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## **CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND THE JOFFREY BALLET COLLABORATE TO PREMIERE TWO BALLETS IN APRIL PROGRAM**

**Conductor Harry Bicket Leads Performances that Feature World Premieres of  
Newly Commissioned Choreographies from Nicolas Blanc and  
Amy Hall Garner set to Music of Darius Milhaud and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson**

**April 10-13, 2025**

CHICAGO — The [Chicago Symphony Orchestra \(CSO\)](#) welcomes [The Joffrey Ballet](#) and [The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director Ashley Wheeler MBE](#) for their third artistic collaboration since 2019 to premiere two newly-commissioned ballets in a program presented at Symphony Center [April 10-13](#). The Joffrey Ballet's Winning Works choreographer Amy Hall Garner sets her new ballet, *Second Nature*, to Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson's Sinfonietta No. 1, and Joffrey choreographer Nicolas Blanc sets his new ballet, *Les Bœufoons*, to Darius Milhaud's boisterous work *Le Bœuf sur le toit* (The Ox on the Roof). The program, led by acclaimed [British conductor Harry Bicket](#), also includes Haydn's Symphony No. 45 (*Farewell*) and the CSO's first performances of Symphony No. 1 of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges. Tickets and more information are available at [cso.org](#).

Cristina Rocca, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association's Vice President of Artistic Planning, The Richard and Mary L. Gray Chair, said "The Chicago Symphony is recognized as one of the best orchestras in the world, and The Joffrey Ballet is one of the best dance companies in the world. The two organizations are a living manifest of the essential role that the arts play in our lives. It seems natural that we should collaborate to create new artworks which both look forward to the future and build

on the history of our respective artforms. We are very proud of this special relationship and look forward to performing together in April.”

“Dance and live music belong together. Joffrey’s partnership with the CSO is the perfect harmony for the senses; the artistry of CSO musicians and Joffrey Company Artists elevate one another, creating an unforgettable experience,” says The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director Ashley Wheeler MBE. “We are proud to premiere new work by Amy Hall Garner and Nicolas Blanc, two choreographers with deep ties to the Joffrey. Amy, an early Winning Works honoree, and Nicolas, a longtime creative collaborator, bring fresh perspectives to their chosen compositions, offering dynamic, resonant storytelling that will captivate and inspire.”

Choreographer [Nicolas Blanc](#) joined The Joffrey Ballet in 2015 as a Rehearsal Director and Coach following a distinguished career as a dancer in companies including Nice Opera Ballet, Zurich Ballet and San Francisco Ballet, where he was a lead dancer from 2004 to 2009. As a choreographer, he was selected to participate in New York City Ballet’s New York Choreographic Institute where he created *Mothership*, which premiered in New York City Ballet’s 2016 gala. In 2018, he created *Beyond the Shore* for The Joffrey Ballet, with designs by Katrin Schnabl and music composed by former CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Mason Bates.

For *Les Bœufoons*, Blanc pays tribute to the Parisian cabaret bar, “Le Bœuf sur le Toit,” perhaps no single place better representing the flourishing and eclectic artistic sensibility of 1920s Paris. Artistic luminaries from Cole Porter to Igor Stravinsky met at this cultural Mecca which took its name from Darius Milhaud’s theatrical, Brazilian-inflected composition. *Les Bœufoons* draws inspiration from the surreal, uninhibited world of Jean Cocteau’s original choreography, and the renowned circus clowns, the Fratellini brothers, who first brought it to life.

Choreographer [Amy Hall Garner](#) was one of the first choreographers of The Joffrey Ballet’s Winning Works competition. Originally from Huntsville, Alabama, Garner is a graduate of The Juilliard School and is currently based in New York. She has created works in the ballet, modern, and theatrical genres for numerous schools and companies including The Joffrey Ballet, Ailey II, Collage Dance Collective, The Juilliard School, The Ailey School and Barnard College, among others. She has also created works for Columbia Ballet Collaborative, and personally coached Grammy Award winner Beyoncé, providing additional choreography for The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour. In 2018, she was selected to participate in Alvin Ailey’s New Directions Choreography Lab supported by the Ford Foundation. Garner is an adjunct professor at New York University’s New Studio on Broadway at Tisch School of the Arts.

For *Second Nature*, set to Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson’s Sinfonietta No. 1, Garner was particularly inspired by the second of the work’s three movements marked “Largo” and

could see movement for dancers when listening to it for the first time. Her ballet features an ensemble of dancers in costumes of bold colors and flowing designs and aims to offer audiences an experience that is hopeful and uplifting. Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004) was principal conductor and Coordinator of Performance Activities at the Center for Black Music Research in Chicago. He was a composer of classical, jazz and popular music who studied composition at the Manhattan School of Music and Princeton University and also served as music director for the renowned Alvin Ailey Dance Company.

### **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. The walk-up Box Office at 220 S. Michigan Ave. is open Monday-Saturday 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

This performance is made possible with the generous sponsorship of Josef and Margot Lakonishok.

The Joffrey Ballet gratefully acknowledges the Bill and Orli Staley Foundation for their production sponsorship.

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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 distinguished 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, became Music Director Emeritus for Life at the beginning of the 2023/24 Season. Daniil Trifonov is the CSO Artist-in-Residence for the 2024/25 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 nationally, and since 1892, has made 64 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](https://www.cso.org/radio). Launched in 2007, [CSO Resound](https://www.cso.org/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 the 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. 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.

### **About The Joffrey Ballet**

The Joffrey Ballet is one of the premier dance companies in the world today, with a reputation for boundary-breaking performances for 69 years. The Joffrey repertoire is an extensive collection of all-time classics, modern masterpieces, and original works.

Founded in 1956 by pioneers Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, the Joffrey remains dedicated to artistic expression, innovation, and first-rate education and engagement programming. The Joffrey Ballet continues to thrive under The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director Ashley Wheater MBE and President and CEO Greg Cameron.

For more information on The Joffrey Ballet and its programs, visit [joffrey.org](http://joffrey.org). Connect with the Joffrey on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).