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RICCARDO MUTI
SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS

Beethoven

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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION
Program Book Production
Frances Atkins Content Director
Phillip Huscher Scholar-in-Residence & Program Annotator
Gerald Virgil Senior Content Editor
Kristin Tobin Designer & Print Production Manager
Landon Hegedus Editor & Copywriter

Bryan Dowling Advertising Sales
708-434-5869
bryan@media8midwest.com

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ON THE COVER
Lithograph portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven by Paul Rohrbach, based on the 1819 portrait by Ferdinand Schimon. Getty Images

LEFT TO RIGHT
CSO Principal Percussion Cynthia Yeh gives the U.S. premiere of Avner Dorman’s Eternal Rhythm. (October 3, 4, and 5)
Riccardo Muti conducts CSO Associate Concertmaster Stephanie Jeong and Assistant Principal Cello Kenneth Olsen in Brahms’s Double Concerto. (November 7, 9, and 12).
It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 2019–20 season on behalf of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This season, we invite you to explore the symphonies of Beethoven, symbols of the power of artistic expression. For nearly 250 years, we have tried to find the secret behind the untouchable music of this divine architect. For me, to conduct his music is like touching the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican. His music and his message are timeless.

In his Ninth Symphony, Beethoven explicitly tells us that we should all become brothers and sisters. Through personal experience, I know that music has the ability to bring people together—people who do not speak the same language or who otherwise could not relate to each other in terms of culture, ethnicity, or religion. To understand what is behind this sometimes metaphysical language is not easy, but, in the end, the message is universal. Through music, people of all backgrounds can form a bond and share a common experience.

With each performance, we strive to reach the ideal that is the triumph of beauty. Your enthusiasm for this orchestra and its musicians is more important than ever, and we thank you for your continued support.

“MUSIC SHOULD STRIKE FIRE FROM THE HEART OF MAN.”

—LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Riccardo Muti Zell Music Director, Chicago Symphony Orchestra
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Welcome to the 129th season of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

This year the Orchestra celebrates the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven across its series. The music of Beethoven has played an important role in the Orchestra’s history since its first concert, which opened with Theodore Thomas conducting the Fifth Symphony on October 16 and 17, 1891, and has been a part of every season since. Indeed, Beethoven’s name even appears at the center of Orchestra Hall’s Michigan Avenue façade designed by Daniel Burnham.

It will be our great pleasure to present all nine of Beethoven’s symphonies over the course of the season, each conducted by Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti, whose tenth season as the Orchestra’s tenth music director we also celebrate. Each symphony stands as a pillar of the repertoire, but collectively, they represent the apex of artistic achievement, providing a timeless source of inspiration. To hear them cyclically, and expertly interpreted by Muti and the CSO, provides a focused examination of Beethoven’s singular style as he developed the expressive possibilities of the symphonic form. Added to this, there will be opportunities for distinguished soloists to perform concertos and arias, as well as chamber music and piano repertoire on the Symphony Center Presents series. This will include performances of all thirty-two piano sonatas, illustrating Beethoven’s lifelong and evolving relationship with his primary instrument.

In addition, there will be musical offerings representing composers from the baroque period to today, a range of genres, and a dazzling roster of artists. This season, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association—the parent organization of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Chorus, Symphony Center Presents, Negaunee Music Institute, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and the Symphony Center complex—presents over 400 concerts and events, enriching the lives of millions throughout Chicago and around the world. We look forward to sharing these experiences with you, and remain grateful for your support of the Orchestra and its wide variety of programs.
A VIRTUOSIC SHOWCASE OF 19TH-CENTURY ITALIAN MUSIC
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.

AVAILABLE NOW ON CSO RESOUND!
As the music world anticipates the 250th anniversary of the composer’s birth, the music still reigns supreme.

By Phillip Huscher

Earlier this summer, a substantial lock of Beethoven’s gray and dark-brown hair, tied with a silk thread and preserved in a glazed oval frame, was auctioned at Sotheby’s in London for roughly $44,500—far above the original estimate of $15,000 to $19,000, and outclassing the $35,000 paid for John Lennon’s hair three years earlier. “Other locks of Beethoven’s hair that we have seen have invariably been taken from the composer on his deathbed in 1827,” Sotheby’s reported in the catalog for its June 11 sale of Important Manuscripts, Continental Books, and Music. (Beethoven’s hair was in such demand, even in 1827, that he was buried nearly bald.) Beethoven apparently gave this lock to Anton Halm, a pianist, in 1826, but only after the composer’s factotum Carl Holz tried to pass off a clump of goat’s hair as Beethoven’s own. When Beethoven learned of the deception, he snipped some hair from the back of his head, wrapped it in a sheet of paper, and handed it to Halm.
(Another lock of Beethoven's hair, auctioned at Sotheby’s for $7,300 in 1994, was sent to the Health Research Institute in Naperville, west of Chicago, where scientific analysis revealed a concentration of lead one hundred times in excess of the norm, indicating that Beethoven suffered from lead poisoning—explaining his constant complaints of bad digestion, chronic abdominal pain, irritability, and depression—but shedding no light on his deafness, the cause of his death, or the miracle of his genius.)

Collecting locks of hair from famous people was common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, just as art museums and concert halls were once ringed with the names of artists and composers rather than the people who gave the money to build them. When Orchestra Hall was built in 1904, it was Beethoven's name that was carved over the central front door, and it was his most famous symphony—the Fifth—that was included in the inaugural concert. Beethoven is still the cornerstone of our musical life, a fact that did not escape Pierre Boulez, the pioneering musical figure who was once the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's conductor emeritus, when he called Beethoven “the least discussed, most accepted and acknowledged symbol of our musical culture.” Notice the emphasis on our. To Boulez, a composer famously entrenched on the front lines of contemporary music, Beethoven's unquestioned preeminence nearly two hundred years after he transformed his own musical culture was perhaps the most astonishing thing of all about this most astonishing of composers.

This season, in honor of Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra plays all nine of the composer's symphonies, and visiting pianists present the thirty-two sonatas—two complete cycles that are among the very cornerstones of music. Riccardo Muti is only the Orchestra's third music director to conduct all of Beethoven's symphonies in a single season, following Frederick Stock in the 1936–37 season and Désiré Defauw eight years later. (Although Sir Georg Solti recorded the complete cycle twice with the Chicago Symphony, he never performed all of them in one season. Bernard Haitink led the nine symphonies in the span of just three weeks, in June of 2010, when he served as the Orchestra's principal conductor.)

Beethoven has now dominated our thinking about great music for two centuries. Many of his works have helped us to define the term masterpiece, and, although that word has taken a beating lately, Beethoven's music itself has not lost its value. Today Beethoven is still as widely performed as any composer, and, unlike Mozart or Schubert, for example, nearly all his major works are in the active repertory. The Chicago Symphony has not let a single season pass without playing some of his music.

Of all the popular composers, Beethoven's is the face we know best—despite the popularity of Amadeus, Mozart's whimsical image is still overshadowed by Ludwig's forbidding scowl. That is apparently the way he actually looked, although some of the paintings and drawings made of him during his lifetime seem to us to border on caricature—when he posed for Joseph Karl Stieler in 1819, it looks like he didn't even bother to comb his hair. The image of the composer as tormented genius is one that Beethoven liked and possibly cultivated, and it has endured to our day, from cartoons to high art, in pictures, movies, and in myth. There is surely not a more tragic story in music than that of a brilliant composer going deaf in the prime of life. Beethoven was the first to comment on the cruel irony of his own plight: “How could I possibly admit an infirmity in the one sense which ought to be more perfect in me than in others?” he wrote as early as 1802, shortly after he turned thirty.

In the background, Beethoven’s famous 1802 letter to his brothers, known as the Heiligenstadt Testament, in which he expresses his despair over his increasing deafness and desire to fulfill his artistic destiny. Hamburg State and University Library, Germany
Even during his lifetime, Beethoven became an almost legendary figure—the personification of defiance in the face of adversity. Day after day, he struggled with chronic illness, money, loneliness, deafness, and, perhaps most astonishingly, composition itself—the very act of putting notes on paper. Communication—an artist’s essential gift—became torturous and ever more precious as neither music nor, ultimately, everyday conversation, came to him easily. He left us more than sixty sketchbooks that record his daily struggle for artistic perfection and nearly four hundred conversation books, in which his visitors tried to “talk” with him once he was totally deaf. As he failed to make a life of satisfying normalcy for himself—he was bad at friendship and pathetic at romance—and as his hearing failed completely, cutting him off still further from the world around him, he kept on composing.

Although he was inevitably misunderstood in his own time, he also was widely admired for the grandeur of his vision and the intensity and expressive range of his music. Even Goethe, who never came around to really liking Beethoven’s music, marveled at his temperament: “more concentrated, more energetic, more warmly and tenderly emotional I’ve never seen an artist.”

Although Beethoven led a solitary life in Vienna—“Live only in your art,” he wrote in his diary, “the only existence for you”—ten thousand people from all over Europe showed up at his funeral, and Franz Schubert, the only equal among his contemporaries, carried a torch in the procession. (Popular myth claims that it was Beethoven’s name Schubert muttered on his own deathbed, just one year later.) Like Byron, Beethoven had become the archetypal romantic hero, a fearless and defiant revolutionary, and this image dominated music for decades. A new book by John Clubbe, *Beethoven: The Relentless Revolutionary*, suggests that it was the composer’s involvement in the political unrest of his time, along with his rebellious spirit, initially inspired by Napoleon, that freed him to write such revolutionary music.

Beethoven’s popularity grew steadily throughout the nineteenth century (even Mozart’s star waned periodically). Every composer worked in his shadow, sometimes with reverence and sometimes with frustration, and none with greater difficulty than Brahms, who took nearly twenty years to finish his First Symphony, grumbling that “you can’t have any idea what it’s like always to hear such a giant marching behind you.” Ultimately Brahms succeeded because he understood the paradox of Beethoven’s influence: it was useless to imitate him; only by striving for originality did one truly follow in his footsteps.

As much as our picture of Beethoven continues to shift with the times, his music never seems to lose its edge—it continues to sound fresh and unsettling—despite its familiarity and its age. It reminds us that nothing of significance is accomplished without struggle, and, in fact, the very act of conquering these scores, the physical challenge of bringing them to life—in passages that two hands can barely manage, that push voices to their limits—recreates, time after time, Beethoven’s own battle to harness the music in his head.

Beethoven was perpetually striving for ideals—musical and societal—that have not yet been achieved, and which may, in fact, be out of reach. In that sense, his is the music not only of our culture, as Boulez predicted, but of our future. Perhaps Beethoven’s greatest achievement was, as Igor Stravinsky remarked, to have written music “that will be contemporary forever.”

Phillip Huscher is the scholar-in-residence and program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

*Beethoven’s Funeral*, watercolor by Franz Xaver Stöber depicting the crowd that assembled on March 29, 1827, before the Schwarzspanierhaus, Beethoven’s last residence (on the right beside the church) in Vienna. Beethoven-Haus, Bonn, Germany
You know the score

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THE EMPRESS: Margarita Teresa

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October 18 – 20

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Celebrate Beethoven’s 250th birthday at Symphony Center!

During the 2019/20 season celebration, Riccardo Muti will be conducting the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and a Beethoven piano sonata cycle performed by celebrated virtuosos on the Symphony Center Presents Piano series.

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  - Symphonies Nos. 4 & 7
- **JUN 11–13**
  - Symphonies Nos. 6 & 8,
  - *Overture to The Ruins of Athens*
- **JUN 18–21**
  - Symphony No. 9

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  - Mitsuko Uchida
- **MAY 10**
  - Evgeny Kissin
- **MAY 20**
  - Igor Levit
- **MAY 24**
  - Maurizio Pollini

See all of Beethoven’s works being performed in 2019/20 at [cso.org/Beethoven](http://cso.org/Beethoven)
In the epigraph to his autobiography, Theodore Thomas—the Chicago Orchestra’s founder and first music director—wrote, “The man who does not understand Beethoven and has not been under his spell has not half-lived his life.”

Theodore Thomas and Daniel Burnham collaborated extensively during the planning of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago: Thomas as music director and Burnham as architect. Burnham was Thomas’s first choice to design the Chicago Orchestra’s new home, and his near-final elevation—completed after construction had already begun on May 1, 1904—of Orchestra Hall included the names of five composers, with Beethoven firmly in the center. (It was soon decided that Brahms was too contemporary to merit landmark status, since he had only died in 1897, and was replaced with Schubert.)

Commemorating the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven

HIGHLIGHTING MATERIALS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE ROSENTHAL ARCHIVES OF THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PHOTO BY ALFRED COX
Theodore Thomas programmed his favorite work—Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony—for the Chicago Orchestra’s inaugural concerts at the Auditorium Theatre on October 16 and 17, 1891, as well as the first concert in Orchestra Hall on December 14, 1904.

This life mask of Beethoven is based on an original mold made in 1812 by Franz Klein. In the nineteenth century, several copies of the mask were produced, and this bronze version in the Theodore Thomas collection is likely one of those. Since Beethoven rarely had the patience to sit for portraits, artists would frequently look to Klein’s sculpture as reference instead. Another mold was taken two days after the composer died in 1827—of course, a death mask—but this mask remains the most accurate likeness of the composer during his lifetime.
No. 1: Composer Cycles and Retrospectives

While this season he honors the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven by conducting his nine symphonies, Riccardo Muti has also brought special attention to the work of many composers throughout his tenure as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s tenth music director. Listening to the works of these composers in a concentrated way and with the benefit Muti’s exceptional interpretations from the podium has led to a deeper understanding and appreciation of both familiar and lesser-known music. As CSO Trombone Michael Mulcahy said of Maestro Muti, “When he comes on stage, the room changes because you know this is serious event, you know something important is going to happen.”

THE MUSIC OF VERDI: “For more than forty years, Riccardo Muti has been the king of Verdi conductors, the one who most makes you feel you are hearing the composer’s operas for the very first time,” read The New York Times following performances of Falstaff (April 2016). Audiences have had the pleasure of hearing Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus perform many works by Verdi, including his Requiem (January 2009, October 2013, and November 2018), Aida (June 2019), and all three of his operas based on Shakespeare’s plays, beginning with Otello (April 2011), followed by Macbeth (September and October 2013), and Falstaff. Muti’s interpretations have revealed the infinite nuances of Verdi’s scores and their ability to express the complex emotions and motivations of his characters.

During his first season as music director, Muti and the Orchestra and Chorus presented Otello at Carnegie Hall on April 15, 2011, following three earlier performances at Orchestra Hall. Coinciding with the 200th anniversary of Verdi’s birth in 2013, CSO Resound released a recording of the Otello performances.

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

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to Bank of America for its generous support as the Maestro Residency Presenter.
THE MUSIC OF SCHUBERT: “When you hear the music of Schubert, you go home enriched,” said Muti in anticipation of his presentation of Schubert’s Mass in A-flat major and eight symphonies during the 2013–14 season—the first complete cycle in a single season in the Orchestra’s history of Schubert’s seven completed symphonies and the Unfinished Symphony no. 8. “This is music of abundant satisfaction,” said Scholar-in-Residence and Program Annotator Phillip Huscher, “It coaxes players to listen to one another as if they were playing chamber music and to sing with their instruments; it gives audiences a rare sense of inner pleasure, of well-being. Behind the polished veneer of the scores, you sense that Schubert, as one of his friends once said, was reaching for the stars.”

Muti conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and soloists Rosa Feola (soprano), Michaela Selinger (mezzo-soprano), Antonio Poli (tenor), and Riccardo Zanellato (bass) in Schubert’s Mass no. 5 in A-flat major on February 6, 2014, as part of the season-long celebration of Schubert.

THE SYMPHONIES OF BRAHMS: In May 2017, Riccardo Muti conducted Brahms’s four symphonies in two sets of concerts. As John von Rhein wrote in the Chicago Tribune, “It takes a conductor of experience, not to mention the wisdom . . . to bring something insightful to this well-worn corpus of masterpieces . . . Those insights are there in the Brahms symphony cycle Riccardo Muti is concluding with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.” So convincing were those performances that, Muti selected the symphonies of Brahms to represent the Orchestra on tour nationally and internationally in subsequent seasons.

Muti and the CSO perform Brahms’s Symphony no. 2 at Lane Tech College Prep High School, November 15, 2017. As part of his vision to expand the impact of the CSO throughout the city, Muti has conducted the Orchestra in an annual community concert since 2010.

TCHAIKOVSKY AND SCRIBIN: As a main theme of the CSO’s 2014–15 programming, Muti explored the music of two Russian giants with a common heritage but distinctive styles. Journalist Peter Lefevre wrote of the Tchaikovsky/Scriabin theme, “They contain an encyclopedic overview of their native country, pointing toward history but also the future. Simple folk songs and Orthodox hymns at one end, apocalyptic chaos at the other, in the middle the ballets, operas and waltzes that continue to inspire and enchant the world over.”

A centerpiece of the CSO’s complete traversal of Tchaikovsky’s symphonies began with a free community concert on September 19, 2014, in Millennium Park featuring Tchaikovsky’s Symphony no. 4, along with The Tempest and Suite from The Sleeping Beauty.
THE MUSIC OF BRUCKNER: The CSO has a distinguished history of performing the works of Anton Bruckner since the Orchestra’s first music director, Theodore Thomas, conducted the Fourth Symphony in 1897. Muti has continued this tradition, conducting six of his nine symphonies as well as the Te Deum since his appointment. “Nobility, lyrical feeling, and dramatic thrust are keys to Muti’s approach to the Bruckner symphonies,” said the Chicago Tribune.

“Muti delivers on promise, leads thrilling Cherubini Requiem with CSO, Chorus” read the headline in the Chicago Tribune following the March 17, 2012, performance.

THE MUSIC OF PROKOFIEV: Muti has championed the diverse music of Sergei Prokofiev. In 2007, he chose the Third Symphony for his first performances with the Orchestra since his 1975 Orchestra Hall debut and conducted it again in June 2018. “The first time was very good. I felt the power of the orchestra and the precision of the orchestra. This time,” he said, with obvious satisfaction, referring to the 2018 performance, “I was much more impressed by the subtlety of the orchestra. The power was still there . . . but the orchestra was singing, even in the most brutal music that the symphony requires.”

Muti undertook performances of two of Prokofiev’s monumental scores for the films of Sergei Eisenstein: Alexander Nevsky in January 2015 and Ivan the Terrible in February 2017. Seen here is Muti conducting the Orchestra and Chorus with actor Gérard Depardieu performing the title role in Ivan the Terrible.

ITALIAN COMPOSERS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES: One of the great benefits of having an Italian music director is that he is no more than one or two degrees of separation from great Italian composers himself. A living disciple of Arturo Toscanini through his own teacher, Antonino Votto, Muti has conducted many symphonic and operatic works by Italian composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Cherubini, Rossini, Verdi, Boito, Catalani, Martucci, Puccini, Mascagni, Giordano, Respighi, and others.
After triumphant performances of Verdi’s _Aida_ with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in June, Riccardo Muti embarked upon a summer filled with engagements across Europe.

To begin, Muti traveled to Athens to conduct Beethoven’s Symphony no. 9 at the Twenty-Third Annual Roads of Friendship, a project of the Ravenna Festival in Italy that presents large-scale concerts to bring attention to current social, cultural, and humanitarian issues. This year’s performances, on July 9 and 11, took place at the historic Odeon of Herodes Atticus and then at the Palazzo Mauro de André to honor the Ravenna Festival’s thirtieth anniversary season. Muti led more than 200 musicians from the combined forces of members of orchestras and choruses from across Greece and the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra, as well as distinguished soloists.

Next, Muti led the fifth edition of his Italian Opera Academy, this year focused on Mozart’s _The Marriage of Figaro_. As in previous years, the musicians of the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra, opera singers, and a group of talented young conductors and répétiteurs assembled, along with dedicated audience members, at the Teatro Dante Alighieri in Ravenna for two weeks of focused study with the distinguished conductor as their guide. Li-Kuo Chang, the CSO’s Acting Principal Viola, joined the academy as a special guest. “Listening to Maestro Muti’s analysis in such an intimate and unhurried atmosphere, has revealed more of Mozart’s and Da Ponte’s double meanings in the opera.”

On August 3, Italian President Sergio Mattarella attended a special concert conducted by Riccardo Muti in honor of the seventieth season of the Sagra Musicale festival at the historic Galli Theater in the city of Rimini, where Verdi’s opera _Aroldo_ was premiered in the presence of the composer. “It is a great thrill to be here tonight in this wonderfully restored and reopened theater to listen to a master like Riccardo Muti,” Mattarella said. In addition to the sold-out concert in the theater, thousands enjoyed a live relay of the performance projected onto a large screen in the Piazza Malatesta.

Muti then traveled to Austria for his annual performances at the Salzburg Festival. This year’s concerts included three sold-out performances of Verdi’s Requiem given in honor of the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Herbert von Karajan. Karlheinz Roschitz of _Kronen Zeitung_ noted that “what made this performance particularly exciting was the development of [Muti’s] interpretation, with which he has been directly following the Karajan tradition since his Salzburg debut in 1971.” When Susanne Zobl of Austria’s _Kurier_ described the performance, she wrote, “That was perfect music-making. Ovation.”

 CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
The Roads of Friendship concert at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens. Photo by © Silvia Lelli
Muti conducting on the stage of the historic Galli Theater. Photo by © Zani-Casadio
Riccardo Muti with Salzburg Festival President Helga Rabl-Stadler, Queen Silvia and King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, and Chairman of the Amadeus Weekend Eva Maria O’Neill after the August 13 performance of Verdi’s Requiem. Photo courtesy of the Salzburg Festival
Muti welcomes Acting Principal Viola Li-Kuo Chang to the 2019 Italian Opera Academy. Photo by © Zani-Casadio
The programs of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association are made possible each season thanks in part to our dedicated volunteers and donors. Support the music you love by getting involved in the following ways.

**GOVERNING MEMBERS** are business, cultural, and civic leaders who serve as essential advocates for the CSO, both in Chicago and around the world, and participate in many significant activities at Symphony Center. Email [governingmembers@cso.org](mailto:governingmembers@cso.org) for more information.

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The **CSO LATINO ALLIANCE** encourages individuals and their families to discover and experience timeless music with other enthusiasts in concerts, receptions, and educational events. To learn more, please visit [cso.org/latinoalliance](http://cso.org/latinoalliance) or connect with us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

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Negaunee Music Institute programs celebrate 100th anniversaries

Reaching over 200,000 people annually, the programs of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Negaunee Music Institute provide broad access to the CSO, educate young listeners, train young musicians, and serve the city and the world through music. All concerts and events are offered to the public free of charge, or at a nominal fee, and aim to dissolve barriers to participation and diversify the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association’s audiences.

The 2019–20 season marks the 100th anniversaries of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and the CSO’s concert series for children. Established in 1919 by the CSO’s second music director, Frederick Stock, these programs are today the foundation of the Orchestra’s educational activities.

To honor the milestone anniversary, this season includes a benefit gala on March 1, 2020, featuring world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma as soloist, under the direction of newly appointed Civic Orchestra Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur.

The centennial anniversary of the CSO’s concert series for children is pleased to provide free admission and school bus transportation to the performances for Chicago Public Schools students. Concert programs, focusing on the season’s theme of Leading Voices, encourage audiences to examine how a composer’s perspective, experience, and identity are expressed through music.

March 26–28, 2020, the CSO School and Family Concerts will feature the World Premiere and CSO Co-commission of Mason Bates’ Philharmonia Fantastique: The Making of the Orchestra. The piece is a virtuosic concerto for orchestra and animated film. The piece zooms inside orchestral instruments to discover how sound is made and brings the instrument families together in a spectacular, pulsing finale.

To learn more about the CSO’s Negaunee Music Institute and all of its programs, visit cso.org/institute.
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is grateful for the generous support of this season’s major corporate sponsors.
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is rightly regarded as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. Northern Trust is committed to serving our communities and the arts, and we are proud to support—as we have for more than a half century—the CSO’s extraordinary tradition of musical excellence.

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ITW is proud to support the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and its long tradition of excellence in providing extraordinary classical music performances for audiences here in Chicago and around the world.

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From one Chicago tradition to another, Sidley Austin LLP congratulates the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on a successful 2019–20 season. We are proud to support an organization that has contributed so much to the rich heritage of our city. May the music continue to transform and inspire us all.

Sidley Austin LLP

Bank of America is proud to continue its long-standing support of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Our partnership not only delivers artistic quality but also helps to create meaningful connections with a diverse audience base in Chicago and around the world.

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Jenner & Block is proud to share the CSO’s passion for creativity, innovation and the pursuit of excellence. As a longtime CSO supporter, the firm looks forward to continuing to participate in the symphony’s rich tradition of musical excitement and unfolding artistry in Chicago and the many communities it touches in the United States and around the world.

Jenner & Block LLP

Allstate applauds the CSO for its commitment to enrich community and educational programs in our hometown of Chicago. We are a proud supporter of the Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO, as we believe that good starts young.

The Allstate Corporation
CSOA’s 30th Annual Corporate Night
June 3, 2019

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association’s thirtieth annual Corporate Night offered Chicago’s corporate community an opportunity to celebrate the many partners and leaders who support the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the arts across the city. Chaired by CSOA Trustee Scott C. Swanson, President of PNC Bank Illinois, Corporate Night featured a remarkable performance by Common and members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This year’s event on Monday, June 3, 2019, also included the third annual Excellence in Corporate Philanthropy Award presentation to ITW, a generous corporate partner of the CSOA for more than forty years. Prior to the concert, ITW Chairman and CEO Scott Santi was welcomed onstage to receive the award on behalf of the company. The event raised more than one million dollars in support of the CSOA’s artistic, education, and community engagement programs. The CSOA is grateful to Corporate Night Chairman Scott C. Swanson and League Co-chairs Sheila Jones and William Ward for their leadership and vision for this special celebration of the strong partnership between the CSOA and Chicago’s corporate community.

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Common Vocals
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William Ward

SAVE THE DATE
We hope that you will join us on MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020, for the 31st Annual Corporate Night! For more information, please contact corporate@cso.org or 312-294-3122.

LEFT TO RIGHT
Corporate Night League Co-chairs William Ward and Sheila Jones, Scott and Nancy Santi, Rhonda and Scott Swanson, CSOA Board Chair Helen Zell, former League President Mimi Duginger, and CSOA President Jeff Alexander
A brass quintet of musicians from the Civic Orchestra welcomed arriving guests on Michigan Avenue.
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Common performs selections from his compositions with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.
Banners recognizing CSOA corporate sponsors hang in Symphony Center’s rotunda above Civic Orchestra Fellow Pei-yeh Tsai at the piano.
Guests enjoy an energetic performance by Common.
Scott Swanson and Mimi Duginger present the Excellence in Corporate Philanthropy Award to Scott Santi.
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David Afkham Conductor

HAYDN

Symphony No. 44 in E Minor (Mourning)
Allegro con brio
Menuet: Allegretto, canon in diapason
Adagio
Presto

STRAUSS

Death and Transfiguration, Op. 24

INTERMISSION

BRAHMS

Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90
Allegro con brio
Andante
Poco allegretto
Allegro

These Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances are dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth M. Ashton, in grateful recognition of her legacy bequest.

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This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.
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These performances are dedicated to the memory of

**Elizabeth M. Ashton,**

in grateful recognition of her legacy bequest.
Joseph Haydn
Born March 31, 1732; Rohrau, Lower Austria
Died May 31, 1809; Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 44 in E Minor (Mourning)

It’s said that Haydn asked to have the Adagio from this E minor symphony played at his funeral. As it turned out, Vienna was conquered by Napoleon’s armies just two weeks before Haydn’s death, and, under the circumstances, little attention was paid to the passing of one of the city’s most distinguished citizens. Haydn was buried on June 1, 1809, with little fanfare and no music. When his death was more properly noted at a grand memorial service two weeks later, the music was Mozart’s Requiem.

Although Haydn’s request may be pure fiction, it has given the symphony a nickname—the Trauersinfonie, or symphony of mourning—that is quite appropriate. Certainly the E major Adagio movement Haydn singled out is as touching and poignant as any music written in the eighteenth century. The whole symphony is powerful and inspired. It’s one of Haydn’s finest works, and, like its numerical neighbor, no. 45, the Farewell, represents a high point in the most productive time of the composer’s life. In the early 1770s, Haydn wrote some sixteen symphonies, twelve string quartets, half a dozen piano sonatas, two masses, several operas, and a number of small—but not always insubstantial—works.

Composed
1772

First performance
1771–72

Instrumentation
Two oboes, bassoon, two horns, strings

Approximate performance time
22 minutes

First CSO performances
May 31 and June 1, 1973, Orchestra Hall. Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducting

Most recent CSO performances
November 28, 29, and 20, 2008, Orchestra Hall. Bernard Haitink conducting

Top to bottom
Joseph Haydn, oil portrait by Ludwig Guttenbrunn (1750–1819), ca. 1791–92, based on the composer’s likeness in 1770

View of the gardens at Schloss Esterházy in Eisenstadt, Austria, 1807—where Haydn was employed as kapellmeister—by Albert Christoph Dies (1755–1822), who also was an early biographer of the composer
The E minor symphony begins not in mourning, but with a strong, urgent unison theme marked Allegro con brio. (This familiar tempo marking, so common in Beethoven—it launches both the Eroica and Fifth symphonies—is rare in Haydn's extensive output.) Listen carefully to the first four notes, for they are the main ingredients of the movement and will turn up often, from the bottom of the bass line to the first violins. Like the symphony itself, this movement runs a wide emotional and dynamic range, with music as tempestuous as any Haydn had yet written, as well as pianissimo passages of a lovely tranquility.

Haydn usually has a good reason for putting the minuet second, before the slow movement; here it's an effective ray of sunshine between two darker movements. The minuet is a strict canon at the octave, played out between the top and bottom lines. (The low strings always appear to be lagging a measure behind.) The Adagio—as mournful as any music from this period written in a major key—creates its mood entirely with a few simple phrases from the strings. There is a lovely swelling of emotion when the winds enter, but the movement maintains its composer's mood to the end. Like the first movement, the finale also begins in unison—the first seven notes set the course for all that happens—and continues at a breakneck pace, filled with tension and a consistent high-excitement level rare in eighteenth-century music.

Richard Strauss
Born June 11, 1864; Munich, Germany
Died September 8, 1949; Garmisch, Germany

Death and Transfiguration, Op. 24

Shortly before he died at the age of eighty-five, Richard Strauss told his daughter-in-law that he wasn't afraid of death: it was just as he had composed it in Death and Transfiguration. Only a few months before, Strauss had read Joseph Eichendorff’s poem “Im Abendrot” (At sunset). When he came to the lines “How tired we are of wandering—could this perhaps be death?,” he took his pencil and jotted down the magnificent theme from Death and Transfiguration that he had written nearly sixty years earlier. And then, summing up his life's work, he wove it into the closing pages of his Eichendorff setting, now known as the last of the Four Last Songs.

It’s the Marschallin, in Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier, who says, “To be afraid of time is useless, for God, mindful of all his children, in his own wisdom created it.” But like the Marschallin, Strauss always heard the ticking of the clock, and he couldn’t help thinking about death. He claimed that from an early age he had wanted to compose music that followed the dying hours of a man who had reached toward the “highest ideal goals,” and who, in dying, sees his life passing before him.

In 1888, without a gray hair on his head and with another sixty years of life and music ahead of him, Strauss wrote knowingly of a man's last days on earth. It's a young man's view of death and a romantic vision of old age, scarcely touched by the chilling truths of infirmity and hopelessness, but it apparently still satisfied Strauss at the end of his own life. The first edition of the score, as well


STRAUSS IN CHICAGO

On March 31, 1904, founder and first music director Theodore Thomas introduced his friend Richard Strauss to the Chicago Orchestra at the Auditorium Theatre. Strauss went straight to work, rehearsing his Also sprach Zarathustra, Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks, and Death and Transfiguration. According to William Lines Hubbard’s account in the Chicago Tribune, halfway through the rehearsal the composer paused to say: “Gentlemen, it is my pleasure and my pride to be able to direct today so faultless an orchestra and to hear my music played in a manner so completely in accordance with my every wish. Your organization is a model in all ways, and I feel proud to be associated with an orchestra which has been brought to such perfection by a man whom I have honored and wished to know for full twenty years—Mr. Thomas.”

Following the Friday matinee performance on April 1, Hubbard wrote: “That master musician of modern music, that wonderful combination of poet, painter, and composer, the man to whom pictures are audible and tones visible—Richard Strauss—appeared at the Auditorium yesterday afternoon, and for over two hours some 3,700 persons sat beneath the spell his great gifts weave and listened to the tonal tales they enable him to tell. . . . The Orchestra was on its mettle, and a more superb technical presentation of the intensely difficult scores than it gave could not be desired. Every wish of the conductor was instantly responded to, and Dr. Strauss’s pleasure in the work done by the men was unmistakable.”

Of course, by then Chicago audiences were quite familiar with Strauss’s work, as Thomas had frequently programmed his friend’s music beginning with the first season in January 1892: the Horn Concerto no. 1 with principal Hermann Dutschke as soloist. Death and Transfiguration was first heard in February 1895, and Thomas also led the U.S. premieres of the Prelude to Guntram and Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks in November 1895, Also sprach Zarathustra in February 1897, Don Quixote in January 1899, and Ein Heldenleben in March 1900. For the inaugural concert in Orchestra Hall on December 14, 1904, Thomas again chose Death and Transfiguration—the most contemporary piece of music on a program that also included Beethoven, Handel, and Wagner.

Strauss returned to Chicago to lead a special concert at the Auditorium Theatre on December 18, 1921. He again conducted the Orchestra in his Also sprach Zarathustra, Death and Transfiguration, and the love scene from his opera Feuersnot, along with several songs—“Morgen!,” “Wiegenlied,” “Freundliche Vision,” and “Ständchen”—with soprano Claire Dux.

Frank Villella is the director of the Rosenthal Archives. For more information, please visit csoarchives.wordpress.com.

Theme from Death and Transfiguration in Strauss’s hand with the inscription “to beloved friends Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Thomas with constant gratitude and respect,” the April 3, 1904, entry from Rose Fay Thomas’s guest book (Theodore Thomas Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago)
as the earliest printed programs, included a poem by Alexander Ritter (a fervent Wagnerian who had married Wagner’s niece Julie) that was written after Strauss had finished the music and was offered as a literary guide to the piece. At the time, Strauss thought Ritter’s scenario indispensable to an understanding of the score, but the best guide is really the one the composer himself wrote in a letter to a friend in 1894:

It was about six years ago when the idea occurred to me to represent the death of a person who had striven for the highest ideal goals, therefore possibly an artist, in a tone poem. The sick man lies in bed asleep, breathing heavily and irregularly; agreeable dreams charm a smile on his features in spite of his suffering; his sleep becomes lighter; he wakens; once again he is racked by terrible pain, his limbs shake with fever—as the attack draws to a close and the pain subsides he reflects on his past life, his childhood passes before him, his youth with its striving, its passions, and then, while the pain resumes, the fruit of his path through life appears to him, the ideal, the ideal which he has tried to realize, to represent in his art, but which he has been unable to perfect, because it was not for any human being to perfect it. The hour of death approaches, and the soul leaves the body, in order to find perfected in the most glorious form in the eternal cosmos that which he could not fulfill here on earth.

A born opera composer, Strauss begins with a deathbed scene, dark and uncertain, and filled only with the sounds of the sick man’s faltering heartbeat. A sudden, convulsive passage, depicting the struggle with death, ultimately gives way to the work’s central theme, an impressive six-note motif characterized by an octave leap, which represents the artist’s ideals. The flood of memories begins pointedly with his storybook-like infancy. (“Childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies,” wrote Edna St. Vincent Millay, the once-popular poet who died the year after Strauss.) Strauss then moves on through youth, marvelously evoked by the self-confident swagger of the horns, to romances of such passion that their recollection brings on a spell of heart palpitations (rendered by the low brass and timpani). The hero revels in remembrance before there is one final, defiant moment of struggle. Death itself arrives accompanied by the solemn striking of the tam-tam. The transfiguration is like one of Strauss’s own great opera finales, weaving the work’s main themes together, through a series of moving climaxes, in music of radiant beauty.
Johannes Brahms
Born May 7, 1833; Hamburg, Germany
Died April 3, 1897; Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra played Brahms’s Third Symphony in its very first season. By then, Johannes Brahms, still very much alive, had stopped writing symphonic music. It was a time of tying up loose ends, finishing business, and clearing the desk. (At the end of that season, in the spring of 1892, Theodore Thomas, the Orchestra’s first music director, invited Brahms to come to Chicago for the upcoming World’s Columbian Exposition, but the composer declined, saying he didn’t want to make the long trip.) It’s hard today to imagine that Brahms’s Third Symphony was once a challenging work of contemporary music. Yet several hundred people walked out of the first Boston Symphony Orchestra performance in 1884, and the critic for the Boston Gazette called it “painfully dry, deliberate, and ungenial.” (It had been introduced to America a month before at one of Frank van der Stucken’s Novelty Concerts in New York.)

Even when Brahms’s music was new, it was hardly radical. Brahms was concerned with writing music worthy of standing next to that by Beethoven; it was this fear that kept him from placing the double bar at the end of his First Symphony for twenty years. Hugo Wolf, the adventuresome song composer, said, “Brahms writes symphonies regardless of what has happened in the meantime.” He didn’t mean that as a compliment, but it touches on an important truth: Brahms was the first composer to develop successfully Beethoven’s rigorous brand of symphonic thinking.

Hans Richter, a musician of considerable perception, called this F major symphony Brahms’s Eroica. There’s certainly something Beethovenesque about the way the music is developed from the most compact material, although the parallel with the monumental, expansive Eroica is puzzling, aside from the opening tempo (Allegro con brio) and the fact that they are both third symphonies. Brahms’s Third Symphony is his shortest and his most tightly knit. Its substance came to him in a relatively

COMPOSED
1882–83

FIRST PERFORMANCE
December 2, 1883; Vienna, Austria

INSTRUMENTATION
two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME
40 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES
April 22 and 23, 1892, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting
July 11, 1936, Ravinia Festival. Hans Lange conducting

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES
July 15, 2011, Ravinia Festival. Christoph von Dohnányi conducting
May 11, 12, and 13, 2017, Orchestra Hall. Riccardo Muti conducting
October 22, 2017, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles. Riccardo Muti conducting

CSO RECORDINGS
1940. Frederick Stock conducting. Columbia
1957. Fritz Reiner conducting. RCA
1976. James Levine conducting. RCA
1993. Daniel Barenboim conducting. Erato

ABOVE
Johannes Brahms, ca. 1880, chalk drawing by Olga von Miller zu Aichholz (1853–1931)
sudden spurt: it was mostly written in less than four months—a flash of inspiration compared to the twenty years he spent on his First Symphony. Brahms was enjoying a trip to the Rhine at the time, and he quickly rented a place in Wiesbaden, where he could work in peace, and canceled his plans to summer in Bad Ischl. The whole F major symphony was written nonstop.

The benefit of such compressed work is a thematic coherence and organic unity rare even in Brahms. Clara Schumann wrote to Brahms on February 11, 1884, after having spent hours playing through the work in its two-piano version: “All the movements seem to be of one piece, one beat of the heart.” Clara had been following Brahms’s career ever since the day he showed up at the door some thirty years earlier, asking to meet her famous husband Robert. By 1884, Robert Schumann—Brahms’s first staunch advocate—was long dead, and Brahms’s on-again-off-again infatuation with Clara was off for good. But she was still a dear friend, a musician of great insight, and a keen judge of his work.

Surely, in trying to get her hands around the three massive chords with which Brahms begins, Clara noted in the top voice the rising F, A-flat, F motive that had become Brahms’s monogram for “frei aber froh” (free but joyful), an optimistic response to the motto of his friend Joseph Joachim, “frei aber einsam” (free but lonely). It’s one of the few times in Brahms’s music that the notes mean something beyond themselves. That particular motive can be pointed out again and again throughout the symphony—it’s the bass line for the violin melody that follows in measures three and four, for example. Clara also can’t have missed the continual shifting back and forth from A-natural to A-flat, starting with the first three chords and again in the very first phrase of Brahms’s cascading violin melody. Since the half step from A-natural down to A-flat darkens F major into F minor, the preeminence of F major isn’t so certain in this music, even though we already know from the title that it will win in the end.

In four measures (and as many seconds), Brahms has laid his cards on the table. In the course of this movement and those that follow, we could trace, with growing fascination, the progress of that rising three-note motive, or the falling thirds of the violin theme, or the quicksilver shifts of major to minor that give this music its peculiar character. This is what Clara meant when she commented that “all the movements seem to be of one piece,” for, although Brahms’s connections are intricate and subtle, we sense their presence throughout.

For all its apparent beauty, Brahms’s Third Symphony hasn’t always been the most easily grasped of his works. Brahms doesn’t shake us by the shoulders as Beethoven so often did, even though the quality of his material and the logic of its development is up to the Beethovenian standards he set for himself. All four movements end quietly—try to name one other symphony of which that can be said—and some of its most powerful moments are so restrained that the tension is nearly unbearable.

Both the second and third movements hold back as much as they reveal. For long stretches, Brahms writes music that never rises above piano; when it does, the effect is always telling. The Andante abounds in beautiful writing for the clarinet, long one of Brahms’s favorite instruments. (The year the Chicago Symphony first played this symphony, Brahms met the clarinetist Richard
Mühlfeld, who inspired the composer’s last great instrumental works, the Clarinet Trio and the Clarinet Quintet.) The third movement opens with a wonderful arching theme for cello—another of the low, rich sounds Brahms favored—later taken up by the solo horn in a passage so fragile and transparent it overrules all the textbook comments about the excessive weight of Brahms’s writing.

There is weight and power in the finale, although it begins furtively in the shadows and evaporates into thin air some ten minutes later. The body of the movement is dramatic, forceful, and brilliantly designed. As the critic Donald Tovey writes in his famous essay on this symphony, “It needs either a close analysis or none at all.” The latter will save the sort of scrutiny that’s not possible in the concert hall, but two things do merit mention. The somber music in the trombones and bassoons very near the beginning is a theme from the middle of the third movement (precisely the sort of thematic reference we don’t associate with Brahms). And the choice of F minor for the key of this movement was determined as early as the fourth bar of the symphony, when the cloud of the minor mode crossed over the bold F major opening. Throughout the finale, the clouds return repeatedly (and often unexpectedly), and Brahms makes something of a cliffhanger out of the struggle between major and minor. The ending is a surprise, not because it settles comfortably into F major, but because, in a way that’s virtually unknown to the symphony before the twentieth century, it allows the music to unwind, all its energy spent, content with the memory of the symphony’s opening.

Phillip Huscher has been the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1987.

ABOVE
Clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld (1856–1907), a member of the Meiningen Court Orchestra and the inspiration for Brahms’s last instrumental works
David Afkham Conductor

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**

June 7, 2010, Orchestra Hall. Mozart’s Sinfonia concertante with Daniel Glynn, Sergey Gutorov, Andrew Thompson, and Anna Spina; and Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto with Philippe Quint (Appreciation Concert)

October 20, 21 and 22, 2016, Orchestra Hall. Beethoven’s Piano concerto no. 1 with Emanuel Ax and Shostakovich’s Symphony no. 10

David Afkham was recently named chief conductor and artistic director of the National Orchestra and Chorus of Spain, a post he took up in September 2019. The position builds on the success of his tenure as the orchestra’s principal conductor since 2014, which has featured critically acclaimed performances of Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder*, Mahler’s Sixth Symphony, Bruckner’s Ninth Symphony, Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*, Brahms’s *A German Requiem* and Haydn’s *The Creation* in addition to several world premieres and semi-staged projects such as Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman*, Strauss’s *Elektra*, Bach’s *Saint Matthew Passion*, and Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle*.

Born in Freiburg, Germany, David Afkham is one of the most sought-after conductors to emerge from Germany in recent years, in high demand as a guest conductor with some of the world’s finest orchestras and opera houses. Future highlights as guest conductor include returns to the Philadelphia Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Frankfurt and Swedish radio symphony orchestras, Orchestra of the National Academy of Saint Cecilia in Rome, and the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo; as well as debuts with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, and Dresden Philharmonic.

As an opera conductor, Afkham made a noted debut at Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2014 with Verdi’s *La traviata*, a production he later revived for performances around the United Kingdom and Ireland for Glyndebourne on Tour. In 2017, he conducted Ginastera’s *Bomarzo* at the Teatro Real in Madrid in a new production by Pierre Audi to unanimous critical acclaim, which led to an immediate return invitation. Last season, he made his German opera debut at Frankfurt Opera with Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, followed by *The Flying Dutchman* at Stuttgart Opera. He opened the 2019–20 season with Dvořák’s *Rusalka* at Theater an der Wien in Vienna. Future operas include Wagner’s *Parsifal*, Weinberg’s *The Passenger*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, and Strauss’s *Arabella*.

David Afkham began piano and violin lessons at the age of six. At fifteen, he entered the University of Music Freiburg to pursue studies in piano, music theory, and conducting and later continued at the University of Music Liszt in Weimar. He was the first recipient of the Bernard Haitink Fund for Young Talent and assisted Haitink in major projects including symphony cycles with the Chicago Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, and the London Symphony Orchestra. He was winner of the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition in London in 2008 and inaugural recipient of the Nestlé and Salzburg Festival Young Conductors Award in 2010. He was assistant conductor of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra from 2009 to 2012.
Now celebrating its 129th 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—the 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 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. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma served as the CSO's Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant from 2010 to 2019. In this role, he partnered with Riccardo Muti, staff, and musicians to provide 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 Louise H. Benton Wagner Chair currently is unoccupied.

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.

Assistant concertmasters are listed by seniority.

‡ On sabbatical
§ On leave

* Assistant concertmasters are listed by seniority.
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Wheaton College
Chris White
John Williams
WLS-FM
Wrigley Field
WXRT
Cynthia Yeh
Yuan-Qing Yu
Sam and Helen Zell

† Deceased
Italics indicate individual or family involvement as part of the Trustees or Governing Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association.
Gifts listed as of August 14, 2019

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The Ring Cycle
42nd Street
The Three Queens starring Sondra Radvanovsky
Sir Bryn Terfel in Recital
Blue

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