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Press Contacts:
[Hannah Sundwall](#)
312-294-3083

[Eileen Chambers](#)
312-294-3092

FEBRUARY PROGRAMMING AT SYMPHONY CENTER AND IN THE COMMUNITY

CHICAGO — February programming presented by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) at Symphony Center features a wide variety of events, including Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) subscription concerts with renowned guest conductors and soloists. February CSO concert highlights include CSO debuts for guest conductor Gemma New (February 8-10), cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason (February 15-18) and pianist Behzod Abduraimov (February 23-27) and CSO first performances of American composer Aaron Jay Kernis' *Musica Celestis* (February 8-10) and Saariaho's *Ciel d'hiver (Winter Sky)* (February 22-27). Guest conductors Paavo Järvi (February 15-18) and Hannu Lintu (February 23-27) return to Symphony Center to lead the CSO. The CSO at the Movies series offers audiences a chance to be transported to the City of Light with a February 9 presentation of *An American in Paris* in Concert featuring the music of George Gershwin.

Symphony Center Presents concerts and events continue with several jazz series programs. On February 2, eight-time Grammy Award-winning bassist and bandleader Christian McBride shares musical portraits of civil rights icons. On February 16, The Blue Note Quintet and Ron Carter's Golden Striker Trio make their first Symphony Center appearances. Piano and chamber music performances begin with Emanuel Ax, Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma's all-Beethoven program of piano trios (February 3) and continue with recitals by pianists Hélène Grimaud (February 4) and Pierre-Laurent Aimard (February 25). CSO for Kids events continue with two sold-out performances of *Once Upon a Symphony: The Three Little Pigs* (February 10). On February 17, former Solti Conducting Apprentice Lina González-Granados leads members of the CSO for Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* in two Family Matinees.

González-Granados also leads the Civic Orchestra of Chicago on February 12 in a program of musical zoological depictions. The Crain-Mailing Foundation CSO Young Artist Competition Finals concert, which features young wind soloists performing with the Civic Orchestra under the direction of Kyle Dickson, is on February 24.

Additional February concert highlights include the free CSO community concert with cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason as soloist in a program led by Paavo Järvi at Apostolic Church of God in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood (February 16). Additional offsite performances include a CSO concert conducted by Hannu Lintu featuring pianist Behzod Abduraimov at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign (February 22) and a free CSO Chamber concert featuring the Plymouth Ensemble at Beverly Arts Center in Chicago's historic Beverly/Morgan Park neighborhood (February 25).

Tickets and more information are available at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org).

[Explore](#) a chronological list of February 2024 concert programs.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Seong-Jin Cho Plays Beethoven ([February 8-10](#))

Artistic advisor and principal conductor of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and New Zealand-born conductor Gemma New makes her subscription debut with the CSO in a program featuring Kernis, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Pianist Seong-Jin Cho returns to Orchestra Hall for Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto. The CSO opens the program with a first performance of American composer Aaron Jay Kernis' *Musica Celestis*, inspired by the powerful simplicity and angelic music of Hildegard von Bingen, while Mendelssohn's mist-cloaked highlands and folk dances evoked in his *Scottish* Symphony close the concert.

Sheku Kanneh-Mason Plays Elgar ([February 15-18](#))

Sheku Kanneh-Mason makes his CSO debut in Elgar's rhapsodic Cello Concerto. Chief conductor of the Tonhalle Orchester-Zürich and Grammy Award-winning artist Paavo Järvi opens the program with Beethoven's jubilant hymn to liberty, the *Leonore* Overture No. 3, and closes with Nielsen's Fifth Symphony, a visceral, dramatic work exploring humanity's potential for conflict, born in the aftermath of World War I.

On February 15, the CSO African American Network continues its 2023/24 season of events with a postconcert reception. Specially priced tickets for individual AAN events are available at [cso.org/AAN](https://www.cso.org/AAN).

Sheku Kanneh-Mason will also participate in a CD signing after the concert on Saturday, February 17. The signing will take place in Grainger Ballroom, with merchandise available in the Symphony Store, the Ballroom and online in advance.

CSO at Apostolic Church of God: Sheku Kanneh-Mason Plays Elgar ([February 16](#))

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra returns to Apostolic Church of God in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood for a free community concert with chief conductor of the Tonhalle Orchester-Zürich and Grammy Award-winning artist Paavo Järvi. Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No. 3, opens the program; Sheku Kanneh-Mason performs Elgar's rhapsodic Cello Concerto, and Smetana's *The Moldau* depicts the river's powerful currents rolling through the idyllic Czech countryside.

This event will be held at the Apostolic Church of God, 6320 S. Dorchester Ave., Chicago IL, 60637. Admission is free and advance reservations are encouraged.

Tchaikovsky & Shostakovich ([February 22](#) and [February 23-27](#))

Music director of Orquestra Gulbenkian and chief conductor of the Finnish National Opera and Ballet Hannu Lintu returns to the podium for a program featuring works by Saariaho, Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky and Shostakovich. Uzbek pianist Behzod Abduraimov makes his CSO debut in Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. The CSO's first performance of Saariaho's ethereal *Ciel d'hiver (Winter Sky)* opens the program, continuing with Shostakovich's arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* prelude and the composer's own Symphony No. 9.

The February 22 performance takes place at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

Symphony Center Presents

Christian McBride's The Movement Revisited ([February 2](#))

Eight-time Grammy Award-winning bassist, bandleader and host of NPR's *Jazz Night in America* Christian McBride presents his musical tribute inspired by the words of Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Muhammad Ali and President Barack Obama. Uniting Voices Chicago, Chicago Jazz Orchestra and students from The Theatre School at DePaul University unite for McBride's evening of musical portraits of civic rights icons.

Ax, Kavakos & Ma ([February 3](#))

Emanuel Ax, Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma return to Symphony Center for an all-Beethoven program. The evening begins with Beethoven's Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 (*Ghost*), followed by Shai Wosner's arrangement of Symphony No. 1, and

culminates with the Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 70, No. 2. *Please note: this concert is sold out.*

Hélène Grimaud ([February 4](#))

Lauded French pianist Hélène Grimaud returns to share an afternoon featuring four pillars of the piano literature, including Beethoven's Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109; Brahms' Three Intermezzos, Op. 117 and Fantasies, Op. 116, and Busoni's arrangement of J.S. Bach's Chaconne from BWV 1004.

The Blue Note Quintet / Ron Carter's Golden Striker Trio ([February 16](#))

The Blue Note Quintet, comprised of vibraphonist Joel Ross, saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins, drummer Kendrick Scott, bassist Matt Brewer and led by six-time Grammy-nominated pianist Gerald Clayton, honors Blue Note Records' rich history and paves the way for the eclectic artists on the legendary label today. One of those legends, Ron Carter — the prolific, three-time Grammy Award winner and most recorded jazz bassist of all time — brings his Golden Striker Trio, including pianist Donald Vega and guitarist Russell Malone, to Symphony Center for the first time.

Pierre-Laurent Aimard ([February 25](#))

Both a champion of contemporary composers and interpreter of piano repertoire from every age, Pierre-Laurent Aimard presents an exploration of the keyboard fantasy. Anchored by two of Mozart's Fantasies in C Minor, K. 475 and D Minor, K. 397, Aimard's program spans four centuries of musical discovery. This program also features fantasies by C.P.E. Bach, Beethoven, George Benjamin, Chopin, Ives and Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck.

CSO at the Movies

An American in Paris in Concert ([February 9](#))

Witness the 1951 MGM musical — starring Gene Kelly as an American ex-GI who falls for a Parisian woman played by Leslie Caron — on the big screen while conductor Constantine Kitsopoulos and the CSO perform the score live. Featuring songs of George and Ira Gershwin, the movie culminates in an iconic ballet sequence, choreographed by Kelly himself.

Civic Orchestra of Chicago

Fantastic Zoology ([February 12](#))

Colombian-American conductor, artistic director of Unitas Ensemble and former Solti Conducting Apprentice Lina González-Granados leads the Civic Orchestra of Chicago in a fantastical program filled with musical depictions of animals, real and wondrous.

In his *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology*, former Mead Composer-in-Residence Mason Bates portrays sprites, sirens, a gryphon and other extraordinary beasts over 11 surreal movements. Einojuhani Rautavaara's concerto for birds and orchestra features recorded bird calls from arctic Finland. Viet Cuong's *Vital Sines* highlights the virtuosity of four-time Grammy Award-winning Chicago sextet Eighth Blackbird.

Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition Finals ([February 24](#))

The Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition is a concerto competition for Illinois' top young soloists. This year's competition was open to woodwinds, brass, harp and percussion. Finalists will perform in the final round in Orchestra Hall with conductor Kyle Dickson and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

CSO for Kids

Carnival of the Animals ([February 17](#))

Colombian-American conductor, artistic director of Unitas Ensemble and former Solti Conducting Apprentice Lina González-Granados leads members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals*. Guided by narration from storyteller Charlotte Blake Alston, the orchestra depicts nature's many creatures.

Pre- and postconcert activities throughout the Symphony Center Rotunda include chamber ensemble performances, a musical instrument petting zoo, create-your-own animal mask, English/Spanish memory matching card games, and Mini-Maestros conducting activities with the Civic Orchestra Woodwind Quintet.

CSO Chamber Music

The Plymouth Ensemble at Beverly Arts Center ([February 25](#))

The Plymouth Ensemble presents a program framed with two works by Mozart and Brahms. The Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Minor is a product of the most stressful period of Brahms' life, depicting his ill-fated love affair with Clara Schumann and the frustration at the impossibility of their love. Mozart's genial Piano Quartet No. 2 in E-flat Major is the second of his two piano quartets that virtually invented the genre. The Plymouth Ensemble comprises of violinist Qing Hou, violist Lawrence Neuman, cellist Daniel Katz and pianist John Blacklow.

This performance takes place at Beverly Arts Center, 2407 W. 111th St., Chicago, IL 60655. Tickets are free but required; reservations open on February 9.

Food and Beverage

From lobby bars serving enticing selections of refreshments to sit-down dining experiences and options for unforgettable private events, there are a variety of opportunities to elevate your concert experience. Symphony Center's restaurant, Forte, features contemporary Mediterranean cuisine and classic cocktails, draft beer, locally roasted coffee and gelato.

The Thomas Club, located on the ninth floor of Symphony Center with sweeping views of Lake Michigan, opens on select dates for dining. View menus, make reservations, and learn more about dining at the Thomas Club or Forte restaurant at [cso.org/dining](https://www.cso.org/dining).

Parking and Transit Options

Symphony Center and SpotHero, the nation's leading parking reservation app, have teamed up to help make parking easier. To reserve a parking spot, visit [cso.org/spothero](https://www.cso.org/spothero) or download the SpotHero app and search for Symphony Center. Valet parking is available for most performances at Symphony Center's 67 E. Adams St. entrance. A round-trip North Shore Shuttle service is available for Friday matinees. Exclusive subscriber parking rates are available through the Grant Park South Garage. Visit [cso.org/parking](https://www.cso.org/parking) for more parking and transit options.

Patron Information

Patron Services representatives are available to assist with ticket purchases by web chat at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org) or by calling [312-294-3000](tel:312-294-3000), Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The walk-up Box Office at 220 S. Michigan Ave. is open Monday-Saturday 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Civic Orchestra of Chicago performances at Symphony Center and in neighborhood venues are free, but tickets are required unless otherwise noted. Seating is general admission, and there is a nonrefundable \$5 per ticket service fee for most performances that take place at Symphony Center. Tickets will become available two weeks prior to each concert.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

United Airlines is the Official Airline of the CSO.

Christian McBride's appearance on February 2 is sponsored by McDermott Will & Emery LLP.

The February 3 concert featuring Ax, Kavakos and Ma is generously sponsored by The Negaunee Foundation and Zell Family Foundation.

An American in Paris in Concert is part of the CSO at the Movies series, which is generously sponsored by Megan and Steve Shebik.

The appearance of Eighth Blackbird with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago is generously sponsored by John and Dora Aalbregtse, Leslie and John Burns, Judy Feldman, Sandra and Earl Rusnak, Jr., and Carol S. Sonnenschein.

The appearance of Sheku Kanneh-Mason is made possible by the Grainger Fund for Excellence.

Funding for educational programs during the 2023/24 Season of SCP Jazz has been generously provided by Dan J. Epstein, Judith Guitelman and the Dan J. Epstein Family Foundation. The CSOA thanks the Epstein Family Foundation for ten consecutive years of generous, innovative support for the SCP Jazz Education program.

Support for Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association programming for children and families is provided by Abbott Fund, BMO, John D. and Leslie Henner Burns, John Hart and Carol Prins, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Kinder Morgan, PNC, Courtney Shea, Megan and Steve Shebik, Michael and Linda Simon, the Walter and Caroline Sueske Charitable Trust and an anonymous family foundation.

The 2023/24 Civic Orchestra season is generously sponsored by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation, which also provides major funding for the Civic Fellowship program.

Major support for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago also provided by Robert and Joanne Crown Income Charitable Fund; Leslie Fund, Inc.; Judy and Scott McCue; Barbara and Barre Seid Foundation; The George L. Shields Foundation, Inc.; The Maval Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

The School Concert: Carnival of the Animals on February 16 is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra programs are partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra: [cso.org](https://www.cso.org)

Founded by Theodore Thomas in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the world's great orchestras. Riccardo Muti, the Orchestra's distinguished 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, was recently named Music Director Emeritus for Life beginning with the 2023/24 Season.

Jessie Montgomery is Mead Composer-in-Residence, and Hilary Hahn is CSO Artist-in-Residence.

The CSO commands a vast repertoire, from baroque through contemporary music. Its renowned musicians perform more than 150 concerts annually, in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center in downtown Chicago and each summer at the Ravinia Festival in suburban Highland Park. The ensemble regularly tours nationally, and since 1892, has made 63 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents.

Patrons around the globe enjoy weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings via the WFMT Radio Network and online at cso.org/radio. Launched in 2007, [CSO Resound](#) is the ensemble's Grammy Award-winning independent record label, featuring live performances with world-class conductors and guest artists. Since 1916, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus have amassed an extensive discography that has earned 64 Grammy awards from the Recording Academy.

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA), which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Symphony Center Presents, and the Negaunee Music Institute. The [Chicago Symphony Chorus](#), founded by Margaret Hillis in 1957, is the country's largest professional chorus. Founded by second music director Frederick Stock during the 1919–20 season, the [Civic Orchestra of Chicago](#) is a training ensemble for emerging professionals with Ken-David Masur serving as its principal conductor. [Symphony Center Presents](#) features guest artists and ensembles across an expansive array of genres, including classical, jazz, world and contemporary. The [Negaunee Music Institute](#) offers community and educational programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds throughout the Chicagoland area.

Through the Institute and numerous other activities — including annual free community concerts in Chicago neighborhoods — the CSO is committed to using the power of music to strengthen bonds with its longtime patrons and create connections with new audiences.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is supported by thousands of patrons, volunteers and institutional and individual donors. The Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.