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SEPTEMBER PROGRAMMING AT SYMPHONY CENTER

CHICAGO — The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) opens its 2026/27 Season with two compelling programs featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) at Symphony Center this September. The month's offerings bring together acclaimed guest artists and major symphonic works.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's 136th season opens September 17 with a program led by Petr Popelka, who returns to the podium for performances that feature former CSO Artist-in-Residence Hilary Hahn as soloist in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. The program also includes Schumann's dramatic *Manfred* Overture and Dvořák's Fifth Symphony. The following week, Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä begins his fall residency with the Orchestra, pairing two expansive statements in Sibelius' Seventh and Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony.

Tickets and more information are available at [cso.org](#).

[Explore](#) a chronological list of September 2026 concert programs.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Petr Popelka & Hilary Hahn ([September 17-19](#))

Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto is packed with magical melodies and sparkling action, and there's no more stylish interpreter than Hilary Hahn, one of the top violinists of our time, and the CSO's former Artist-in-Residence. The Romantic journey begins with Schumann's powerful *Manfred* Overture and concludes with Dvořák's Fifth Symphony. Considered Dvořák's symphonic breakthrough, the Fifth transports listeners from a Bohemian country meadow to a Viennese ballroom.

Mäkelä Conducts Sibelius & Shostakovich ([September 24-26](#))

Two exhilarating symphonies launch the fall residency of Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä. Sibelius' Seventh Symphony sweeps you along like a mighty river flowing to the sea, joining noble trombone calls with misty, churning string currents.

Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony, written under Stalin's shadow, shows the composer at his most wild and audacious. Be riveted by this panorama of moods and genres — funeral marches, waltzes, birdsongs and caustic interjections.

Food and Beverage

Explore Symphony Center's on-site dining options for a seamless preconcert experience. Preorder a Sound Bites meal to enjoy in the Rotunda at Symphony Center before the concert — or make a reservation to dine at the Thomas Club, offering a prix fixe menu featuring traditional American fare and a spectacular view of Lake Michigan. View menus and learn more at [cso.org/dining](https://www.cso.org/dining).

Parking and Transit Options

Exclusive parking rates are available through Millennium Garages, the Preferred Parking Partner for Symphony Center. The closest parking garage is the Grant Park South Garage, located at 325 S. Michigan Ave. Valet parking is available for CSO classical performances at Symphony Center's 67 E. Adams St. entrance. A round-trip North Shore Shuttle service is available for Friday matinees. Visit [cso.org/parking](https://www.cso.org/parking) for more parking and transit options.

Patron Information

Contact Patron Services for personalized assistance online at [cso.org/contact](https://www.cso.org/contact) or by calling [312-294-3000](tel:312-294-3000), Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

The appearance of Hilary Hahn is made possible with support from The Paul Ricker Judy Endowment Fund.

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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. In April 2024, Klaus Mäkelä was named the Orchestra's 11th music director, and he will begin an initial five-year tenure as Zell Music Director with the 2027/28 Season. Riccardo Muti, the Orchestra's 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, became music director emeritus for life at the beginning of the 2023/24 Season. Jean-Yves Thibaudet is the CSO artist-in-residence for the 2026/27 Season.

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 domestically, and since 1892, has made 65 international tours, performing in 30 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](https://www.cso.org/radio). Launched in 2007, [CSO Resound](https://www.cso.org/resound) is the ensemble's Grammy Award-winning 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 65 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 Negaunee Music Institute. The [Chicago Symphony Chorus](https://www.cso.org/chicago-symphony-chorus), founded by Margaret Hillis in 1957, is the country's largest professional chorus, and Donald Palumbo currently serves as director. Founded by second music director Frederick Stock during the 1919/20 Season, the [Civic Orchestra of Chicago](https://www.cso.org/civic-orchestra-of-chicago) trains the next generation of musicians with Ken-David Masur as its principal conductor. [Symphony Center Presents](https://www.cso.org/symphony-center-presents) features guest artists and ensembles across an expansive array of genres, including classical, jazz, global and contemporary. The [Negaunee Music Institute](https://www.cso.org/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 CSO's music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation. The Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.