



**CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION**  
**RICCARDO MUTI** MUSIC DIRECTOR

220 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60604-2559  
TELEPHONE 312-294-3333  
FACSIMILE 312-294-3329

**For Immediate Release:**  
January 23, 2023

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

## **WINNER OF 2023 CRAIN-MALING FOUNDATION CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION ANNOUNCED**

### **Violinist Esme Arias-Kim Wins First Prize**

CHICAGO—The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association announces that violinist Esme Arias-Kim is the first-place winner of the 2023 Crain-Maling Foundation Chicago Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Competition. Her winning performance was of Chausson's *Poème* for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 25. As this year's winner, Arias-Kim will appear as a soloist in a Chicago Symphony Orchestra Youth Concert during the 2023/24 Season.

Arias-Kim was one of four young musicians from across Illinois who auditioned in the final round on Saturday, January 21, 2023, on the stage at Orchestra Hall. This year's final round was accompanied by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, under the baton of conductor Andrew Grams. The Young Artists Competition is organized jointly by the Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO and the League of the CSOA.

**Esme Arias-Kim**, age 17, from Hoffman Estates, Ill., made her solo debut with orchestra at the age of 10 with the Oistrakh Symphony, and was featured on WFMT's *Introductions* and NPR's *From the Top*. Since then, she has appeared as a soloist with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Fairbanks Symphony, Sinfonia da Camera (Champaign-Urbana), Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Midwest Young Artist Conservatory, Fox Valley, Chicago Arts, Ottawa Chamber, Lincolnwood Chamber, Accademia d'Archi G.G. "Arrigoni," and Civic orchestras. She has presented solo recitals at the Peninsula Music Festival, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Chicago Cultural Center, 92nd Street Y in New York, Musikferien am Starnberger See (Germany), and Palácio Foz (Portugal).

Arias-Kim has received numerous first-place awards including at the Walgreens National, International Young Artist, Arthur D. Montzka, Fox Valley, Sphinx, Enkor International, New York International Artist Association, and Illinois Music Teachers National Music Association competitions, and most recently at the American String Teachers Association National Solo, Musicians Club of Women, Minnesota Orchestra, and Southern California Philharmonic Concerto competitions.

Arias-Kim is currently studying with Robert Lipsett. Previous teachers include Almita Vamos and Betty Haag-Kuhnke. She has also participated in master classes with Hilary Hahn, Midori Goto, Julia Fischer, Ian Swensen, Vadim Gluzman, Kirill Troussov, Noah Bendix-Balgley, and others. Arias-Kim is performing on a violin by Alfredo Contino from 1920, courtesy of Guarneri Hall NFP and Darnton & Hersh Fine Violins, Chicago.

The runner up was **Jan Vargas Nedvetsky**, age 16, from Wilmette, Ill., a Merit Scholarship Fellow at the Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago. The other two finalists were: **Henry Auxenfans** and **Aiden Yu**.

The CSOA is grateful to the Crain-Maling Foundation as its title sponsor of the Young Artists Competition. Special thanks to Dr. Michael Maling for his enduring support.

The event's host was Robbie Ellis, a broadcaster, composer, music director, and comedy song maker. He works at WFMT as the host on Sunday afternoons and as the producer and presenter of *Introductions*, a weekly show that profiles local pre-college musicians. He started in classical radio at RNZ Concert in Wellington, New Zealand. In addition, Ellis has worked as an event host for the International Music Foundation, Cedille Records, and the Northbrook Symphony Orchestra, and has been a teaching artist with Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and The Second City, with which he has also toured on land and sea as a music director.

Conductor Andrew Grams led the young artists in the competition finals. The winner of 2015 Conductor of the Year honors from the Illinois Council of Orchestras, Grams has led ensembles throughout the United States, including the Chicago, Philadelphia, and National symphony orchestras and the Detroit, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Dallas and Houston symphonies. Grams was named music director of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra after an international search in 2013 and recently concluded his tenure there after eight seasons.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago accompanied the finalists. Since 1919, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago has been one of the nation's premier orchestral training programs for emerging professionals. Benefiting from a unique alliance with the world-renowned Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Civic members refine their skills under the guidance of musicians of the CSO, Zell Music Director Riccardo Muti and Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur, as well as numerous guest artists who visit Symphony Center each season. The Civic Orchestra is a signature program of the Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO. The Negaunee Music Institute shares the extraordinary musical resources of the CSO, creating connections to music for individuals and communities in Chicago and across the world.

Programs of the League of the CSOA span music appreciation, fundraising and education and include the Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition. More information about the League of the CSOA is available at [cso.org/support/get-involved/the-league/](http://cso.org/support/get-involved/the-league/).

###

**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 greatest orchestras in the world. Since 2010, the pre-eminent conductor Riccardo Muti has served as

its 10th music director. Jessie Montgomery is Mead Composer-in-Residence, and Hilary Hahn is CSO Artist-in-Residence.

From baroque through contemporary music, the CSO commands a vast repertoire. Its renowned musicians annually perform more than 150 concerts, most at Symphony Center in Chicago and, each summer, at the suburban Ravinia Festival. They regularly tour nationally and internationally. Since 1892, the CSO has made 62 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents.

People around the globe listen to weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings on the WFMT radio network and online at [cso.org/radio](http://cso.org/radio). Recordings by the CSO have earned 63 Grammy Awards, including two in 2011 for Muti's recording with the CSO and Chorus of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* (Muti's first of eleven releases with the CSO to date). Find details on these and many other CSO recordings at [cso.org/resound](http://cso.org/resound).

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (Ken-David Masur, Principal Conductor), a training ensemble for emerging professionals. Through its prestigious Symphony Center Presents series, the CSOA presents guest artists and ensembles from a variety of genres — classical, jazz, world and contemporary.

The Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO offers community and education programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds. Through the Institute and other activities, including a free annual concert led by Muti, the CSO is committed to using the power of music to create connections and build community.

The CSO 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.