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## **FEBRUARY PROGRAMMING AT SYMPHONY CENTER AND IN THE COMMUNITY**

CHICAGO — The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) presents a variety of programs this February, featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and renowned guest artists performing at Symphony Center and in community venues.

Esa-Pekka Salonen returns for a two-week residency with the CSO that includes two distinctive programs: one pairing works by Beethoven and Bruckner (January 29–February 1), followed by an ocean-inspired program featuring Debussy's *La mer* and Gabriella Smith's cello showpiece *Lost Coast* — performed by Chicago native Gabriel Cabezas (February 5–7). In another classical highlight, sensational teen Himari performs Bruch's First Violin Concerto in her CSO subscription debut, with Jaap van Zweden conducting (February 12–15).

Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä returns to Chicago to lead the CSO in a program featuring musical portraits of two heroic figures: Richard Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* and Sibelius' *Lemminkäinen* (February 19–21). Following his residency, Mäkelä and the CSO embark on a four-city U.S. tour from February 23 to March 1, which is Mäkelä's first tour with the Orchestra.

The Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Jazz series features vocalists José James and Lizz Wright celebrating the 50th anniversary of Marvin Gaye's *I Want You* (February 6). On the Symphony Center Presents Chamber Music series, 2025/26 CSO Artist-in-Residence Joyce DiDonato performs with Time For Three in Emily – No Prisoner Be as they bring to life 24 vivid poems by Emily Dickinson, set to music by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts (February 10) and the SCP Piano series welcomes the return of Marc-André Hamelin performing Ives' Sonata No. 2 (February 22). The month concludes with the SCP Concert Tango After Dark, direct from Argentina (February 28).

CSO Chamber Music continues with a program featuring Korngold's Piano Quintet in E Major, Op. 15 at the University of Chicago's Mandel Hall (February 6). The Civitas

Ensemble offers a free performance at North Park University's Anderson Chapel (February 22).

Conductor Alpesh Chauhan makes his Civic Orchestra of Chicago debut (February 2), and Mallory Thompson — former director of bands at Northwestern University for 28 years — leads the Civic Wind Ensemble in her Civic podium debut (February 16). Civic also performs free community concerts with the Kenwood Academy High School Orchestra (February 1) and musicians of the Vernon Hills High School band program (February 15).

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

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

## **Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

### **Salonen, Trifonov & Beethoven ([February 1](#))**

Bruckner's *Romantic* Symphony begins its four-movement journey, encompassing birdsong, forest dances and hymns of thanksgiving. Former CSO Artist-in-Residence Daniil Trifonov performs Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto.

### **Salonen Conducts *La mer* ([February 5-7](#))**

Debussy's ravishing *La mer* and Gabriella Smith's showpiece for cello, *Lost Coast*, offer two striking visions of the ocean. Inspired by a hiking trip along the rugged Northern California coastline, the concerto features Chicago native Gabriel Cabezas — for whom it was written. Another evocative marvel, Debussy's *Images* conjures up French folk dances, English-Scottish jigs and a Spanish street festival.

### **Jaap van Zweden, Himari & Mozart Jupiter ([February 12-15](#))**

Sensational teen Himari illuminates Bruch's First Violin Concerto in her CSO subscription debut. Blacknificent 7 composer Joel Thompson's *To See the Sky*, "a shifting palette of grooves, colors and moods" (*Bachtrack*), and Mozart's electrifying *Jupiter* Symphony frame the program.

The program is also offered on [February 13](#) at Wheaton College's Edman Memorial Chapel (401 E. Franklin St., Wheaton).

### **Mäkelä Conducts *Ein Heldenleben* ([February 19-21](#))**

Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä pairs Richard Strauss' *A Hero's Life* with music from his native Finland: Sibelius' *Lemminkäinen*, a symphonic portrait of the life and romantic escapades of the country's folk hero.

## **CSO Chamber Music**

### **CSO Chamber Music at the University of Chicago ([February 6](#))**

Musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra perform a program inspired by the theme of climate change. Christopher Stark's *Seasonal Music* — an evocative work that draws on themes from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* — is paired with Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Homunculus* and Korngold's Piano Quintet in E Major, Op. 15

This event takes place at Mandel Hall (1131 E. 57th St., Chicago) at the University of Chicago.

### **Civitas Ensemble at North Park University ([February 22](#))**

The Civitas Ensemble traces an arc from the shadowed intensity of Bartók to the radiant lyricism of Fauré in the acoustic warmth of Anderson Chapel. Bartók's early quintet unfolds as if in one continuous, sweeping movement, while Fauré's late masterwork blends youth and serenity with a subtle and inexplicable sense of mystery and revelation.

This concert takes place at Anderson Chapel at North Park University (5159 N. Spaulding Ave., Chicago). Tickets are free; reservations are required.

## **Symphony Center Presents Chamber Music**

### **Joyce DiDonato in Emily – No Prisoner Be ([February 10](#))**

Renowned mezzo-soprano and 2025/26 CSO Artist-in-Residence Joyce DiDonato takes center stage in *Emily – No Prisoner Be*, an extraordinary collaboration with the classical-roots string trio Time For Three. Together, they bring to life 24 vivid poems by Emily Dickinson in a theatrical presentation, set to music by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts (*The Hours, Silent Night*). Bold, enigmatic and deeply evocative, Dickinson's poetry finds new resonance in this captivating musical journey.

Joyce DiDonato and Time For Three participate in a CD signing in the Rotunda following the concert. Merchandise can be purchased at the Symphony Store and Orchestra Hall lobby prior to the signing. This event is free and open to all ticketholders.

## **Symphony Center Presents**

### **Tango After Dark ([February 28](#))**

Direct from Argentina, Tango After Dark ignites the stage with the captivating artistry of tango. Led by World Tango Champion Germán Cornejo, a stellar cast of dancers, singers and musicians performs Astor Piazzolla's iconic music. The show illustrates the

“splendid, sensual, imposing extravagance of Argentine Tango at its very best” (*DanceTabs*).

### **Symphony Center Presents Jazz**

#### **José James with Lizz Wright: Marvin Gaye’s I Want You ([February 6](#))**

Marvin Gaye’s *I Want You* shaped the music of a generation, blending jazz, funk, R&B, soul and disco in a way that pushed boundaries and continues to inspire artists today. Internationally renowned José James — “one of the suavest vocal improvisers on the scene” (*Pitchfork*) — joins forces with fellow singer Lizz Wright to reimagine the music of this provocative album in celebration of its 50th anniversary. Experience this soulful homage to one of R&B’s most influential recordings.

### **Symphony Center Presents Piano**

#### **Marc-André Hamelin ([February 22](#))**

Marc-André Hamelin, a pianist celebrated for his astonishing technique and profound musicality, explores the music of two restless visionaries: Ives, whose *Concord Sonata* salutes Transcendentalist thinkers from Emerson to Thoreau, and Scriabin, represented by his radiant Fourth Piano Sonata. Schumann’s mercurial *Fantasy Pieces* span humor, joy and brooding intensity.

### **Civic Orchestra of Chicago**

#### **Civic Plays Elgar & Lutosławski at Kenwood Academy ([February 1](#))**

The Civic Orchestra performs Lutosławski’s Concerto for Orchestra and closes with a collaborative program with the Kenwood Academy High School Orchestra. This concert takes place at Kenwood Academy High School (5015 S. Blackstone Ave., Chicago). Tickets are free; reservations are required and are available now.

#### **Civic Plays Esmail, Elgar & Lutosławski ([February 2](#))**

Alpesh Chauhan makes his Civic Orchestra debut conducting Elgar’s *In the South* — a sun-drenched tribute to the glories of ancient Rome. Premiered in 2018 at Wentz Concert Hall, Reena Esmail’s evocative *Black Iris* is named after Georgia O’Keeffe’s famous painting and inspired by the #MeToo movement. The program concludes with the irrepressible sweep and invention of Lutosławski’s Concerto for Orchestra.

#### **Civic Wind Ensemble at Vernon Hills High School ([February 15](#))**

The Civic Orchestra Wind Ensemble performs works from Richard Strauss to Holst, Stravinsky to Tower in a collaborative performance with musicians of the Vernon Hills High School band program. The concert takes place at Vernon Hills High School (145

Lakeview Pkwy., Vernon Hills). Tickets are free; reservations are required and open on January 30.

### **Civic Wind Ensemble (February 16)**

The Civic Orchestra explores the sublime and boundless world of wind ensemble music led by Mallory Thompson, who was director of bands at Northwestern University for nearly three decades. Globally recognized for her passionate, insightful interpretations, Thompson makes her Civic podium debut conducting landmark pieces from Mozart and Richard Strauss to Holst, Stravinsky and Tower.

### **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](http://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 select 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](http://cso.org/parking) for more parking and transit options.

### **Patron Information**

Contact Patron Services for personalized assistance online at [cso.org/contact](http://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 Daniil Trifonov for the Salonen, Trifonov & Beethoven concerts is made possible by an anonymous donor.

The 2025/26 Civic Orchestra season is generously sponsored by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation, which also provides major funding for the Civic Fellowship program.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

The appearance of Esa-Pekka Salonen is made possible by the Juli Plant Grainger Fund for Artistic Excellence.

Newsradio 105.9 WBBM is a Media Partner for the Salonen Conducts La mer concerts. The concerts are generously sponsored by United Airlines.

Chicago Jazz, *DownBeat* Magazine and WDCB 90.9FM Jazz are Media Partners for the José James with Lizz Wright: Marvin Gaye's I Want You concerts.

Funding for educational programs during the 2025/26 Season of SCP Jazz has been generously provided by Dan J. Epstein, Judith Guitelman and the Dan J. Epstein Family Foundation.

The Artist-in-Residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is made possible through a generous gift from James and Brenda Grusecki.

The Joyce DiDonato in Emily – No Prisoner Be concert is generously sponsored by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation.

The Jaap van Zweden, Himari & Mozart Jupiter concerts are generously sponsored by United Airlines.

The appearance of Jaap van Zweden is made possible by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation.

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

Support for the CSO at Wheaton series is provided by Megan and Steve Shebik.

CSO at Wheaton performances are generously sponsored by the JCS Arts, Health and Education Fund of DuPage Foundation.

Bank of America is the Maestro Residency Presenter.

The Mäkelä Conducts Ein Heldenleben concerts are generously sponsored by Zell Family Foundation.

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### **Chicago Symphony Orchestra: [cso.org](http://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. Joyce DiDonato is the CSO Artist-in-Residence for the 2025/26 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](http://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 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**, founded by Margaret Hillis in 1957, is the country's largest professional chorus. Donald Palumbo is the Director of the Chicago Symphony 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.