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**Press Contact:**  
[Eileen Chambers](#)  
312-294-3092

## **VIOLINIST BLAIR MILTON TO RETIRE AFTER 48 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

CHICAGO – Blair Milton, a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s first violin section for 48 years, will retire on November 1. Across his distinguished tenure with the Orchestra, he performed under music directors Sir Georg Solti, Daniel Barenboim and Riccardo Muti, as well as former Principal Conductor Bernard Haitink and Principal Guest Conductor Pierre Boulez, and participated in 44 international tours, including the Orchestra’s first tours to Asia, Australia and South America.

Milton, who was appointed to the CSO by Solti, performed with the Orchestra for the first time at the opening concert of the 1975 Ravinia Festival season. He went on to perform regularly on the chamber music series of the CSO and the Ravinia Festival. He also appeared as a soloist with the Chicago String Ensemble and with the CSO conducted by Sir Georg Solti.

Milton became a founding member of the Evanston Chamber Ensemble in 1979 and was also the originator of the Winter Chamber Music Festival, which will mark its 28<sup>th</sup> season in January 2024. Since the founding of the Festival, he has performed with Daniel Barenboim, Gil Shaham, Menahem Pressler, Yo-Yo Ma, Pinchas Zukerman, Lynn Harrell and János Starker, among others.

A dedicated educator and mentor, Milton has been a member of Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music violin faculty since 1984, Milton is also director of its Summer Violin Institute. He has given master classes across the United States, as well as in South America, Germany and Japan.

A native of Canada, Milton began his musical training at McGill University in Montreal. He earned a master’s degree at Indiana University where he studied with the legendary Josef Gingold. Other teachers include Ivan Galamian, Franco Gulli and former CSO concertmaster Sidney Harth.

Reflecting on his time in the CSO, Milton said: “It has been a great privilege to work with the very best conductors and to play in the midst of such amazing and dedicated musicians for

these many years. I will miss both the music-making and the camaraderie. It has been an enduring source of inspiration to have played thousands of concerts with all of my colleagues in this remarkable ensemble. The joy of playing Bruckner and Mahler with Solti, Mozart piano concerti with Barenboim, and Verdi's *Macbeth* with Muti stand out as experiences that I will always cherish. I leave with a lifetime of artistic memories and lifelong friends."

After retiring from the CSO, Milton will continue teaching at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music and continue as director of the Winter Chamber Music Festival. He also looks forward to spending more time with his wife Barbara, and his children and grandchildren. Milton will receive the CSO's Theodore Thomas Medallion for Distinguished Service at a date to be announced.

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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](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 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](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](https://www.cso.org/civic-orchestra-of-chicago) is a training ensemble for emerging professionals with Ken-David Masur serving 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, world 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 Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.