CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
RICCARDO MUTI
SYMPHONY CENTER PRESENTS

FEBRUARY–APRIL 2020
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FEBRUARY–APRIL 2020

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Welcome to Symphony Center, where we find musicians who constantly amaze us with their talents and enrich our lives with their performances.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti recently returned from the Orchestra’s sixty-second international tour. In eight European cities, six countries, and ten sold-out concerts, they cemented their reputation as one of the foremost interpreters of classical music and a cultural treasure from Chicago that is respected the world over. As one reviewer put it, “There are good orchestras . . . there are great orchestras. And then there is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.”

Riccardo Muti’s first Orchestra Hall concerts in 2020 include the highly anticipated performances of Mascagni’s Cavalleria rusticana, featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and a remarkable cast of soloists. Then Muti and the Orchestra depart for a tour of Florida, with concerts in Miami, Sarasota, and Naples. They return to continue the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth with performances of symphonies nos. 2 and 5. These concerts also include the world premiere of a CSO commission for solo bass clarinet and orchestra by Nicolas Bacri, entitled Ophelia’s Tears. In addition to concerts with Muti, the CSO welcomes to the podium several esteemed guest conductors this winter, including Hannu Lintu, Herbert Blomstedt, Valery Gergiev, André de Ridder, Nicholas Kraemer, Jakub Hrůša, Jaap van Zweden, and Emmanuel Krivine.

The Symphony Center Presents series also honors Beethoven in concerts with Emanuel Ax, Leonidas Kavakos, and Yo-Yo Ma performing three of his piano trios; Sir András Schiff in two recitals of Beethoven’s piano sonatas; and Mitsuko Uchida in a piano recital that includes the Diabelli Variations. In addition to the usual star-studded array of classical, jazz, and international artists, the SCP series presents, in collaboration with Lyric Opera of Chicago, soprano Renée Fleming and pianist Evgeny Kissin in a rare recital on April 19.

Our 2020–21 season has been announced, and you can review it in brochures available in the lobby and on cso.org. Subscribing allows you to take advantage of the best ticket prices and seats as well as special benefits such as discounts at the Symphony Store and Opus Restaurant and Café; access to special offers, presales, and events; preferred parking; and fee-free exchanges. Secure your seats for next season early, as tickets are selling fast!

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Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra recently completed a triumphant ten-concert tour that took them to eight cities in six countries, marking the CSO’s sixty-second international tour, its thirty-fourth tour to Europe, and eighth European tour with Riccardo Muti. With their stellar reputation preceding them, Muti and the Orchestra found sold-out venues and enthusiastic audiences eager to hear them perform at each location.

The repertoire featured during the tour highlighted works performed by Muti and the CSO during his ten years as music director. Prokofiev’s Symphony no. 3—a work that was included in Muti’s first international tour with the CSO in 2007—and his Suite from Romeo and Juliet—a work featured on a 2014 CSO Resound recording—were part of several programs (they were also performed at Carnegie Hall on November 16, 2019). In addition, Dvořák’s Symphony no. 9 (From the New World), Hindemith’s Mathis der Maler Symphony, and Wagner’s Overture to The Flying Dutchman, all performed during recent seasons, displayed the Orchestra’s talents.

The following photographs and press quotes offer a glimpse of this memorable tour.

“The fabulous Chicago Symphony and Riccardo Muti are artistically heart and soul.”
—KURIER, VIENNA

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is grateful to Bank of America, the International Tour Sponsor of the CSO for the 2019–20 season; United Airlines, the official airline of the CSO; and the Zell Family Foundation, which sponsored the Naples, Italy, performance on January 19.
“There are good orchestras . . . there are great orchestras. And then there is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.”  
—RHEINISCHE POST

“The Echo Chamber of the Soul”  
—FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

LEFT: Marking its first performance there since 2000, the CSO began the tour with a concert in Cologne, Germany, on January 9. Here is a fish-eye view of the Kölner Philharmonie as Muti and the CSO perform Prokofiev’s Symphony no. 3.

FIRST STOP: Cologne, Germany | Kölner Philharmonie

“Muti’s interpretation is brilliant in every respect. . . .”  
—DIE PRESSE*

“What makes metal in the Golden Hall shimmer—not the gold gilding the stucco walls, but the brass, for whose splendid sound this orchestra is rightly world-famous.”  
—SALZBURGER NACHRICHTEN

“Riccardo Muti brings salvation to the world . . . . If you hadn’t felt obliged to stand during the applause, you would have wanted to lie at his feet.”  
—WIENER ZEITUNG

“Muti and the fabulous orchestra grandly paid homage to a pandemoniac ideal of beauty.”  
—KURIER

LEFT TO RIGHT: Muti and the Orchestra returned to Vienna and the historic Musikverein to perform three concerts. The first, on January 11, included Wagner’s Overture to The Flying Dutchman, Wagner’s Mathis der Maler Symphony, and Prokofiev’s Symphony no. 3. Conductor Valery Gergiev and pianist Rudolf Buchbinder were two special guests in attendance.

Muti and the CSO also presented two performances of Verdi’s Messa da Requiem. The January 13 concert was part of a season-long celebration of the Musikverein’s 150th anniversary. In addition to multiple performances in Chicago, they have previously taken this work on international tours, performing it at the Musikverein in November 2014 and at Tokyo’s Bunka Kaikan in January 2019.

*See page 8 for an extended review from Die Presse.
“With a rich range of nuance and layering of voices, Muti and his orchestra offered a reading of exceptional clarity and sensitivity, emphasizing different instrumental timbres and underlining rhythmic games with a highly disciplined virtuosity that was flexible and full of playful liveliness.”

—LUXEMBURGER WORT

“An orchestra of astonishing unity, virtuosity, power, and refinement.”

—LE MONDE*

“The Chicago Symphony remains the most powerful orchestra in the world.”

—LE FIGARO

“Tonight, [Muti] offered a lesson in rigor, architecture, proportions, and articulation—as well as in what remains the maestro’s greatest secret: intensity through precision.”

—DIAPASON

TOP TO BOTTOM: On January 17, Muti conducted works by Wagner, Hindemith, and Dvořák at the Philharmonie de Paris. Organized by the CSO’s Negaunee Music Institute, ahead of their Paris concert at the Philharmonie de Paris, Concertmaster Robert Chen, Principal Percussion Cynthia Yeh, Principal Trumpet Esteban Batallán, Trombone Michael Mulcahy, and Principal Flute Stefán Ragnar Höskuldsson (seen here) gave master classes at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse.

*See page 8 for an extended review from Le Monde.
‘I am 100% Italian and 200% a man of the south,’ and so Riccardo Muti addresses the audience, all standing, at the end of the concert. The applause that envelopes him at the [Teatro di] San Carlo comes like molten lava, but what happened a few hours earlier, at the Nisida juvenile prison, is an experience that will last.”

—CORRIERE DELLA SERA

LEFT TO RIGHT: After the concert at Teatro di San Carlo, Maestro Muti and Cristina Mazzavillani Muti hosted CSO musicians and distinguished guests at a postconcert dinner. Muti is seen here greeting CSO Concertmaster Robert Chen, Bass Robert Kassinger, Horn James Smelser, Assistant Principal Cello Kenneth Olsen, and Associate Concertmaster Stephanie Jeong.

Joined by CSO Flute and Piccolo Jennifer Gunn, Bass Trombone Charles Vernon, and Principal Tuba Gene Pokorny, Maestro Muti presented an informal recital for young men and women at a juvenile justice center on the islet of Nisida. During his CSO tenure, Muti has made it his mission to bring music to correctional facilities. The program was presented by the Negaunee Music Institute, assisted by the administrative staff of the Teatro di San Carlo.

“What was most striking was the dazzling milky transparency of its thick sound (of each section), the dense homogeneity, the tonal balance, the flesh and blood under a velvet skin, and above all the fervent tension released by every note, every phrase. . . . This, if anything, is a function of the overall architectural design. And if so, it is due to Muti . . . with the awareness that music is primarily a cultural fact, something urgent and vital for those who make it and listen to it.”

—LA REPUBBLICA

SEVENTH STOP: Milan, Italy | Teatro alla Scala

It is a celebrated occasion when Riccardo Muti returns to Teatro alla Scala, where he was music director from 1986 to 2005. This January 22 performance with the CSO was no exception. See page 9.

EIGHTH STOP: Lugano, Switzerland | LAC Sala Teatro

The tour concluded with a debut appearance for Muti and the Orchestra in Lugano, Switzerland, in LAC’s Sala Teatro, the center for contemporary art and culture that opened in 2015. The intimacy of the hall and its wooden interior makes for an exceptional acoustic experience.
Verdi’s Funeral Mass, Newly Interpreted by Muti
WALTER WEIDRINGER, DIE PRESSE, JANUARY 14, 2020

In his Messa da Requiem, Verdi expressed the fears and doubts of modern man in music. Muti and his orchestra were celebrated with standing ovations for their interpretation of the work in this manner.

When Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra interpret Verdi’s Requiem in the Musikverein, together with the Wiener Singverein and prominent soloists, then this not only turns into an event that is cheered by both voice aficionados and orchestral connoisseurs, but it also amounts to a musical reassessment of the often-played work in every possible regard. . . . In all of this, Muti sets the standards that he has meticulously derived from Verdi’s scores and commentaries—and of course, also from his operas.

. . . In another sense, we remain consistently attached to mother earth, when, as it were, the dramatically sublime and the deeply profound come together. Muti’s interpretation reveals the reason for this, namely that Verdi did not write this funeral mass to comfort the bereaved and to increase confidence in life after death, but to express the fears and doubts of modern man.

. . . The Chicago Symphony Orchestra—both brilliant and supple in all sections, with striking accompaniment from the strings and sobbing woodwinds—demonstrates how to roll out the red carpet for these voices without degenerating into a mere backdrop . . .

Translation by Marc Falkenberg

Triumph for Riccardo Muti at the Philharmonie de Paris
MARIE-AUDE ROUX, LE MONDE, JANUARY 18, 2020

. . . One expects every performance by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, one of the world’s most acclaimed ensembles—the best according to the rankings published by the highly respected Gramophone magazine—to feel like a jolt of electricity. And that was true from the opening bars of the Overture to The Flying Dutchman, Wagner’s opera about a ghostly sea captain eternally cursed to roam the stormy seas. Brassy waves smacked and splashed foam up to the ceiling of the Philharmonie de Paris, whose plush acoustics valiantly withstood the tempest.

At the battleship’s helm stood Riccardo Muti, casting a silhouette of a much younger man, despite his seventy-nine years (he was born in Naples in 1941), and commanding the elements with a ramrod-straight back and measured gestures. The CSO is capable of impressive strength, yes—but it’s also an orchestra that plays with astonishing unity, virtuosity, power, and refinement. . . .

Translation by Roderick Branch
At Teatro alla Scala, where all the illustrious orchestras have visited, there’s no doubt that today the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is the orchestra with the most magnificent and luxurious engine—and the most modern. Magnificence, perfection, and discipline are accomplished autonomously. . . . [The members of the Orchestra are] completely focused on the music. All this, even before the entrance of Concertmaster Robert Chen, as always, the perfect combination of stability and class. Impeccable. Even the tuning is a prediction of the end result. Essential, brief. No rowdy eagerness.

We see the wonderful 100 members in every detail. They’ve been on tour in Europe for two weeks, at their ninth concert in a row, and yet they sound fresh, overflowing with energy.

. . . This is the secret of the CSO: it’s a spaceship. It lands on the stage and distributes its treasures like a Pandora’s box. The excellence of its musicians is extraordinary. But its style is standard and sober, in the way it presents itself to the audience. In a time of hippy orchestras, with tiny, mosquito-like sounds, it’s the opposite: no effervescence, but a refined technique and an immense sound. It’s the result of its integrity, of every section, blending and balancing each other. These musicians are the most beautiful engine around. They teach all of us a lesson on the potential of being a team. A real team.

But the surge of “modernity” that this orchestra poured into the theater was the real revelation of the CSO concert at La Scala on Wednesday, the last stop of the Italian trio, after San Carlo in Naples and Maggio in Florence, and before the final stop at LAC in Lugano. Wagner, Hindemith, and Prokofiev seemed like music from another world. By listening to them, so expansive, rich, grandiose, one had the impression—especially with the two twentieth century pieces—of an unveiling of repertoire. Riccardo Muti alone piloted them here to the present, leaving the audience enchanted and transfixed (not a cough, unbelievably).

. . . Muti, with his Chicago orchestra, showed that some become more modern with time, probably because of their classical heritage. So, in each of the three pieces, a special feature emerged that identified it. In other words, every piece was the narrative of the composer, in that particular moment of his life. . . .

Translation by Claudia Zanella
No. 4: National and International Tours
Riccardo Muti has embraced the Chicago Symphony’s touring legacy and reinforced the Orchestra’s reputation as a cultural ambassador on more than ten tours including several domestic tours, such as those to the East and West coasts, multiple visits to Carnegie Hall, among other national venues; five European tours; and two tours to Asia. Before assuming the role of music director, Muti returned to lead the CSO in September 2007 in a month-long residency that included subscription concerts and a triumphant seven-city, nine-concert European tour that featured the Orchestra’s first appearances in Italy in over twenty-five years. The renewed artistic partnership, one that began with Muti’s CSO podium debut at the Ravinia Festival in 1973, led to the appointment of Muti as the CSO’s tenth music director.

Here is a selection of photographs and press quotes that reflect the incredible impact Muti and the Orchestra have made during their travels together.

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.

“...to hear [Otello] performed in concert by this superb orchestra. The nuances of the playing came through vividly: the quartet of plush solo cellos during the love duet, the beautiful interplay of woodwinds in the mournful orchestral opening of act 4, and much more.”
—The New York Times
From August 22 to September 7, 2011, Muti and the CSO traveled on their first European tour together since his appointment as music director. The tour included performances at the Salzburg, Lucerne, and Dresden music festivals and in Luxembourg at the Philharmonie, in Paris at the Salle Pleyel, and in Vienna at the Musikverein. Seen here is the August 26 concert at the Salzburg Grosses Festspielhaus.

“The audience response: foot-stomping on the wooden floor and, with Muti and the orchestra's third bow, a standing ovation. ‘It wasn’t the usual reaction of the audience,’ [Jan] Vogler [director of the Dresden Music Festival] said. “It’s usually a conservative and quiet audience. I think they were really in heaven.’”

—Chicago Tribune

February 14–19, 2012, the CSO returned to California for the first time in twenty-five years for concerts in San Francisco, Costa Mesa, Palm Desert, and San Diego. The February 2012 tour included the West Coast premieres of pieces by CSO Mead Composers-in-Residence Mason Bates and Anna Clyne. Here Muti and Clyne take a bow at Davies Hall on February 15 following a performance of Night Ferry.

“Through both concerts, Muti’s marvelously hands-on, total and constant involvement with every element of the music, every member of the orchestra amazed and delighted.”

—San Francisco Classical Voice

The April 2012 European tour with Maestro Muti marked the CSO’s first appearances in Russia (Moscow and Saint Petersburg) in more than two decades and included debuts in Naples, Brescia, and Ravenna, Italy. Seen here, a standing ovation for Muti and the CSO following their performance in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory on April 18.

“The audience of nearly five thousand in the Pala de Andrè [Ravenna] was in paradise. One has the impression that the orchestra’s power and gradation of sound are limitless, to which Muti has added clarity and transparency of sound.”

—Il Giornale
Engaging with the public beyond the stage has always been a priority for Muti and the Orchestra. Here Muti shakes the hand of a young man in Tokyo at a CD signing during his first tour to Asia with the CSO, which included ten sold-out concerts in Taipei, Tokyo, Shanghai, Beijing, and Seoul in the winter of 2016.

“Such mastery!”
—Asahi Shimbun

On the Fall 2014 European Tour, Muti conducted the CSO’s debuts in Warsaw, Poland, and Geneva, Switzerland, in addition to performances in Luxembourg, Paris, and a week-long residency at the Musikverein in Vienna, which included two performances of Verdi’s Requiem and two additional orchestral programs. Seen here is the standing ovation following the October 20 debut in Warsaw.

“To say that this concert by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and its charismatic leader will find a place in our history books would be an understatement . . .”
—Tribune de Genève

On their fifth international tour together, Muti conducted the CSO’s debut in Spain’s Canary Islands—in Las Palmas (seen here, January 10, 2014), the capital of Gran Canaria, and in Santa Cruz de Tenerife—opening the thirtieth Canary Islands Music Festival.

“. . . and what concerts! Impressive, moving, radiant. . . . I’m at a loss for words. The combination of Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is something close to miraculous.”
—El País

The Fall 2015 National Tour also included concerts at Carnegie Hall; the Carolina Performing Arts Memorial Hall in Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and the Kauffman Center (seen here, October 27) in Kansas City, Missouri.

“Muti is a true genius of the podium.”
—The Kansas City Star
“Muti channeled that excitement into rapt, almost reverent attention with a searing performance of a dramatic work that is very close to his heart.”

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

“A probing performance of a work Muti rightly termed ‘a masterpiece.’”

CHICAGO TRIBUNE
In February 2018, following concerts in New York and Washington, D.C., Muti and the CSO traveled to Florida. Seen here, Muti conducts at Hayes Hall in Naples, Florida, on February 12. The success of these concerts led to the foundation of an annual residency for the Orchestra with Artis—Naples.

“Riccardo Muti embraces CSO Concertmaster Robert Chen and shares a laugh with the Orchestra during the first rehearsal of their second tour to Asia on January 19, 2019.

“It seems that after nearly ten years in the group, Muti and the orchestra have now established a kind of tacit understanding, and he has fully integrated his decades of artistic ideas into the deep tradition of the group.”

—Wenhui Daily News

In addition to concerts in Taipei, Shanghai, Beijing, and Osaka, Muti led the CSO, soloists, and the Tokyo Opera Singers chorus in two performances of Verdi’s Requiem during a residency at the Bunka Kaikan in Tokyo on January 31 (seen here) and February 2, following a performance of Brahms’s symphonies nos. 1 and 2 on January 30. Verdi’s Requiem was a dramatic conclusion to Muti’s second tour to Asia with the CSO in 2019.

“The CSO showcased its wide range of expression under the baton of Riccardo Muti. In sensitive movements, there were colors and nuances, and in tutti, glorious sounds filled the hall.” —Nikkei

“Riccardo Muti conducted his 350th performance with the CSO on February 7, 2018, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the first stop of the 2018 East Coast Tour.

“[An] evening that offered a taste of what a really great orchestra sounds like.”

—Washington Post
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During his tenure as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s eighth music director, Sir Georg Solti led the Orchestra and Chorus (under the direction of Margaret Hillis) in recordings of several of Beethoven’s works for London Records: two symphony cycles; the piano concertos with Vladimir Ashkenazy as soloist; the opera Fidelio; Missa solemnis; and the Coriolan, Egmont (twice), and Leonore no. 3 (twice) overtures.
In July 1942, second music director Frederick Stock led his final recording sessions with the Orchestra—Beethoven’s Fourth and Fifth piano concertos with Artur Schnabel, a foremost interpreter of the composer’s works—for Victor Records in Orchestra Hall.

Sixth music director Fritz Reiner led the Orchestra in sessions of the composer’s Third Symphony in 1954. He also conducted the ensemble in recordings of the First (1961), Fifth (1959), Sixth (1961), and Seventh (1955); along with the Ninth (1961), featuring the Chicago Symphony Chorus prepared by Margaret Hillis. Reiner also led the Orchestra in recordings of the Fourth and Fifth piano concertos with Van Cliburn, as well as the Coriolan and Fidelio overtures, all for RCA.
Celebrating a Century: The Civic Orchestra of Chicago Turns 100

Second music director Frederick Stock founded the Civic Music Student Orchestra during the 1919–20 season, and the original objective continues to resonate: “To give an opportunity to capable players to acquire orchestral routine and experience, fitting themselves for positions in the symphony orchestras of the country [and] to take orchestral concerts to outlying districts. . . .”

This spring, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, still the CSO’s prestigious training ensemble, celebrates its 100th anniversary with special events. To mark its centennial, two programs will be led by Civic Orchestra Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur. On Sunday, March 1, the Civic Centennial Celebration Benefit Concert features cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Additionally, there will be a special Anniversary Concert on Sunday, March 29, that includes Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony, which was performed on the Civic Orchestra's inaugural concert on that same date, 100 years ago.

**CIVIC CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION BENEFIT CONCERT** March 1, 2020

Presented by the Negaunee Music Institute, the League, and the Women’s Board of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, the Civic Centennial Celebration celebrates all those that comprise the fabric of the Civic community, including alumni, supporters, leadership, and, of course, the current musicians.

“I congratulate the Civic Orchestra of Chicago on its centennial and commend all who are part of its legacy—past, present, and future,” said Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti. “Providing a strong future for music has
remained at the core of this ensemble of young artists. They are the hope for the preservation of our culture and represent its highest ideals.”

The concert features Yo-Yo Ma as soloist in Dvořák’s Cello Concerto. Ma served as the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant from 2010 through 2019 and has long advocated for the Civic Orchestra’s musicians and mission. “I have had the wonderful experience of working with so many young people through the Civic Orchestra,” said Ma. “Together, we have thought through the stage in between student and professional life and explored what it means to be a musician, a citizen, and to serve our communities. We have talked about what it means to be a member of a larger group that truly, deeply collaborates, and at the same time act as an individual leader to start something new.”

The weekend also features Masur leading a private reading session where past and current members will gather onstage in Orchestra Hall with Ma as the special guest. Other alumni weekend events include attending a CSO concert as well as a Q&A session with notable alumni, such as violinist Rachel Barton Pine and current members of the CSO.

CIVIC ANNIVERSARY CONCERT
March 29, 2020

Ken-David Masur leads the Civic in its Anniversary Concert, held 100 years to the day of the ensemble’s first performance. This special program opens with Sinfonia (for Orbiting Spheres), a 2013 work by CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Missy Mazzoli, which mimics the shape of a solar system. CSO Horns Oto Carrillo, Daniel Gingrich, David Griffin, and James Smelser—all are Civic Orchestra alumni—appear as soloists in Schumann’s virtuosic Konzertstück for Four Horns and Orchestra, and Tchaikovsky’s Symphony no. 5 closes the program with its colorful orchestration and popular second-movement theme.

“If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people.”

—CONFUCIUS
Associate Principal Horn Daniel Gingrich. “It was a tremendous opportunity for me. As a member of Civic, I was coached by Dale Clevenger, long-time principal horn of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Being able to study with Chicago Symphony musicians really catapulted my career, beyond what I could have expected anywhere else.” The kismet of his current mentorship role with Civic is not lost on Gingrich. “I love that things have come full circle and I am able to be the horn coach. [It’s great to] see more young people learning and getting this experience and, hopefully, being able to go on and enjoy a life in music, the way I have.”

THE CIVIC ORCHESTRA’S LEGACY

More than 7,000 musicians have been members of the Civic Orchestra, and many have gone on to perform with the finest ensembles in the world. Over 160 alumni have become members of the CSO—including fourteen in the current roster.

Today’s Civic members experience an in-depth study of orchestral repertoire, perform as an orchestra and in chamber ensembles, and participate in the co-creation and implementation of their own musical projects throughout the community. It is a curriculum designed to produce well-rounded musicians for the modern orchestral landscape—a philosophy emphasized under the leadership of Riccardo Muti.

“That the word ‘civic’ is part of this orchestra’s name is symbolic. It indicates that the musician is both a reflection of his or her society and one who can serve and lead within the community,” said Muti, who will lead his sixteenth open rehearsal with the orchestra on April 27. “Music has the ability to bring people together: people who do not speak the same language and otherwise would not understand each other in terms of culture, ethnicity, or religion. Music is our greatest tool. In this orchestra, musicians are instilled with the fundamental civic principles of a participatory, respectful society. All contribute to the total harmony.”

To learn more about the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, visit cso.org/civic.
whether in Orchestra Hall or in your own home. At Montgomery Place, residents plan their own concerts and lectures—and still find time for Maestro Muti.

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The atmosphere was festive as the League of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association celebrated the tenth annual *Fall in Love with Music* fundraising event on November 8, 2019, in the Lincoln Ballroom of the Union League Club. CSO Associate Concertmaster Stephanie Jeong and Assistant Principal Cello Kenneth Olsen performed Handel’s *Passacaglia*, a virtuoso piece for violin and cello arranged by Johan Halvorsen. Next, guests enjoyed a fascinating discussion with the featured speaker, Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti, and Phillip Huscher, the CSOA’s Scholar-in-Residence and Program Annotator. Under the leadership of co-chairs Cheryl Istvan and Amy Boonstra, this season’s *Fall in Love with Music* exceeded its goal and raised over $75,000. Event proceeds support the many outstanding educational and community engagement programs of the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the League of the CSOA, such as Adventures in Music, CSO open rehearsals for seniors and veterans, to name a few.

Clockwise from top: CSO Associate Concertmaster Stephanie Jeong and Assistant Principal Cello Kenneth Olsen embrace following their performance.

Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti and Phillip Huscher, the CSOA’s Scholar-in-Residence and Program Annotator, engage with the audience.

Sue Bridge, President, League of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, addresses the room.
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 for more information.

The LEAGUE works on fundraising events, educational programs, and social activities to support the CSO while building camaraderie with fellow members. Email wardw@cso.org for further information.

The WOMEN’S BOARD promotes the CSO’s artistic excellence and exemplary educational programming by engaging women leaders in advocacy and fundraising efforts, including the CSO’s annual Symphony Ball. Email Kim Duffy at duffyk@cso.org for further information.

The OVERTURE COUNCIL is a dynamic group of Chicago young professionals aged 21–45 who have a love of music and a desire to learn more about how to support the CSO. Email overturecouncil@cso.org for more information.

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In anticipation of the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth on December 17, 2020, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Center Presents join the entire musical world in celebrating this momentous milestone throughout the 2019–20 season. Symphony Center is thrilled to present a complete cycle of Beethoven’s thirty-two piano sonatas performed by six outstanding pianists over eight concerts in the first complete cycle of these works in Orchestra Hall since Daniel Barenboim’s eight-concert traversal during the 1985–86 season.

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—Ludwig van Beethoven
Sunday, February 16, 2020, at 3:00

Piano Series

YUJA WANG

**GALUPPI**  
Andante from Sonata No. 5 in C Major

**BACH**  
Toccata in C Minor, BWV 911

**BRAHMS**  
Intermezzo in A Minor, Op. 116, No. 2

**CHOPIN**  
Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 67, No. 4

**BRAHMS**  
Intermezzo in E Minor, Op. 119, No. 2

**CHOPIN**  
Mazurka in C-sharp Minor, Op. 30, No. 4

**BRAHMS**  
Intermezzo in C-sharp Minor, Op. 117, No. 3

**CHOPIN**  
Mazurka in F Major, Op. 68, No. 3

**BRAHMS**  
Romance in F Major, Op. 118, No. 5

**INTERMISSION**

**SCRIABIN**  
Sonata No. 4 in F-sharp Major, Op. 30  
Andante—Prestissimo volando

**RAVEL**  
Une barque sur l’océan from *Miroirs*

**BERG**  
Sonata, Op. 1

**MOMPOU**  
Secreto from *Impressions íntimes*

**SCRIABIN**  
Sonata No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Op. 53

This performance is made possible in part by a generous endowment gift from the estate of Halina J. Presley.

This performance is made possible in part by Carol Honigberg, in memory of Joel Honigberg.
Baldassare Galuppi’s importance in the eighteenth-century’s radical evolution of musical taste is in almost precisely inverse proportion to his notoriety today. He was an influential agent of change from the deeply expressive profundities of the baroque (he was born in Venice in 1706, when Bach was just beginning his first job, as organist in Arnstadt) to the elegant reserve of high classicism (he died in 1785, the zenith of Mozart’s career in Vienna) but is now almost unknown. Galuppi received his early musical instruction from his father, a barber and theater violinist living on the island of Burano, in the Venetian lagoon. He took his formal training with Antonio Lotti, principal organist at San Marco, and by the age of twenty had established himself as a harpsichordist in the Venetian theaters and started to compose. His first attempt at an opera, written before his studies with Lotti, did not succeed, but Dorinda of 1729 did, and it set the direction for a career that would make him one of the most popular and widely performed composers of his day.

Galuppi was based in Venice throughout his life—his works were regularly produced at the city’s theaters and across Italy. He taught at the Ospedale dei Mendicanti and Ospedale degli Incurabili (girls’ orphanages with rigorous programs of music education for their wards), and served as vice-maestro and later as maestro di coro at San Marco, for which he composed a great deal of service music (as well as thirty Latin oratorios for the ospedali). He also held extended residencies at King’s Theatre in London and at the court of Catherine the Great in Saint Petersburg. Galuppi wrote more than 100 operas, both historical/mythological opera seria and dramma giocoso, a genre mixing dramatic and comic elements that he did much to develop. (Mozart adopted that designation for Don Giovanni and also used the model of Galuppi’s ensemble finales to close many acts of his operas.) In The Present State of Music in France and Italy (1771), Charles Burney, the peripatetic English chronicler of the music of his day, wrote, “Among the natives of Venice, no professor of the present century has contributed more copiously to the delight of his fellow citizens, and lovers of Music in general, than Baldassare Galuppi.” When Galuppi died, the city’s musicians showed their respect by establishing a fund to pay for his elaborate funeral mass at Santo Stefano.

Galuppi was best known for his many operatic and sacred works, but he also composed numerous sinfonias, “concerti a quattro” for strings and continuo, and keyboard pieces, including some 130 sonatas in one to three movements. Galuppi was noted for his skill as a harpsichordist, but he geared these works, with their modest technical requirements and ingratiating style, to the growing market of home music-makers. Though the dates of pieces are mostly unknown, he apparently composed them throughout his life, including one the year he died; none were published before 1750. The three-movement Sonata in C major (no. 27 in Heda Illy Vignanelli’s pioneering 1969 catalog of Galuppi’s works) opens with a sweet-natured, lightly textured andante.
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
Born March 21, 1685; Eisenach, Germany
Died July 28, 1750; Leipzig, Germany

Toccata in C Minor, BWV 911

The genre of the toccata in Germany traces its roots to at least the fifteenth century, when the title was used to designate independent keyboard pieces not based on dance types, canti firmi (i.e., borrowed melodies), or vocal models. The term was derived from the Italian word toccare (to touch) and indicates a style intended to exhibit the player’s virtuosity and manual dexterity. Toccatas continued to be composed in Italy and the northern countries through the following century, when they often incorporated contrasting passages in fugal and free idioms. This type of work reached its zenith in the elaborate and often dramatic organ compositions of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583, Ferrara–1643, Rome). Later in the baroque era, the toccata was marked mainly by its rhapsodic, sometimes flamboyant nature and almost incessant rhythmic animation; Johann Sebastian Bach’s toccatas—five for organ and seven for harpsichord, as well as others incorporated into multi-movement works—are the most magnificent eighteenth-century examples of the species. Little attention was paid to the genre during the century after Bach, though Muzio Clementi resurrected the toccata form in his eponymous piano piece of 1784 (op. 11) and Schumann wrote a splendid example (op. 7) in 1830. Debussy and Ravel enlisted the toccata to lend a certain archaism to, respectively, Pour le piano and Le tombeau de Couperin (the keyboard version), and Prokofiev wrote a toccata as his op. 11 in 1912. Respighi, Vaughan Williams, Reger, Honegger, Casella, Busoni, Martinů, and Irving Fine also contributed to the twentieth-century toccata repertory.

Bach’s dozen independent toccatas are products of his tenure as organist and chamber musician at the court of Weimar between 1708 and 1717. As was typical of the genre, the C minor toccata, composed around 1710, encompasses a number of contrasting sections, some seemingly improvisatory, some precisely rhythmic, but is largely devoted to a fantasia upon a long theme whose apparent melodic naïveté Bach used for a remarkable display of invention and contrapuntal mastery.
JOHANNES BRAHMS
Born May 7, 1833; Hamburg, Germany
Died April 3, 1897; Vienna, Austria

Four Piano Pieces

Brahms was a gifted pianist who toured and concertized extensively in northern Europe early in his career. He made his recital debut in Vienna in 1862, and returned there regularly until settling permanently in that city in 1869. By then, his reputation as a composer was well established, and he was devoting more time to creative work than to practicing piano. He continued to play, however, performing his own chamber music and solo pieces both in public and in private, and even serving as soloist in the premiere of his daunting Second Concerto on November 9, 1881, in Budapest. His last public appearance as a pianist was in Vienna on January 11, 1895, just two years before he died, in a performance of his clarinet sonatas with Richard Mühlfeld.

Brahms’s pianism was noted less for its flashy virtuosity than for its rich emotional expression, fluency, individuality, nearly orchestral sonority, and remarkable immediacy, and his compositions for the instrument are marked by the same introspection, seriousness of purpose, and deep musicality that characterized his playing. His keyboard output, though considerable, falls into three distinct periods: an early burst of large-scale works mostly in classical forms (1851–53: three sonatas, opp. 1, 2 and 5; Scherzo in E-flat minor, op. 4; and four ballades, op. 10); a flurry of imposing compositions in variations form from 1854 to 1863 on themes by Schumann, Haydn, Handel, and Paganini; and a late blossoming of thirty succinct capriccios, intermezzos, ballades, and rhapsodies from 1878–79 and 1892–93 issued as opp. 76, 79, 116, 117, 118, and 119. To these must be added the dance-inspired compositions of the late 1860s: the waltzes (op. 39) and Hungarian Dances. Brahms’s late works, most notably those from 1892 and 1893, share the autumnal quality that marks much of the music of his ripest maturity.

The hesitant phrases of the Intermezzo in A minor (1892, op. 116, no. 2) give the music a ruminative quality that is thrown into expressive relief by the movement’s animated central episode. The agitated outer portions of the Intermezzo in E minor, op. 119, no. 2 (1892) are perfectly balanced by the gentle waltz at the center not just in mood and style, but also through the use of the same theme in different guises for both sections.

Brahms headed the Intermezzo in E-flat major, op. 117, no. 1 (1892), the most gentle of his piano pieces, with a German translation from Johann Gottfried Herder’s late eighteenth-century folksong collections of lines from an old Scottish song known as “Lady Anne Bothwell’s Lament,” with its refrain “Schlaf sanft mein Kind, schlaf sanft und schön! Mich dauert’s sehr, dich weinen seh’n” (Sleep softly my child, sleep softly and well! It fills me with regret to see you cry). The original text is thought to tell the sad tale of Lady Anne Bothwell, daughter of a sixteenth-century bishop of Orkney, who was seduced by a young nobleman and abandoned with an infant. Herder’s verse has also been associated
with the **Intermezzo in C-sharp minor** (op. 117, no. 3), but so has Longfellow’s 1855 poem “Victor Galbraith,” which recounts the execution by firing squad of a disgraced bugler from Middletown, Ohio, during the Mexican War of 1846–48. The Romance in F major is the most untroubled and consoling movement of the op. 118 set, which Brahms composed shortly after suffering the deaths of his sister Elise and his friend and faithful correspondent Elisabeth von Herzogenberg.

**FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN**

Born February 22, 1810; Zelazowa-Wola, Poland  
Died October 17, 1849; Paris, France

### Three Mazurkas

The mazurka originated in Chopin’s home district of Mazovia sometime during the seventeenth-century. Rather a family of related musical forms than a single set type, the mazurka could be sung or danced, performed fast or languidly, and, when danced, given many variations on the few basic steps of the pattern. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when its popularity spread throughout Europe, the mazurka was characterized by its triple meter, frequent use of unusual scales, variety of moods, and occasional rhythmic syncopations. Of Chopin’s fifty-six mazurkas, forty-one of which were published during his lifetime, G.C. Ashton Jonson wrote, “In his hands, the mazurka ceased to be an actual dance tune, and became a tone poem, a mirror of moods, an epitome of human emotions, joy and sadness, love and hate, tenderness and defiance, coquetry, and passion.” The expressive range of the mazurkas is wider than that of any other group of his compositions; it is said that he never played any of the mazurkas the same way twice. They contain Chopin’s most intimate thoughts, and are moving reminders that this famous Polish émigré lived virtually his entire life away from his native land.

The four mazurkas of op. 67 were among some three dozen previously unpublished songs and piano pieces that the Berlin publisher Adolph Schlesinger issued in 1855, six years after Chopin’s death. The soulful, chromatic **Mazurka in A minor, op. 67, no. 4**, was composed in 1846, when Chopin’s health was beginning to fail from tuberculosis and his relationship with the flamboyant George Sand was beginning to unravel. Their split the following year marked the virtual extinction of his creative career—he composed just three waltzes, three mazurkas, and a single song between the summer of 1846 and his death three years later.

The four mazurkas of op. 30 were composed in 1836–37 and dedicated upon their publication by Schlesinger in Paris in December 1837 to the princess of Würtemberg, née Marcelline Czartoryska, one of Chopin’s pupils and leading patrons. The closing mazurka of op. 30 (**Mazurka in C-sharp minor**) is harmonically daring enough that it seems to look forward a half century to the pastel impressionism of Claude Debussy.

The four mazurkas of op. 68 were among some three dozen previously unpublished songs and piano pieces that Schlesinger issued in 1855. The noble music of the outer sections of the **Mazurka in F major, op. 68, no. 3** (1829) surround an exotic central episode that Chopin may have based on a lost peasant dance tune known as “Oj Magdalino.”
ALEXANDER S C R I A B I N
Born January 6, 1872; Moscow, Russia
Died April 27, 1915; Moscow, Russia

Sonata No. 4 in F-sharp Major, Op. 30

“The Muscovite seer,” “the Russian musical mystic,” “the clearest case of artistic egomania in the chronicles of music”: Alexander Scriabin was one of the most unusual of all composers. Living in the generation between Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev, he showed an early talent for music and trod the accepted path of lessons, conservatory training, and teaching. His visions, however, refused to be channeled into the conventional forms of artistic expression, and he developed a style and a philosophy that were unique.

Scriabin’s life was shaken by several significant changes around 1902, when he resigned from the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory to devote himself to composition and to rumination, and left his first wife to take up with another woman. From that time on, Scriabin bent his music ever more forcibly to expressing his dizzying world vision. He believed that humankind was approaching a final cataclysm from which a nobler race would emerge, with himself playing some exalted but ill-defined messianic role in the new order. (He welcomed the beginning of World War I as the fulfillment of his prophecy.) As the transition through this apocalypse, Scriabin posited an enormous ritual that would purge humanity and make it fit for the millennium. He felt that he was divinely called to create this ritual, this “Mysterium” as he called it, and he spent the last twelve years of his life concocting ideas for its realization. Scriabin’s mammoth “Mysterium” was to be performed in a specially built temple in India (a country in which he never set foot), and was to include music, mime, fragrance, light, sculpture, costume, etc., which were to represent the history of man from the dawn of time to the ultimate world convulsion. He even imagined a language of sighs and groans that would express feelings not translatable into mere words.

He whipped all these fantasies together with a seething sexuality to create a vision of whirling emotional ferment quite unlike anything else in the history of music or any other art. In describing the Poem of Ecstasy to his friend Ivan Lipaev he said, “When you listen to it, look straight into the eye of the Sun!”

The Sonata no. 4 was composed in the crucial year of 1903, when Scriabin began to demonstrate the unique harmonic language built on daring, far-flung combinations of intervals that define conventional theory that came to be his characteristic musical speech. The two-movement Fourth Sonata opens with a dreamy meditation based on a gently upward-leaping theme and a brief answering motive built from scale steps; the leaping theme...
remains dominant. The sonata-form Prestissimo volando (as fast as possible, flying), which follows without pause, takes as its main theme a motive in quick, nervous, interrupted rhythms, and as its second subject a broad idea ascending in chromatic half-steps. The development section treats the main theme in an increasingly animated manner until the upward-leaping motive from the first movement is recalled as a bridge to the recapitulation, in which both of the movement’s themes return in heightened settings. The sonata reaches a grand climax in a coda based on the first movement’s leaping theme in a noble, aspiring transformation.

Maurice Ravel
Born March 7, 1875; Ciboure, France
Died December 28, 1937; Paris, France

Une barque sur l’océan FROM Miroirs

When Ravel composed Miroirs (Mirrors), in 1904–05, he was the focus of a spirited Parisian cause célèbre. It was the fourth time he had failed to win the coveted Prix de Rome, and his supporters were outraged that the staid professors of the conservatory refused to recognize his talent with the prestigious award after he had already proven himself with such works as Jeux d’eau (Fountains) and Pavane pour une infante défunte (Pavane for a dead princess). The cautious judges were undoubtedly put off by Ravel’s harmonic audacities and by his failure to regurgitate proper species counterpoint, but they were wrong in denying him the prize. Enough fuss was stirred up over the matter that Théodore Dubois was forced to resign as director of the Paris Conservatory; Gabriel Fauré took his place. Despite the furor, however, Ravel was never granted the Prix de Rome. On the occasion of his disappointment in 1905, he had to be satisfied with escaping from Paris to join a party of friends for a yachting excursion in Holland.

An important influence on Ravel’s modernity at the time of the Miroirs was an informal group of young Parisian artists to which he belonged who were interested in new forms of poetic and musical expression. One critic called them the Apaches, which connoted both “hooligans” in French and “renegades” in its Wild West association. They liked the name and appropriated it. At one of their regular Saturday meetings at the home of the painter and ardent music lover Paul Sordes, the pianist Ricardo Viñes told his confrères about an idea Claude Debussy had presented to him: to compose music so free in structure as to seem improvised. Ravel applauded the concept, and a few weeks later played for the
Apaches a new piece he said followed Debussy’s dictum while representing “a profound change in my harmonic development”—the *Oiseaux tristes* (Sad birds), meant to describe, according to the composer, “birds lost in the torpor of a somber forest during the torrid hours of summertime.” He dedicated the piece to Viñes, then added to it four more evocative miniatures, each inscribed to another Apache: the painter Paul Sordes was presented with the rippling water portrait *Une barque sur l’océan* (A boat on the ocean), also known in Ravel’s luminous 1906 orchestration.

**ALBAN BERG**

**Born February 9, 1885; Vienna, Austria**

**Died December 24, 1935; Vienna, Austria**

**Sonata, Op. 1**

Alban Berg, the son of a prosperous salesman for a Viennese export firm, was introduced early to art, theater, and music, and given piano lessons as a matter of course during his youth. Berg’s taste and knowledge of music ripened rapidly, and by age sixteen, he had eagerly begun to try his hand at composition, though a series of events during the next few months—the death of his father, failure to pass his high school graduation examinations, the collapse of a passionate love affair—resulted in a depression severe enough to cause him to attempt suicide. He survived and managed to finish school in 1904, after which he went to work as an apprentice (i.e., unpaid) accountant in the Austrian ministry that oversaw pigs and distilleries. Berg’s ambition to be a musician weathered these Kafkaesque difficulties, however, and he continued to compose. Just at that time, his brother Charley spotted an advertisement in a local newspaper announcing that Arnold Schoenberg, whose reputation as an iconoclastic modernist had been firmly established by the premiere of his *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured night) in 1902, was accepting students in composition. Charley took some of Alban’s manuscripts to Schoenberg, who saw such promise in the works that he agreed to take Berg on as a pupil for free. A fortunate inheritance in 1905 made it possible for Berg to leave his government job and devote himself to his lessons. He began composing in earnest under Schoenberg’s tutelage, and had soon produced the Seven Early Songs, the first work that he was to include in his mature canon. The Piano Sonata (op. 1) followed in 1908 and a set of four songs (op. 2), and a string quartet (op. 3) two years later, by which time Berg considered that his musical apprenticeship had come to an end. He discontinued formal lessons with Schoenberg in 1910, though the two remained supportive friends and creative allies for the rest of their lives.

Though Berg molded his Piano Sonata along the lines of classical sonata form, its ripe chromaticism and heightened emotionalism stand at the border between late nineteenth-century romanticism and tonally ambiguous modernism. Like all the works of Schoenberg and his followers, this one is tightly built from a few motivic cells ingeniously transformed and woven into rich contrapuntal textures, and the music’s continuous unfolding makes the divisions of the formal plan difficult to discern at first hearing. The sonata’s ebb and flow, however, across climaxes of Tristanesque intensity connected by introspective passages of great poignancy, map out a strong emotional journey that ends with some of the most touching music that Berg ever wrote.
FEDERICO MOMPOU
Born April 16, 1893; Barcelona, Spain
Died June 30, 1987; Barcelona, Spain

Secreto FROM Impressions íntimes

In his study of Spanish Music in the Twentieth Century, the noted Spanish composer and musical scholar Tomás Marco wrote, “[Federico Mompou’s] is the most important pianistic corpus produced in Spain in the twentieth century, indeed one of the most significant in all European music of his time.” Mompou was born on April 16, 1893, in Barcelona, where he started taking piano lessons as a young boy with Pedro Serra at the Conservatorio del Liceo; he gave his first public concert at age fifteen. A recital of Fauré’s piano works performed by Marguerite Long in 1909 fixed Mompou’s ambition to devote himself to music and to further his career in Paris. Two years later, armed with a letter of recommendation from Granados, Mompou descended on the French capital, where he studied harmony with Marcel Samuel-Rousseau and piano with Ferdinand Motte-Lacroix, with whom he became close friends. Mompou, like César Franck, realized that his retiring personality made the life of a performing virtuoso impractical for him, so he chose to devote himself to composition. His first important works, a set of Impressions íntimes (Intimate impressions), were premiered to warm acclaim in Paris by Motte-Lacroix in 1914. World War I drove Mompou back to Barcelona, but in 1921 he returned to Paris, where he lived until the Nazis overran the city twenty years later. From 1941 until his death in 1987, he made his home in Barcelona, living out of the public eye and occasionally playing his compositions for friends. Mompou was recognized as one of the masters of modern Spanish music—he was elected to membership in the royal academies of San Jorge in Barcelona and San Fernando in Madrid, made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French government, and awarded the Premio Nacional de Música for his lifetime’s work.

Mompou composed the nine Impressions íntimes between 1911 and 1914. Though they are his earliest significant works, the Impressions exemplify the lyricism, small scale, and inward expression that characterize many of his compositions. The eighth of the Impressions is the gentle, austere Secreto (1912), whose title Mompou did nothing to elucidate with the enigmatic phrase he inscribed at the head of the score: “The only secret of this secret is that it is no secret.”

ABOVE: Federico Mompou, date unknown
ALEXANDER SCRIBIN

Sonata No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Op. 53

Scriabin’s Sonata no. 5 in F-sharp major, composed in a few days in December 1907, was a pendant to the recently completed Poem of Ecstasy, whose various themes Scriabin said represented “human striving after the ideal,” “the awakening of the soul, gradually realizing itself (the Ego theme),” “the Will to rise up,” and “soaring flight of the spirit.” The composer’s biographer Boris de Schloezer wrote, “Scriabin first realized that universal art was a function of his own artistic personality during the composition of his Fifth Piano Sonata. He remarked that the music existed outside him in images that could not be expressed verbally. His task was to render these images into sounds, without distortion.” Scriabin summarized the expressive nature of the sonata by inscribing on its title page an excerpt from a long poem he had written (in French) to guide the composition of the Poem of Ecstasy: I call you to life. O mysterious forces / Submerged in depths, obscure! / O thou creative spirit, timid of life, / To you I bring courage! Perhaps surprisingly, Scriabin corralled this superheated expression within an old-fashioned sonata form, though he dispensed with a distinct central development section because of the continuous working-out of the thematic materials throughout the sonata’s single movement. There are three significant ideas: an ominous rumbling low in the keyboard (Allegro. Impetuoso. Con stravaganza); a dreamy episode of misty harmonies (Languido); and a section in increasingly frenzied rhythms (Presto con allegreza . . . Presto tumultuoso esaltato . . . Allegro impetuoso). Each is repeated and varied in the sonata’s second half before the work reaches its visionary close.
Critical superlatives and audience ovations have continuously followed Yuja Wang’s dazzling career. The Beijing-born pianist, celebrated for her charismatic artistry and captivating stage presence, is set to achieve new heights during the 2019–20 season, which features recitals, concert series, as well as season residencies, and extensive tours with some of the world’s most venerated ensembles and conductors.

Season highlights include her year-long Artist Spotlight at the Barbican Centre, where she curates and performs in four distinct events: the first London performance of John Adams’s newest piano concerto (premiered by her in spring 2019) entitled *Must the Devil Have All the Good Tunes?* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, which they take to Boston and New York City; recitals featuring cellist Gautier Capuçon and clarinetist Andreas Ottensamer; and a solo recital in conclusion of the residency.

In the fall, she toured China with the Vienna Philharmonic, presenting concerts in Macao, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Wuhan. In January 2020, Yuja Wang and Gautier Capuçon reunited for a recital tour featuring eleven dates presented in Europe’s premiere venues, including the Philharmonie de Paris and the Wiener Konzerthaus. She then embarked on an extensive solo recital tour, appearing in renowned concert halls throughout North America and Europe, including Carnegie Hall, Davies Symphony Hall, and the Het Concertgebouw, running from February to April.

Additionally, Yuja Wang will be the featured soloist with some of the leading orchestras of North America, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Andris Nelsons, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra conducted by Gustavo Gimeno, the San Francisco Symphony led by Michael Tilson Thomas, and the Philadelphia Orchestra under the musical direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Yuja Wang received advanced training in Canada and at Philadelphia’s Curtis Institute of Music under Gary Graffman. Her international breakthrough came in 2007 when she replaced Martha Argerich as soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She later signed an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon and has since established her place among the world’s leading artists, with a succession of critically acclaimed performances and recordings.

Yuja Wang was named Musical America’s Artist of the Year in 2017.
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