Kleijn cello
Works by Piazzolla, Ginastera & more

Special: June 20
JAY PRITZKER PAVILION, MILLENNIUM PARK
Yo-Yo Ma: The Complete Bach Cello Suites

CSO: June 21–25
Muti Conducts Verdi Aida
Riccardo Muti conductor
Krassimira Stoyanova Aida
Anita Rachvelishvili Amneris
Francesco Meli Radamès
Kiril Manolov Amonasro
Il达尔 Abdrazakov Ramfis
Eric Owens The King
Chicago Symphony Chorus
Duain Wolfe chorus director

Special: June 22
TO BE DETERMINED
Concert for Peace
Yo-Yo Ma cello
Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Musicians from the Civic Orchestra of Chicago
St. Sabina Band

Film: June 27–29
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban™ in Concert
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Emil de Cou conductor
Women of the Chicago Symphony Chorus
Duain Wolfe chorus director

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Visit concert event pages on cso.org for more information about your concerts, including artist biographies.

Access program notes before and after the performance on each concert’s event page at cso.org or at csosoundsandstories.org/category/program-books. You can enjoy learning about the music and the CSO even if you cannot attend a performance!
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is profoundly grateful to the leaders and volunteers listed here and invites you to consider these volunteer opportunities.

**GOVERNING MEMBERS** are leading individuals of the CSOA family and serve as its first established volunteer group, celebrating their 124th year in the 2018–19 season. GMs provide elevated enthusiasm and support for the CSOA’s artistic excellence and educational innovation. Members receive opportunities to gain a deeper connection with CSO’s musicians and organization, as well as with fellow members through special access, ticketing services, events, and meetings. To learn more, call 312-294-3337.

The **WOMEN’S BOARD** promotes the artistic excellence and exemplary education programs of the Orchestra by engaging women leaders in advocacy and fundraising efforts. The board supports annual fundraising events to benefit the Orchestra, including its signature event, Symphony Ball. To learn more, please call 312-294-3160.

The **LEAGUE** is a creative, vibrant, and dedicated group of over 250 members with over an eighty-year history of supporting the CSO. Members plan and produce fundraising and social events; implement outreach opportunities for adults and children, such as the Young Artists Competition and the Docent Program; and support audience development. To learn more, please call 312-294-3170 or email wardw@cso.org.

The **OVERTURE COUNCIL** is a dynamic group of young professionals ages 21 to 45 who have a love of music and a desire to learn more about how to support the CSO. Members have many opportunities to attend social activities and concert evenings together. Connect with new friends who share the same interests! Check out the Overture Council’s innovative event Soundpost—open to all! Learn more at cso.org/overturecouncil and cso.org/soundpost.

The **LATINO ALLIANCE** is a liaison and partner that connects the CSO with Chicago’s diverse community by creating awareness, sharing insights, and building relationships for generations to come. The group encourages individuals and their families to discover and experience timeless music with other enthusiasts in concerts, receptions, and educational events. To learn more, email csolatinointercultural@cso.org, visit cso.org/latinointercultural, or join the CSO Latino Alliance Facebook group.

The mission of the **AFRICAN AMERICAN NETWORK** is to engage Chicago’s culturally rich African American community through the sharing and exchanging of unforgettable musical experiences. The AAN seeks to serve and encourage individuals and families, educators and students, musicians and composers, and churches and businesses to experience the timeless beauty of music. To learn more about how you can be involved, contact Sheila Jones, director of community stewardship, at africanamericannetwork@cso.org or call 312-294-3045.

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IN ALL ITS PASSION, JOY AND HEARTBREAK
Includes selections from Verdi’s Nabucco, Macbeth and I vespri siciliani, intermezzos by Puccini and Mascagni and Boito’s Prologue to Mefistofele. Recorded live in Orchestra Hall, June 2017.
Aida
Music by Giuseppe Verdi
Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni
After a scenario by Auguste Mariette

CAST
Aida, Ethiopian Slave ........................................... Krassimira Stoyanova soprano
Amneris, Daughter of the King of Egypt .......... Anita Rachvelishvili mezzo-soprano
Radamès, Captain of the Guards ......................... Francesco Meli tenor
Amonasro, King of Ethiopia and Father of Aida ........ Kiril Manolov baritone
Ramfis, Chief of the Priests ........................................ Ildar Abdrazakov bass
The King of Egypt .................................................... Eric Owens bass-baritone
High Priestess .......................................................... Kimberly Gunderson soprano
........................................................ Tasha Koontz soprano
A Messenger ............................................................ Issachah Savage tenor

Priests, priestesses, ministers, captains, soldiers, functionaries, slaves, Ethiopian prisoners, Egyptian populace, etc.

Chicago Symphony Chorus
Duain Wolfe Director

(continued)
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ACT 1
SCENE 1  A hall in the King’s palace in Memphis
SCENE 2  Inside the Temple of Vulcan in Memphis

INTERMISSION

ACT 2
SCENE 1  A room in Amneris’s apartments
SCENE 2  One of the city gates of Thebes

INTERMISSION

ACT 3  The banks of the Nile

ACT 4
SCENE 1  A hall in the King’s palace
SCENE 2  Scene on two levels: the upper represents the interior of the Temple of Vulcan, gleaming with gold and light; the lower is a vault

The action takes place in Memphis and Thebes, at the time of the reign of the Pharaohs.

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These concerts are made possible through the generous support of the Aida Patrons Circle.
The appearance of the Chicago Symphony Chorus is made possible by a generous gift from Jim and Kay Mabie.
This program is supported in part by awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.
English supertitles by Kenneth Chalmers by arrangement with the Salzburg Festival
SuperTitle System by DIGITAL TECH SERVICES, LLC, Portsmouth, VA
GIUSEPPE VERDI
Born October 10, 1813; Le Roncole, near Busseto, Italy
Died January 27, 1901; Milan, Italy

Aida

On the morning of October 28, 1971, the Khedivial Royal Opera House in downtown Cairo—the oldest opera house in Africa—burned to the ground. Costumes, sets, musical instruments, and archival documents were all lost. Today, on the site where Giuseppe Verdi’s Aida had been given its world premiere almost exactly a century earlier, in December 1871, a squat, nondescript, multistory car park now stands.

The Khedive Ismail—the title khedive is that of viceroy of Egypt during Turkish rule, 1867–1914—had ordered the building of the Cairo opera house in 1869, to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal late that year. Verdi, the biggest name in the world of opera—within the past decade alone, he had written Un ballo in maschera, La forza del destino, Don Carlo, and the final version of Macbeth—was commissioned to compose a new opera for the opening of the house. (He had already declined an offer to write a hymn for the canal dedication.)

The Khedivial Opera House was something of a novelty in Egypt—a monument to Western European culture in the heart of Cairo. It was modeled after the celebrated Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy; busts of great European opera composers—Mozart, Beethoven, Bellini, Verdi—decorated the painted ceiling. (There was one significant concession to Egyptian tradition: a harem box screened behind heavy lace curtains.) By sheer happenstance, the entire correspondence regarding the creation of Verdi’s Aida—most of it unpublished—had been photocopied only weeks before the disastrous 1971 fire, and so we still know a great deal about the creation of the opera that many people thought would be Verdi’s last.

In the late 1860s, Verdi considered a number of subjects for a new opera, but nothing suited him. (Among the rejects was a play about Adriana Lecouvreur, later taken up with great success by Francesco Cilea, and Molière’s Tartuffe.) He had not written a new opera since La forza del destino in 1862, choosing
instead to revise *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos*, and then *La forza del destino* itself. Now in his fifties—and after more than a quarter century writing for the opera house—he had grown increasingly finicky: he guarded his time more and more; he found fewer subjects that stirred his interest.

But then early in 1870 he read a scenario set in ancient Egypt. He must have known at once that this was his next opera; he agreed, in principle at least, within a month. He was struck by the classically pure plot (surely a relief after the convoluted story lines of *Don Carlos* and *La forza del destino*): a simple tale of a heroine torn between devotion to her father (and her homeland)—and to her lover, the enemy. Verdi did not know the brief synopsis had been written by Auguste Mariette, the celebrated archaeologist and Egyptologist, but he detected “a very expert hand, one who knows the theater very well.” Verdi was himself one of the great storytellers in the history of opera: he knew how to use musical architecture to pace and build his plots into works of gripping power and immediacy, and he understood the power of a simple detail—sometimes a single note—to reveal something critical about a character or to turn the drama on its heels. *Aida*, as the Egyptian story was called from the earliest planning stages, sparked Verdi’s greatest gifts as a man of the theater.

The Egyptian scenario had been intended to convince Verdi to write the inaugural work for the new Cairo opera house. In June 1870, Verdi dictated his terms to the Khedivial Opera House: a fee of 150,000 francs (four times what he had received for *Don Carlo*), from which he would pay a librettist of his own choice—he quickly picked Antonio Ghislanzoni, who had worked with him on the revision of *La forza del destino*—as well as a conductor for the Cairo premiere, since he had decided not to travel to Egypt to prepare the first performance. The khedive agreed. Almost immediately, Verdi began to outline the libretto, scene by scene. The idea for the bold last-act finale, with its split-level action, was entirely his. He then drafted a thirty-seven-page prose libretto, in the process refining the shifting dynamics between the central trio of characters: Aida, the Ethiopian slave, and Amneris, the daughter of the king of Egypt, both of whom are in love with Radamès, captain of the Egyptian armies.

Composition began sometime in July 1870 and proceeded as quickly as Ghislanzoni could send his verses. As always, Verdi insisted that the text be charged by the presence of *la parola scenica*—the theatrical word. “By theatrical words,” he wrote to Giulio Ricordi, his Italian publisher, “I mean the ones that sculpt a situation or a character, that always have enormous power over the audience.” By November, Giuseppina, Verdi’s wife, said the work was finished, although, inevitably, it wasn’t. Verdi continued to fuss, over words and action, over pacing and dramatic strategy, and often over telling details that he knew weren’t yet quite right. Since Verdi wouldn’t be in Cairo for the rehearsal period, when he would normally fine-tune the orchestration, he had to finalize the orchestral scoring at home in Italy. Earlier, he had written to Ricordi asking for information about ancient Egypt. He now visited the National Archaeological Museum in Florence, hoping to add some authentic exotic color to his orchestration, but he was disappointed to find that the ancient Egyptian flute was merely an ordinary shepherd’s pipe. In the end, the full score of *Aida* wasn’t done until the following August, just as it was being sent to the printer.

Since Verdi’s contract allowed that *Aida* could be staged wherever he wished once the Cairo premiere took place, the Teatro alla Scala began
to press the composer for the rights to the Italian premiere. When rumors spread that La Scala planned to upstage Cairo and present Aida first, the director of the Khedivial Opera House was incensed: “In choosing you, dear Maestro, to write the score for an unpublished work, in which the action takes place in his own country, His Highness had conceived the idea of creating a national work which would be one of the most precious souvenirs of his reign.” With the kind of backstage negotiating that characterizes the opera world to this day, Cairo and Milan worked things out. There were now two important Aida premieres for Verdi to worry over, and two different productions to cast: Cairo and La Scala.

The new Cairo house had originally planned to open with Aida in January 1871, but the sets and costumes were being produced in Paris, which was now under siege during the Franco-Prussian War; work had come to a complete standstill. The premiere would have to be postponed. The opera house opened on schedule, but with Verdi's Rigoletto instead. Aida was now set for December 1871.

Three months before the premiere, Wagner's Lohengrin was performed for the first time in Italy. Verdi went to Bologna to see what his celebrated German counterpart was up to. He wanted to remain anonymous, so he sat at the rear of box 23 at the Teatro Comunale, behind a curtain, with Wagner's score open on his lap. (The score, with the comments Verdi scribbled in the margin that night, remains at his country home near the village of Sant'Agata. “ Mediocre impression,” he wrote in summary. “The action runs slowly, as do the words. From that, boredom.”) At the end of the second act, one of his box mates, Luigi Monti, a Ricordi representative, shouted “Viva il Maestro Verdi,” setting off a fifteen-minute ovation. Verdi refused to step forward.

On December 24, Aida premiered in Cairo. It would be the most important night in the Egyptian company’s history, undercut only by the fact that Verdi himself was not there to share in the ovations. “We’ll see what happens later,” he wrote after getting reports of the success, “because one should not put too much faith in telegrams sent after the first performance.” Turning his attention to the upcoming La Scala production, Verdi was as demanding as ever, fussing over the string complement, the number of choristers, the size of the bass drum and timpani, and the seating diagram for the orchestra. (In a famous letter from June 1871, he praised Wagner’s idea of making the orchestra invisible at Bayreuth.) Verdi had agreed to cast the Cairo production from the company’s regular roster of singers, but for La Scala he had freer reign. He had originally snared Teresa Stolz as Amneris, but then switched her to the role of Aida, accepting a young, unknown Austrian, Maria Waldmann, as Amneris. (The two later sang together in the first performance of the Requiem.) When Verdi began coaching his singers, months before the premiere, at Sant'Agata, Giuseppina may well have noticed the first hints of a romance between her husband and Stolz that would soon add to the onstage rivalries of Aida itself.

For the Milan premiere, Verdi wrote a full-scale overture, full of themes from the opera, but he withdrew it during rehearsals, opting for the taut, hauntingly atmospheric prelude we know instead. (Toscanini led the first public performance of the overture in March 1940, in a concert with the NBC Symphony Orchestra, and then never conducted it again.) The Aida premiere in Milan on February 8 was one of Verdi’s greatest successes. Tickets were in such demand that people shared

Above
Auguste Mariette (1821–1881), seated, far left, and Emperor Dom Pedro II of Brazil, seated, far right, among others, during a visit to the Great Sphinx of Giza and the Giza Necropolis, 1871
seats; boxes overflowed. Verdi was called out thirty-two times over the course of the evening.

*Aida* is famous for its stage-filling pageantry and epic crowd scenes—the triumphal scene in act 2, with its well-known trumpet march, is one of opera’s grandest monuments. But it is really the tension between the private and the public that animates Verdi’s score—the drama of patriotic duty versus personal devotion. For all the grandeur of its panoramic public scenes, *Aida* is an opera about individuals. To highlight that, Verdi even identifies certain musical ideas with specific characters—the very first strand of melody in the orchestral prelude is associated with Aida—not in a systematic Wagnerian way, but as a shrewd theatrical device. Aside from the big moments, Verdi’s orchestration is often surprisingly delicate, with the intimacy of chamber music. The opening of the Nile scene in act 3, with its hush of muted violins and exotic flute arabesques—a rare example of local color in Verdi—conveys the sounds and stirrings of a tropical night. It is all texture and atmosphere, and in thirty-four measures, a perfect miniature tone poem.

As always in a Verdi opera, it is the personal moments—the confrontations and revelations—that tear at the heart and linger in the memory. The pivotal act 3 scene for Aida and Amonasro, with its soaring phrases over urgent syncopations in the violins, racing like a heartbeat at its climax, is arguably the greatest of Verdi’s father-daughter duets. The big set-piece finale of act 2 may be more spectacular, but the dramatic end of act 3, with its rapid-fire plot twists and just a handful of people on stage, is thrilling in its bloodcurdling intensity—it is music of magnificence and action. The celebrated judgement scene (at the end of act 4, scene 1), with Amneris alone, raging against her fate and the verdict of Ramfis and the priests, is as hair-raising as any scene in opera. And the cinematic ending of the opera—the divided-scene finale that was entirely Verdi’s idea—with Radamès and Aida dying in each other’s arms in a dark, airless vault, and with Amneris praying above them in the resplendent Temple of Vulcan, is at once a stunning theatrical effect and a haunting musical conceit.

Critics at first were puzzled by Verdi’s use of traditional forms in the score: the big, multi-sectional duets; the numbers that end with a blazing cabaletta; the complex but cunningly paced act 2 finale, incorporating trumpet march and ballet. This is not yet the fluid, unchartered landscape of the forthcoming *Otello* and *Falstaff*. *Aida* still inhabits the musical world Verdi grew up on, here reduced to its essentials, stripped of extraneous notes and gestures—transformed into forms of pure dramatic expression. The classical clarity of *Aida* is a reminder that Verdi’s very earliest teachers, in effect, were Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, whose music he studied first and loved. And, as critics long ago noted, if *Aida* is the heir to the grand opera tradition, it is the first grand opera from which not one note can be cut. It is that tightly composed (even the ballet music is an integral part of the musical drama), that thematically interwoven, that theatrically incisive.

It was sixteen years before there would be another premiere of a Verdi opera. The main work that occupied Verdi right after *Aida*, the great Requiem of 1874, reveals a restless and inventive mind leading music in ever newer directions. And the two operas he was finally persuaded to write, interrupting his declared retirement and forcing him back into the disenchanting world of opera production—*Otello* and *Falstaff*—find him taking off into a visionary musical landscape, unforeseeable even from the threshold of *Aida*. If Verdi had written nothing after *Aida*, it would be viewed as the natural climax of his career, the work that sums up everything he had accomplished in the previous three decades and twenty-some operas. It has that kind of authority, that sense of finality. It is our good fortune that Verdi had not written himself out—that he still had more to say. But *Aida* is, nevertheless, a crowning achievement, and a work like no other opera in his, or any other composer’s catalog.

Phillip Huscher has been the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1987.
ACT 1
Ancient Egypt. In a hall of the King’s palace in Memphis, Ramfis, the High Priest, tells the young warrior Radamès that the King will soon announce the appointment of a general to lead the Egyptian forces against Amonasro, king of the invading Ethiopians. Left alone then, Radamès dreams of being that general so that, victorious, he can ask the King for the hand of Aida, a young Ethiopian slave girl with whom he is secretly in love, unaware that she is the daughter of the enemy ruler. Princess Amneris, the Egyptian king’s daughter, comes in. She is also in love with Radamès and is disturbed by his interest in her slave girl, who follows her.

The King and his court enter. A messenger confirms the Ethiopian invasion, and the King names Radamès supreme commander. Aida is torn between love of her father and her country and her love for Radamès.

Later, in the Temple of Ptah, Radamès is invested with the consecrated armor and the symbols of his high mission.

ACT 2
Radamès is victorious. As Amneris’s slaves prepare her for the triumphal celebration, she dreams of his return, then tricks Aida into revealing her love. The princess and slave girl are now rivals.

After the elaborate procession of the victorious troops, the King asks Radamès what he wants as a reward. The young general first has the prisoners brought in. Among them, unrecognized by all except Aida, is her father, King Amonasro, disguised as a simple warrior. Radamès asks the Egyptian king to free them, believing Amonasro dead and the enemy spirit therefore broken. The priests object, but the King grants this request for clemency and at the same time announces that the young general will be given Amneris in marriage and that one day the royal couple will rule over Egypt together. Amneris is exultant, but Radamès and Aida are aghast at this turn of events.

ACT 3
Ramfis accompanies Amneris to the Temple of Isis, on the banks of the Nile, where she is to pray and keep vigil in preparation for her forthcoming marriage.

When they have gone inside, Aida appears. She is to meet Radamès nearby, but before he comes, her father suddenly confronts her and makes her promise to discover the road that the Egyptian army will take, so that the reassembled Ethiopian forces can fall on the enemy and destroy him.

Amonasro hides, and Aida persuades Radamès to flee with her to Ethiopia, then to reveal the secret. Once the young general has spoken, Amonasro steps forward and reveals who he is. Radamès is horrified at his own treason and gives himself up to the High Priest, who appears with Amneris and with guards, who pursue Aida and Amonasro.

ACT 4
Despite Radamès’s act of treason, Amneris still loves him, and as the priests gather to decide his fate, she offers him a final opportunity to save himself by giving up Aida. He refuses. The priests condemn him to be buried alive.

Two priests close the stone over the crypt where Radamès has been placed. But Aida has already concealed herself in this tomb, and as the priests and priestesses chant in the temple above, where Amneris is praying for peace, Aida is reunited with her lover and dies in his arms.

Excerpted from William Weaver’s *Seven Verdi Librettos* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975)
Riccardo Muti Conductor

Born in Naples, Italy, Riccardo Muti is one of the preeminent conductors of our day. In 2010, when he became the tenth music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), he had more than forty years of experience at the helm of Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (1968–80), the Philharmonia Orchestra (1973–82), the Philadelphia Orchestra (1980–92), and Teatro alla Scala (1986–2005).

Muti studied piano under Vincenzo Vitale at the Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella in his hometown of Naples, graduating with distinction. He subsequently received a diploma in composition and conducting from the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan, also graduating with distinction. His principal teachers were Bruno Bettinelli and Antonino Votto, principal assistant to Arturo Toscanini at La Scala. After he won the Guido Cantelli Conducting Competition—by unanimous vote of the jury—in Milan in 1967, Muti’s career developed quickly. In 1968, he became principal conductor of Florence’s Maggio Musicale, a position that he held until 1980.

Herbert von Karajan invited him to conduct at the Salzburg Festival in Austria in 1971, and Muti has maintained a close relationship with the summer festival and with its great orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, for more than forty-five years. When he conducted the philharmonic’s 150th anniversary concert in 1992, he was presented with the Golden Ring, a special sign of esteem and affection, and in 2001, his outstanding artistic contributions to the orchestra were further recognized with the Otto Nicolai Gold Medal. He is also a recipient of a silver medal from the Salzburg Mozarteum for his contribution to the music of W.A. Mozart and the Golden Johann Strauss Award by the Johann Strauss Society of Vienna. He is an honorary member of Vienna’s Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society of the Friends of Music), the Vienna Hofmusikkapelle, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Vienna State Opera.

Muti succeeded Otto Klemperer as chief conductor and music director of London’s Philharmonia Orchestra in 1973, holding that position until 1982. From 1980 to 1992, he was music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and in 1986, he became music director of Milan’s Teatro alla Scala. During his nineteen-year tenure, Muti conducted operatic and symphonic repertoire ranging from the baroque to the contemporary, also leading hundreds of concerts with the Filarmonica della Scala and touring the world with both the opera company and the orchestra. His tenure as music director, the longest of any in La Scala’s history, culminated in the triumphant reopening of the restored opera house with Antonio Salieri’s Europa riconosciuta, originally commissioned for La Scala’s inaugural performance in 1778.

Muti has received innumerable international honors. He is a Cavaliere di Gran Croce of the Italian Republic, Officer of the French Legion of Honor, and a recipient of the German Verdienstkreuz. Queen Elizabeth II bestowed on him the title of honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire, Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded him the Order of Friendship, and Pope Benedict XVI made him a Knight of the Grand Cross First Class of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great—the highest papal honor. Muti also has received Israel’s Wolf Prize in Music, Sweden’s prestigious Birgit Nilson Prize, Spain’s Prince of Asturias Award for the Arts, from Japan the Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Star and most recently the Praemium Imperiale, and the gold medal from Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs for his promotion of Italian culture abroad as well as the prestigious “Presidente della Repubblica” award from the Italian government. Muti has received more than twenty honorary degrees from universities around the world.

Passionate about teaching young musicians, Muti founded the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra in 2004 and the Riccardo Muti Italian Opera Academy in 2015. Through Le vie dell’Amicizia (The roads of friendship), a project of the
Ravenna Festival in Italy, he has conducted in many of the world’s most troubled areas in order to bring attention to and advocate for civic and social issues.

Riccardo Muti’s vast catalog of recordings, numbering in the hundreds, ranges from the traditional symphonic and operatic repertoires to contemporary works. He also has written two books, Verdi, l’italiano and Riccardo Muti: An Autobiography: First the Music, Then the Words, both of which have been published in several languages.

During his time with the CSO, Muti has won over audiences in greater Chicago and across the globe through his music making as well as his demonstrated commitment to sharing classical music. His first annual free concert as CSO music director attracted more than 25,000 people to Millennium Park. He regularly invites subscribers, students, seniors, and people of low incomes to attend, at no charge, his CSO rehearsals. Muti’s commitment to artistic excellence and to creating a strong bond between an orchestra and its communities continues to bring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to ever higher levels of achievement and renown.

riccardomutimusic.com

Muti Releases Third Book, Infinity Between the Notes: My Journey in Music

Following his CSO residency in May, Riccardo Muti participated in a special program on May 19 in Milan, Italy, to launch his new autobiography entitled L’infinito tra le note: Il mio viaggio nella musica (Infinity Between the Notes: My Journey in Music). In the book, published in Italian by Solferino, Muti examines the mystery of music through eight lessons from music history, drawing on his long experience as a conductor. He discusses his teachers as well as his favorite composers, including Mozart and Verdi, along with lesser-known Italian composers such as Gaspare Spontini and Giovanni Paisiello.

Paisiello’s Missa defunctorum was featured in his performances this spring with the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra—a subject in his book—in Pavia (May 25 and 26) and Florence (May 28). Muti and the orchestra were joined by soprano Benedetta Torre, mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona, tenor Giovanni Sala, and bass Gianluca Buratto and the Bavarian Radio Chorus. Marking the occasion of the opening of the thirtieth anniversary season of the Ravenna Festival, Maestro Riccardo Muti and pianist Maurizio Pollini—two of Italy’s most esteemed living artists—gave a special concert on June 5 at the Palazzo Mauro de Andrè with the Cherubini Youth Orchestra.

Following his CSO June residency, Muti travels to Athens, Greece, and Ravenna, Italy, to lead the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra and Greek musicians in performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, as part of the annual Roads of Friendship concerts, presented by the Ravenna Festival on July 9 and 11. Other summer 2019 activities for Muti include his annual Italian Opera Academy in Ravenna, this year with sessions for young conductors and répétiteurs planned around Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro. Muti also returns to the Salzburg Festival in August for performances of Verdi’s Requiem with the Vienna Philharmonic, Concert Association of the Vienna State Opera Chorus, and soloists including soprano Krassimira Stoyanova, mezzo-soprano Anita Rachvelishvili, tenor Francesco Meli, and bass Ildar Abdrazakov.
**Krassimira Stoyanova**  
**Soprano**

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**  
April 7, 9, and 12, 2011, Orchestra Hall. Verdi’s *Otello*, Riccardo Muti conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES**  
June 21, 22, 23, and 24, 2018, Orchestra Hall. Cherubini’s *Chant sur la mort de Joseph Haydn* and Rossini’s *Stabat mater*, Riccardo Muti conducting

One of the leading sopranos of our time, Krassimira Stoyanova is highly acclaimed by press and public alike. She regularly collaborates with the most renowned conductors, including Daniel Barenboim, Riccardo Chailly, Myung-Whun Chung, Bernard Haitink, Manfred Honeck, Mariss Jansons, Fabio Luisi, James Levine, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Yuri Temirkanov, Christian Thielemann, and Franz Welser-Möst. Her repertoire covers a wide variety of roles ranging from bel canto to the great heroines of Verdi, Puccini, and Strauss, as well as Slavic works. She also dedicates herself to such lesser-known titles as Verdi’s *La battaglia di Legnano*, Donizetti’s *Maria di Rohan*, Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*, and Dvořák’s *Dimitrij*.

Born in Bulgaria, Krassimira Stoyanova studied violin at the conservatory and singing and violin at the Plovdiv Music Academy. She made her professional debut in 1995 at the Sofia National Opera House, where she would later debut a wide range of roles.

Since 1998, Stoyanova has maintained a close relationship with the Vienna State Opera, where she has appeared as Rachel in Halévy’s *La Juive*, the Countess in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*, Micaela in Bizet’s *Carmen*, Antonia in Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Liù in Puccini’s *Turandot*, Nedda in *Pagliacci* by Leoncavallo, and Violetta in Verdi’s *La traviata*, among many others. From that time, her international career developed rapidly, and has since taken her to the world’s leading venues.

Krassimira Stoyanova began the 2018–19 season as soloist in Verdi’s *Requiem* at the Konzerthaus Berlin under Juraj Valčuha and returned to the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Leonora in Verdi’s *Il trovatore* and to the Dresden State Opera in the title role of a new production of Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* under Thielemann. Under Chung, she sang the *Four Last Songs* with the Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. At the Zurich Opera House, she portrayed the Marschallin in Strauss’s *Der Rosenkavalier*, followed by recitals at the Musikverein in Vienna and at Teatro alla Scala in Milan, where she also appeared as Ariadne conducted by Franz Welser-Möst. A highlight of the season is her house and role debut at the Bayreuth Festival as Elsa in Wagner’s *Lohengrin*. The season ends with concerts of Verdi’s *Requiem* at the Salzburg Festival under Muti.

In the 2019–20 season, the soprano returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago in the title role of Verdi’s *Luisa Miller*. She also makes her Dallas Symphony Orchestra debut in Verdi’s *Requiem* in the fall of 2020 before returning to the Met in *Il trovatore*.

Highlights of Stoyanova’s work as one of the most sought-after concert artists includes Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony at the Ravenna Festival with Riccardo Muti and appearances with Sir Colin Davis at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, Mariss Jansons at the Vatican in Rome, and the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra and Christian Thielemann. Her discography includes the award-winning solo recordings *I Palpiti D’amor, Slavic Opera Arias, Verdi: Arias*, and *Verismo* on the Orfeo label. Her *Giacomo Puccini: Complete Songs* disc appears on the Naxos label.

In 2009, Krassimira Stoyanova was named a Kammersängerin of the Vienna State Opera.
Anita Rachvelishvili Mezzo-soprano

These concerts mark Anita Rachvelishvili’s debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Anita Rachvelishvili’s career was launched in a spectacular overnight coup de théâtre in 2009 when Daniel Barenboim chose her to open the season at Teatro alla Scala in Milan in a much-publicized new production of Bizet’s Carmen with Jonas Kaufmann as Don José. That performance marked her debut in the signature role, which she has since debuted at most of the important theaters in the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Paris Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Royal Opera House (Covent Garden), and many others.

Rachvelishvili, an exclusive Sony Classical artist, released her debut solo album in 2018 to great critical acclaim and was featured in a 2019 New York Times article entitled “A Young Singer Takes the Opera World by Storm.”

Rachvelishvili began the current season as Amneris in Verdi’s Aida at the Metropolitan Opera, where she also appeared as Dalila in Saint-Saëns’s Samson and Dalila and as the Princess de Bouillon in Cilea’s Adriana Lecouvreur. She also debuted in Monte Carlo as Dalila and returned to the Paris Opera as Carmen. Additional performances on the concert platform included a solo program with Sir Antonio Pappano and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House (Covent Garden), concerts in Berlin and Hamburg with Daniel Barenboim and with Kaufmann in Germany. The mezzo-soprano closes the season at the Salzburg Festival in Adriana Lecouvreur and Verdi’s Requiem under Riccardo Muti, with whom she first sang in Munich in the Requiem in 2018.

Anita Rachvelishvili makes role debuts in the 2019–20 season as Princess Eboli in Verdi’s Don Carlos in Paris and Charlotte in Massenet’s Werther in Athens. She also returns to Paris as Konchakovna in Borodin’s Prince Igor and appears as Carmen for her debut at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona and for her return to the Berlin State Opera. She sings Dalila and Azucena in Vienna, Dalila at the 2020 Orange Festival in France, and Santuzza in Mascagni’s Cavalleria rusticana at the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam and in concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Further engagements have included Amneris at the Paris Opera, the Met, Rome Opera, La Scala, the Orange Festival, Vienna State Opera, Arena di Verona, and in Turin; Lyubasha in Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Tsar’s Bride at Berlin State Opera; Azucena at the Met, Paris Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Covent Garden; Dalila at the Paris Opera; Marfa in Mussorgsky’s Khovanshchina at the Dutch National Opera; and Santuzza in Rome.

Anita Rachvelishvili was born in Tbilisi, Georgia. While a student at the Vano Sarajishvili State Conservatory, she made her debut at the opera in Tbilisi as Maddalena in Verdi’s Rigoletto and Olga in Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin, subsequently joining the theater ensemble. In 2007, she was invited to join the Accademia Teatro alla Scala, where she first came to the attention of Daniel Barenboim.
Francesco Meli
Tenor

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**
September 28, October 1, 4, and 6, 2013, Orchestra Hall. Verdi’s Macbeth, Riccardo Muti conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES**
January 31 and February 2, 2019; Bunka Kaikan, Tokyo, Japan. Verdi’s Requiem, Riccardo Muti conducting

One of the most sought-after tenors in the world, Francesco Meli was born in Genoa, Italy, where he began studying singing at the age of seventeen with soprano Norma Palacios at the Conservatorio Paganini. He continued his studies with Vittorio Terranova and established himself in several operatic contests, including the Enrico Caruso and Riccardo Zandonai international voice competitions.

In 2002, he made debuts in Verdi’s Macbeth, Rossini’s Petite messe solennelle, and Puccini’s Messa di gloria at the Festival of the Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, marking the start of an outstanding career in the bel canto repertoire, focusing on works by Rossini.

Meli made his Teatro alla Scala–Milan debut at the age of just twenty-three in Dialogues of the Carmelites conducted by Riccardo Muti. He has since returned to perform in new productions of Otello, Idomeneo, Don Giovanni, Maria Stuarda, and Der Rosenkavalier. To date, Francesco Meli can count eighteen productions at La Scala. He also made debuts in Il barbiere di Siviglia in Zurich; Don Giovanni at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris; La sonnambula in Lyon for a recording on the Virgin Records label with Natalie Dessay; Così fan tutte under Muti in Vienna, where he returned to perform in Anna Bolena; Maometto II in Tokyo; and Rigoletto in his debuts at the Royal Opera (Covent Garden) and Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Since 2009, Francesco Meli has turned his attention toward more dramatic repertoire. Following performances in I Lombardi alla prima crociata, Simon Boccanegra, and Werther in Parma, he debuted in the major roles by Verdi.

In 2013, the 200th anniversary of the composer’s birth, he sang in Simon Boccanegra, I due Foscari, Ernani, and Nabucco at the Rome Opera and in Salzburg with Muti; Ernani at the Met; Macbeth led by Muti in Chicago; Simon Boccanegra in Vienna and at Teatro La Fenice in Venice; Giovanna d’Arco at the Salzburg Festival and at La Scala for the season opening; Aida in Salzburg under Muti; and new productions of Carmen in Madrid and at Covent Garden, among many other engagements. He was featured in the opening concert of the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin and for Expo Milan 2015, both broadcast by RAI.

The tenor has appeared in recital at La Scala and in London and Tokyo; and in Verdi’s Requiem with Riccardo Chailly, Daniele Gatti, Fabio Luisi, Lorin Maazel, Gianandrea Noseda, and Yuri Temirkanov at La Scala and in London, Paris, Zurich, Moscow, and Vienna.

He won the Abbiati Prize in 2013 for his performances of Verdi’s music and also holds the Golden Mask, the Opera Star International Opera Award, and the Zenatello Award at the Arena di Verona, among numerous others. His recordings are available in a range of DVDs released by the Deutsche Grammophon, Unitel, and Opus Arte labels.

Francesco Meli’s most recent engagements include Simon Boccanegra in London, Genoa, and Vienna; Ernani and La traviata at La Scala; Verdi’s Requiem led by Muti in Tokyo and Baden-Baden; and Aida at La Fenice. Upcoming engagements include Il trovatore and Don Carlos in Madrid, Verdi’s Requiem with Muti in Salzburg, and a concert performance of Ernani in Paris. He appears at La Scala in the 2019–20 season in Il trovatore and La Gioconda (two new productions) and in performances of La traviata directed by Liliana Cavani and conducted by Zubin Mehta.

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PHOTO BY VICTOR SANTIAGO
Kiril Manolov Baritone

These concerts mark Kiril Manolov’s debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Sofia, Bulgaria, Kiril Manolov studied singing at the National Academy of Music, where he also made his professional debut in the title role of Mozart’s Don Giovanni. He has won several singing competitions in Bulgaria and in Vienna, Warsaw, Barcelona, and Brescia. In addition, he sang in all the opera houses of Bulgaria and also was a member of National Opera Sofia for two years.

His repertoire includes the title roles in Verdi’s Nabucco, Simon Boccanegra, and Falstaff; and Amonasro in Verdi’s Aida, Marcello in Puccini’s La bohème, Enrico in Donizetti’s Lucia di Lammermoor, Giorgio Germont in Verdi’s La traviata and Renato in Un ballo in maschera, Figaro in Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia and Dandini in La Cenerentola, Rodrigo in Verdi’s Don Carlos and Miller in Luisa Miller, the Count in Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro, Riccardo in Bellini’s I Puritani, and Silvio in Leoncavallo’s Pagliacci.

In 2010, he appeared as Falstaff in a new production at the Opera House of Wiesbaden and made his Hamburg State Opera debut in the role the same year. In 2011, he essayed Falstaff, Miller, and Figaro in Wiesbaden; Conte di Luna in Verdi’s Il trovatore at the Cologne Opera; and Miller in Essen. In the 2012–13 season, he appeared in a new production of Simon Boccanegra in Wiesbaden; Donizetti’s Don Pasquale and Aida and Falstaff in Wuppertal; Donizetti’s Lélisir d’amore in Zagreb; Aida in Nuremberg; and Don Pasquale in Darmstadt.

Among Kiril Manolov’s recent engagements are Il barbiere di Siviglia, Simon Boccanegra, La forza del destino, and Falstaff in Wiesbaden; Falstaff in Ravenna, Piacenza, Ferrara, Reggio Emilia, and for the Ravena Festival with Riccardo Muti; Aida and Puccini’s Il trittico in Rome; Lélisir d’amore in Seville; and Falstaff in Savonlinna. He also has appeared as Simon Boccanegra in Antwerp, Innsbruck, and Ravenna; Nabucco in Stuttgart; Rigoletto and Tomski in Tchaikovsky’s The Queen of Spades in Savonlinna; and Tonio in Pagliacci in Ravenna, Rome, and Piacenza; among others.

His future roles include Amonasro in Aida in St. Petersburg, Rigoletto in Innsbruck, and Simon Boccanegra in Copenhagen.
Ildar Abdrazakov Bass

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES
January 15, 16, and 17, 2009, Orchestra Hall. Verdi’s Requiem, Riccardo Muti conducting

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES
October 10, 2013, Orchestra Hall. Verdi’s Requiem, Riccardo Muti conducting

Ildar Abdrazakov has established himself as one of opera’s most sought-after basses. Since making his debut at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan in 2001 at the age of twenty-five, the Russian native has become a mainstay at leading opera houses worldwide. Also an active concert artist, he has performed at the BBC Proms in London and Carnegie Hall in New York, and with leading international ensembles.

Highlights of his 2018–19 season included Don Ruy Gomez de Silva in Verdi’s Ernani followed by a solo recital and the title role in Verdi’s Attila for the season opening of La Scala, broadcast live worldwide; Leporello in Mozart’s Don Giovanni at the Metropolitan Opera in New York; a tribute concert in memory of Dmitri Hvorostovsky in Moscow; a solo concert debut in Canada with the Orchestre Métropolitain under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin; Mussorgsky’s Songs and Dances of Death with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester at the Philharmonie Berlin; and Verdi’s Requiem at Festspielhaus Baden-Baden led by Riccardo Muti. Further solo concerts take him to Moscow and Vienna.

Abdrazakov’s solo debut album, Power Players, was released in 2014 on Delos to critical acclaim. With the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on CSO Resound, he is featured on the Grammy Award–winning recording of Verdi’s Requiem and Shostakovich’s Suite on Verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti, both with Muti. He also has recorded unpublished arias by Rossini with the Symphony Orchestra of Milan Giuseppe Verdi and Riccardo Chailly for Decca, and Cherubini’s Mass with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Muti for EMI Classics. On Chandos, his discography includes Shostakovich’s Michelangelo Verses and Rachmaninov’s The Miserly Knight, both with the BBC Philharmonic and Gianandrea Noseda. In 2017, Abdrazakov became an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist and toured Europe with tenor Rolando Villazón in support of their first joint album, Duets, released in September that same year. His first solo album is slated for release in the summer.

Ildar Abdrazakov was born in Ufa, capital of the Republic of Bashkortostan (Bashkiria) in Russia. A child of artists, his mother a painter and his late father a film director, Abdrazakov began acting in his father’s productions at four years old. These early experiences inspired him to pursue a career in the arts. On graduating from the Ufa State Institute of Arts, he joined the Bashkir State Opera and Ballet Theatre. In the late 1990s, he won several prestigious awards, including the Moscow Grand Prize named for Irina Arkhipova, the Rimsky-Korsakov International Competition, and the International Obraztsova Competition. His win in 2000 at the Maria Callas International Television Competition in Parma thrust him into the international spotlight and led to his debut at La Scala the following year.

Since 2014, Ildar Abdrazakov has been artistic director of the Elena Obraztsova International Academy of Music.
Bass-baritone Eric Owens has a unique reputation as an esteemed interpreter of classic works and a champion of new music. Equally at home in orchestral, recital, and operatic repertoire, he brings his powerful poise, expansive voice, and instinctive acting faculties to stages around the world.

In the 2018–19 season, Owens returned to Lyric Opera of Chicago and made his role debut as the Wanderer in David Pountney’s new production of Wagner’s Siegfried. He also starred as Porgy in James Robinson’s new production of Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess at the Dutch National Opera and made his role debut as Hagen in Götterdämmerung at the Metropolitan Opera in New York conducted by Philippe Jordan. Concert appearances have included the world premiere of David Lang’s prisoner of the state with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Jaap van Zweden, Verdi’s Requiem with the Minnesota Orchestra, and Mozart’s Requiem with Music of the Baroque. He also undertook a multi-city recital tour with tenor Lawrence Brownlee.

Eric Owens’s career operatic highlights include Alberich in the Met’s production of Wagner’s Ring cycle directed by Robert Lepage; Orest in Patrice Chereau’s production of Strauss’s Elektra conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen, also at the Met; the title role in Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman and Stephen Kumalo in Weill’s Lost in the Stars at Washington National Opera; his San Francisco Opera debut in Verdi’s Otello conducted by Donald Runnicles; his Royal Opera (Covent Garden) debut in Bellini’s Norma; Vodnik in Dvořák’s Rusalka and Porgy in Porgy and Bess at Lyric Opera of Chicago; the title role in Handel’s Hercules with the Canadian Opera Company; Verdi’s Aida at Houston Grand Opera; Verdi’s Rigoletto and Il trovatore and Puccini’s La bohème at Los Angeles Opera; Mozart’s The Magic Flute for his Paris Opera (Bastille) debut; the title role in Verdi’s Macbeth at the Glimmerglass Festival; and Handel’s Ariodante and Monteverdi’s The Coronation of Poppea at English National Opera.

Eric Owens has been recognized with multiple honors, including Musical America’s 2017 Vocalist of the Year Award, the 2003 Marian Anderson Award, a 1999 ARIA Award, second prize in the Plácido Domingo Operalia Competition, the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and the Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition. He serves on the board of trustees of both the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and Astral Artistic Services.
Kimberly Gunderson Soprano

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**
June 20, 21, 22, and 23, 2013, Orchestra Hall. Verdi’s *Four Sacred Pieces*, Riccardo Muti conducting

Critically acclaimed soprano Kimberly Gunderson has appeared as soloist in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Chicago Sinfonietta, Schubert’s Mass no. 2 in G major, Bach’s *Magnificat*, Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Ravel’s *Shéhérazade*, Mozart’s Mass in C minor, and Fauré’s Requiem. She appeared as Charlotte in the Chicago premiere of Ronald Perera’s opera *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and created the role of the Ingénue in VOX 3 Collective’s jukebox opera, *night/music*. A member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus for eight seasons, Gunderson also has performed with the Grant Park Chorus, the Chicago Chamber Orchestra, the Bach Week Festival in Evanston, and the William Ferris Chorale.

Kimberly Gunderson is cofounder and performer in the chamber group Mode Ensemble.

Tasha Koontz Soprano

These concerts mark Tasha Koontz’s debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Soprano Tasha Koontz is an artist garnering attention from coast to coast. She lends her unique combination of nuanced and vocally exciting performances to a gallery of leading ladies in her repertoire, including Violetta in Verdi’s *La traviata*, Mimi in Puccini’s *La bohème*, Donna Anna in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, Alice Ford in Verdi’s *Falstaff*, and the Countess in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. In 2017, she made her San Diego Opera debut as Annina in *La traviata* conducted by David Agler and directed by Marta Domingo. Last fall, she returned to San Diego Opera to sing Edith in the season’s opening production of Sullivan’s *Pirates of Penzance*. Koontz made her debut with Central City Opera in 2018 as the First Lady in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. In the spring of 2019, she returned to San Diego Opera as Frasquita in Bizet’s *Carmen*, for which she received high praise. With San Diego Opera in the fall of 2019, Tasha Koontz reprises the role of High Priestess in Verdi’s *Aida*.

tashakoontz.com
**Issachah Savage** Tenor

These concerts mark Issachah Savage’s debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Having won the Seattle International Wagner Competition, sweeping all the major categories, dramatic tenor Issachah Savage is garnering critical acclaim. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Don Riccardo in Verdi’s *Ernani* conducted by James Levine. He recently appeared to critical acclaim as Siegmund in Wagner’s *Die Walküre* at the Canadian Opera Company under Johannes Debus. Other debuts include Bacchus in Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Seattle Opera; Narraboth in Strauss’s *Salome* led by James Conlon with the Los Angeles Opera; Weill’s *Lost in the Stars* with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; Radamès in Verdi’s *Aida* opposite Liudmyla Monastyryksa and Dolora Zajick at Houston Grand Opera; Bacchus at Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse, France; and Siegmund with Opéra National de Bordeaux under the baton of Paul Daniel.

In concert, Savage has appeared as soloist in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington (D.C.) under Gianandrea Noseda, the Orchestre National de Bordeaux-Aquitaine under Paul Daniel, and the Utah Symphony; and Verdi’s Requiem with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in Australia, Boston Philharmonic, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. He also made his Aspen Music Festival debut as Radamès under conductor Robert Spano, a role he sang with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood under Jacques Lacombe.

Issachah Savage participated in San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program for gifted young singers, appearing in the finale to Wagner’s *Lohengrin* for the Merola Grand Finale concert. He holds a bachelor’s degree in vocal performance from Morgan State University and a master’s degree in opera voice performance from the Catholic University of America.

PHOTO BY KRISTIN HOEBERMANN
The Chicago Symphony Chorus celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 2017–18. Led by chorus director and conductor Duain Wolfe since 1994, the ensemble regularly performs with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Orchestra Hall and at the Ravinia Festival.

The history of the Chorus began in 1957, when sixth music director Fritz Reiner invited Margaret Hillis to establish a chorus to equal the quality of the Orchestra. Hillis accepted the challenge, and the Chicago Symphony Chorus debuted in March and April 1958, in Mozart’s Requiem under Bruno Walter and Verdi’s Requiem under Reiner.

Hillis served the Chorus for thirty-seven years, until her retirement in 1994; ninth music director Daniel Barenboim appointed Wolfe as her successor in June of that year.

The Chorus frequently performs under music director Riccardo Muti as well as guest conductors. Highlights of 2018–19 have included Shostakovich’s Symphony no. 13 (Babi Yar), Mahler’s Symphony no. 3, Verdi’s Requiem, and Handel’s Messiah.

The Chorus first performed in Carnegie Hall in 1967 in Henze’s Muses of Sicily and Ravel’s Daphnis and Chloe under seventh music director Jean Martinon, and most recently in 2015 with Riccardo Muti for Scriabin’s Prometheus and Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky. Touring internationally with the Orchestra, the Chorus traveled to London and Salzburg in 1989 with Sir Georg Solti for performances of Berlioz’s The Damnation of Faust and to Berlin in 1999 with Barenboim for Brahms’s A German Requiem and Pierre Boulez for Schoenberg’s Moses and Aron.

World premieres featuring the Chorus have included Ned Rorem’s Goodbye My Fancy, John Harbison’s Four Psalms, and Bernard Rands’s apókryphos. With visiting orchestras, the Chorus has collaborated with the Berlin Philharmonic under Claudio Abbado, Boston Symphony Orchestra and Seiji Ozawa, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra with Zubin Mehta, and the Staatskapelle Berlin under Barenboim.

Since first recording commercially in 1959—Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky under Reiner—the Chorus has amassed a discography that includes hallmarks of the choral repertoire and several complete operas. The Chorus most recently received a 2010 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance for Verdi’s Requiem, led by Riccardo Muti on CSO Resound. The Chorus has received an additional nine Grammy awards for Best Choral Performance for Verdi’s Requiem, Beethoven’s Missa solemnis, Brahms’s A German Requiem, Berlioz’s The Damnation of Faust, Haydn’s The Creation, and Bach’s Mass in B minor with Solti; Brahms’s Requiem and Orff’s Carmina Burana with James Levine; and Bartók’s Cantata profana with Boulez.

The Chorus also has appeared on two movie soundtracks with the Orchestra: Fantasia 2000 led by Levine and John Williams’s score for Lincoln, conducted by the composer. Recordings on CSO Resound featuring the Chorus include Mahler’s Second and Third symphonies, Poulenc’s Gloria, and Ravel’s Daphnis and Chloe under Bernard Haitink; and Berlioz’s Lélio, Verdi’s Otello, and most recently Schoenberg’s Kol Nidre under Riccardo Muti.
The appearance of the Chicago Symphony Chorus is made possible by a generous gift from

Jim and Kay Mabie.
Duain Wolfe Chorus Director and Conductor

Now in his twenty-fifth season as director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Duain Wolfe has prepared over 150 programs for concerts in Orchestra Hall and at the Ravinia Festival, as well as many works for commercial recordings. Wolfe also directs choral works at the Aspen Music Festival and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and he is founder-director of the Colorado Symphony Chorus (now in its thirty-fifth season), a position he maintains along with his Chicago Symphony Chorus post.

Winner of two Grammy awards in 2010 (Best Choral Performance and Best Classical Album) for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s recording of Verdi’s Requiem with Riccardo Muti, in 2012 Wolfe received the Michael Korn Founders Award from Chorus America in recognition of his contributions to the professional choral arts. He also prepared the Chicago Symphony Chorus for the Grammy Award–winning recording of Wagner’s Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg with Sir Georg Solti, and for the CSO Resound release of Verdi’s Otello conducted by Riccardo Muti.

Well known for his work with children, Wolfe is conductor laureate of the Colorado Children’s Chorale, an organization that he founded and conducted for twenty-five years. Also active in opera, he served as conductor of the Central City Opera Festival for twenty years.

Among the many performances for which Wolfe has prepared the Chicago Symphony Chorus are Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony; Cherubini’s Requiem; Brahms’s A German Requiem; Orff’s Carmina Burana; Verdi’s Requiem, Otello, Macbeth, and Falstaff; and Schoenberg’s Kol Nidre with Alberto Mizrahi as narrator, recorded during performances in Orchestra Hall in 2012 and recently released on CSO Resound—all conducted by CSO music director Riccardo Muti. World premieres include John Harbison’s Four Psalms and Bernard Rands’s apókryphos, both commissioned by the CSO.

Wolfe prepared the Chicago Symphony Chorus for its most recent Carnegie Hall performances of Scriabin’s Prometheus and Prokofiev’s Alexander Nevsky in 2015, under Riccardo Muti, as well as Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Staatskapelle Berlin in 2000 with Daniel Barenboim. He also prepared the Chorus for performances of Schoenberg’s Moses and Aron (led by Pierre Boulez) and Brahms’s A German Requiem (led by Barenboim) at the Berlin Festtage in 1999.

Duain 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.
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The Chorus was prepared for these performances by Duain Wolfe.
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39G ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-EIGHTH SEASON
Now celebrating its 128th season, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the world’s leading orchestras. In September 2010, renowned Italian conductor Riccardo Muti became its tenth music director. His vision for the Orchestra—to deepen its engagement with the Chicago community, to nurture its legacy while supporting a new generation of musicians, and to collaborate with visionary artists—signals a new era for the institution.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s distinguished history began in 1889, when Theodore Thomas, then the leading conductor in America and a recognized music pioneer, was invited by Chicago businessman Charles Norman Fay to establish a symphony orchestra here. Thomas’s aim to establish a permanent orchestra with performance capabilities of the highest quality was realized at the first concerts in October 1891. Thomas served as music director until his death in 1905—just three weeks after the dedication of Orchestra Hall, the Orchestra’s permanent home designed by Daniel Burnham.

Frederick Stock, recruited by Thomas to the viola section in 1895, became assistant conductor in 1899, and succeeded the Orchestra’s founder. His tenure lasted thirty-seven years, from 1905 to 1942—longest of the Orchestra’s music directors. Dynamic and innovative, the Stock years saw the founding of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the first training orchestra in the United States affiliated with a major symphony orchestra, in 1919. Stock also established youth auditions, organized the first subscription concerts especially for children, and began a series of popular concerts.

Three distinguished conductors headed the Orchestra during the following decade: Désiré Defauw was music director from 1943 to 1947; Artur Rodzinski assumed the post in 1947–48; and Rafael Kubelík led the ensemble for three seasons from 1950 to 1953. The next ten years belonged to Fritz Reiner, whose recordings with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra are still considered performance hallmarks. It was Reiner who invited Margaret Hillis to form the Chicago Symphony Chorus in 1957. For the five seasons from 1963 to 1968, Jean Martinon held the position of music director.

Sir Georg Solti, the Orchestra’s eighth music director, served from 1969 until 1991. He then held the title of music director laureate and returned to conduct the Orchestra for several weeks each season until his death in September 1997. Solti’s arrival launched one of the most successful musical partnerships of our time, and the CSO made its first overseas tour to Europe in 1971 under his direction, along with numerous award-winning recordings.

Daniel Barenboim was named music director designate in January 1989, and he became the Orchestra’s ninth music director in September 1991, a position he held until June 2006. His tenure was distinguished by the opening of Symphony Center in 1997, highly praised operatic productions at Orchestra Hall, numerous appearances with the Orchestra in the dual role of pianist and conductor, twenty-one international tours, and the appointment of Duain Wolfe as the Chorus’s second director.

From 2006 to 2010, Bernard Haitink held the post of principal conductor, the first in CSO history. Pierre Boulez’s long-standing relationship with the CSO led to his appointment as principal guest conductor in 1995. He was named Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus in 2006, a position he held until his death in January 2016. Only two others have served as principal guest conductors: Carlo Maria Giulini, who began to appear in Chicago regularly in the late 1950s, was named to the post in 1969, serving until 1972; Claudio Abbado held the position from 1982 to 1985.

In December 2009, Yo-Yo Ma was appointed the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant by Riccardo Muti. In this role, he partners with Muti, staff, and musicians to provide program development for the Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO.

Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli was appointed by Riccardo Muti and began her two-year term in the fall of 2018. In addition to composing, she curates the contemporary MusicNOW series.

Since 1916, recording has been a significant part of the Orchestra’s activities. Current releases on CSO Resound, the Orchestra’s independent recording label, include the Grammy Award–winning release of Verdi’s Requiem led by Riccardo Muti. Recordings by the CSO have earned sixty-two Grammy awards from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

cso.org
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra string sections utilize revolving seating. Players behind the first desk (first two desks in the violins) change seats systematically every two weeks and are listed alphabetically. Section percussionists also are listed alphabetically.

The Louise H. Benton Wagner Chair currently is unoccupied.

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The Chicago Symphony Orchestra string sections utilize revolving seating. Players behind the first desk (first two desks in the violins) change seats systematically every two weeks and are listed alphabetically. Section percussionists also are listed alphabetically.
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Alyce H. DeCosta was a dedicated philanthropist who loved Chicago and helped nurture cultural life in the city through her generous support for the arts and higher education. Mrs. DeCosta was a leading member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra family, having served as a Governing Member and as a Life Trustee of the Board of Directors. For many years, she was the president of the Walter E. Heller Foundation, a philanthropic foundation named after her late husband, the founder and past Chairman of the Walter E. Heller Co.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is proud to recognize the Walter E. Heller Foundation and the continuing legacy of Alyce H. DeCosta during the 2018-19 season.
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