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FEBRUARY PROGRAMMING AT SYMPHONY CENTER AND IN THE COMMUNITY

CHICAGO — February programming presented by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) at Symphony Center and in community venues features a wide variety of events, including Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) concerts with renowned guest conductors and soloists. February CSO concert highlights include return podium appearances by Esa-Pekka Salonen (January 30-February 8), David Afkham (February 14-16) and Dame Jane Glover (February 20-22). Conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali makes his CSO podium debut in a program featuring Seong-Jin Cho as soloist in Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto (February 27-March 2).

February programming showcases a variety of guest artists. Organist Iveta Apkalna makes her CSO debut in the Orchestra's first performances of Salonen's *Sinfonia concertante* for Organ and Orchestra (January 30-February 4). Mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubanova and bass-baritone Christian Van Horn return as soloists with actor Breezy Leigh as narrator for Bartók's landmark opera *Bluebeard's Castle* (February 6-8). Returning soloists include Christian Tetzlaff in Sibelius' Violin Concerto (February 14-16) and CSO Concertmaster Robert Chen as soloist in Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* and Ravel's *Tzigane* (February 20-22).

Additional highlights include programs across a variety of CSO concert series. The CSO for Kids series returns with music and storytelling for the youngest audiences with *Once Upon a Symphony: The Little Red Hen* (February 1). CSO Chamber Music continues with a program featuring Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* at the University of Chicago's Mandel Hall (February 2) and music for string quartet at the Beverly Arts Center's Baffes Theatre (February 23).

Symphony Center Presents (SCP) concerts in February feature a Chicago debut by acclaimed pianist Alexandre Kantorow (February 2), Grammy Award-winning jazz singer and composer Cécile McLorin Salvant (February 21), Japanese taiko drumming ensemble Kodo (February 25), and the 18-member string orchestra Sphinx Virtuosi in a special program that includes Jessie Montgomery's Rounds for Piano and String Orchestra, with pianist Awadagin Pratt and Montgomery as guest concertmaster for her work (February 25). Pink Martini featuring China Forbes will celebrate their 30th anniversary with a return to Symphony Center (February 28).

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago showcases several collaborations throughout February. Conductor Alexander Shelley makes his Civic Orchestra debut leading works by French composers Boulanger, Ravel and Debussy (February 10). Civic Fellows return to Epiphany Center for the Arts with families from Purpose Over Pain for songs of tribute in a Notes for Peace Reunion (February 16) and Buntrock Hall for the second collaboration with participants from Chicago Refugee Coalition (February 23).

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

[Explore](#) a chronological list of February 2025 concert programs.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Bartók Concerto for Orchestra ([January 30-February 4](#))

The extraordinary organist of the Klais organ at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Germany, Iveta Apkalna makes her CSO debut in the Orchestra's first performances of Sinfonia concertante for Organ and Orchestra, composed and conducted by San Francisco Symphony Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen. The program is framed by Richard Strauss' tone poem *Don Juan* and Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra — two signature works of the CSO.

Salonen Conducts Bluebeard's Castle ([February 6-8](#))

Award-winning opera stars, mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubanova and bass-baritone Christian Van Horn, join acclaimed conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen for Bartók's compelling one-act opera *Bluebeard's Castle*, and actress Breezy Leigh makes her CSO debut as narrator. Beethoven's Second Symphony opens the program.

Tetzlaff Plays Sibelius ([February 14-16](#))

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Spanish National Orchestra and Chorus David Afkham leads a program showcasing Christian Tetzlaff in Sibelius' Violin Concerto. The program opens with Wagner's Prelude to Act 3 of *Lohengrin* and Schoenberg's lush early tone poem *Pelleas and Melisande* — premiered in 1903, only a year after Debussy's famous opera of the same name — closes the program.

Glover Conducts English Classics ([February 20-22](#))

Music Director of Chicago's Music of the Baroque and Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire Jane Glover leads a program highlighting English masterworks and honoring the 150th anniversary of Ravel's birth. Elgar's Serenade for Strings opens the program, Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* and Ravel's *Tzigane* for Violin and Orchestra features CSO Concertmaster Robert Chen as soloist. The program also includes Britten's Suite on English Folk Tunes follows and Haydn's Symphony No. 104 (*London*) closes the program.

Seong-Jin Cho Plays Prokofiev ([February 27-March 2](#) & CSO at Wheaton [February 28](#))

Principal Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chief Conductor of the Gothenburg Symphony Santtu-Matias Rouvali makes his CSO podium debut leading Sibelius' Fifth Symphony. Evoking Roman carnivals, Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien* opens the program, and Seong-Jin Cho — the award-winning Artist-in-Residence for the Berliner Philharmoniker this season — performs Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto.

The program is also offered on Friday, February 28 at Wheaton College's Edman Memorial Chapel (401 E. Franklin St., Wheaton, IL) as part of the [CSO at Wheaton](#) concert series.

Seong-Jin Cho will participate in a CD signing after the concert on Sunday, March 2. The signing will take place in the Rotunda, with merchandise available at the Symphony Store and in the Orchestra Hall outer lobby prior to the event.

CSO for Kids

Once Upon a Symphony: The Little Red Hen ([February 1](#))

Produced and presented in partnership with Chicago Children's Theatre, Once Upon a Symphony combines vibrant music played by members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with storytelling and enchanting visuals for a playful concert experience. Delightful musical selections combine with the story of a cow, horse and pig who all turn down the Little Red Hen's requests for help planting wheat, grinding flour and baking bread — and are disappointed when the hen eats the delicious bread all by herself.

CSO Chamber Music

CSO Chamber Music at the University of Chicago ([February 2](#))

CSO musicians Danny Yehun Jin (assistant principal second violin), Qing Hou (violin), Lawrence Neuman (viola), John Sharp (principal cello), Stephen Williamson (principal clarinet) and guest Umi Garrett (piano) perform a program investigating how artists

respond to catastrophe, featuring Mozart's Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in A Major and Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*.

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

CSO Chamber Music at the Beverly Arts Center ([February 23](#))

CSO musicians Matous Michal (violin), So Young Bae (violin), Danny Lai (viola) and Karen Basrak (cello) perform works for string quartet written by Black composers. Jessie Montgomery's *Strum* opens the program, employing American folk idioms and evoking the spirit of dance and movement. Florence Price's String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor follows, and Wynton Marsalis' *At The Octoroon Balls*, which explores the American Creole contradictions and compromises exemplified by life in New Orleans, closes the program.

This concert takes place at the Baffes Theatre at the Beverly Arts Center (2407 W. 111th St., Chicago, IL).

Symphony Center Presents Piano

Alexandre Kantorow ([February 2](#))

Winner of the prestigious Gilmore Artist Award in 2024 and the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 2019, Alexandre Kantorow makes his SCP Piano series and Chicago debut performing a virtuosic program of works for piano. Brahms' Rhapsody in B Minor opens, followed by Liszt's Transcendental Etude No. 12 in B Minor (*Chasse-neige*) and Vallée d'Obermann from *Années de pèlerinage, Première année, Suisse*. The program continues with Bartók's Rhapsody, Op. 1 and Rachmaninov's impressive Sonata No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 28, and closes with Brahms' arrangement of Bach's Chaconne in D Minor for the Left Hand.

Alexandre Kantorow will participate in a postconcert CD signing in Grainger Ballroom, with merchandise available in the Symphony Store preconcert and the Ballroom at intermission and postconcert.

Symphony Center Presents Jazz

Cécile McLorin Salvant ([February 21](#))

Three-time Grammy Award winner Cécile McLorin Salvant connects vaudeville, blues, jazz, baroque and traditional folk music. As singer and composer, Salvant bridges the musical past and contemporary world and features imaginative interpretations of standards and original works.

Symphony Center Presents Featured Concerts

Kodo One Earth Tour 2025 ([February 23](#))

With over four decades of performances across five continents, Kodo Taiko Performing Arts Ensemble brings traditional Japanese instruments to Chicago, performing original compositions with the mission to transcend language and cultural boundaries through music.

Sphinx Virtuosi: American Form/s ([February 25](#))

Sphinx Virtuosi, the 18-member string orchestra connected to the Detroit-based Sphinx Organization, makes its Symphony Center debut in a program of masterworks by prominent Black and Latino composers, including Scott Joplin's overture from the opera *Treemonisha*, selections from Teresa Carreño's *Serenade for Strings*, Derrick Skye's *American Mirror Part One*, Levi Taylor's *Daydreaming* (A Fantasy on Scott Joplin) and Juantio Becenti's *Hané* for String Quartet. Principal Percussionist of the Grant Park Orchestra Josh Jones joins as soloist in Curtis Stewart's *Drill* Concerto for Prepared Drum Set and Strings. Former CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery's 2024 Grammy Award-winning *Rounds* for Piano and String Orchestra, featuring Avery Fisher Career Grantee Awadagin Pratt, closes the program with Montgomery joining the ensemble as guest concertmaster for her work.

Pink Martini featuring China Forbes: 30th Anniversary Tour ([February 28](#))

Pink Martini celebrates 30 years with a genre-bending program fusing everything from French café music and Brazilian sambas to Cuban rumbas and jazz. This Portland, Oregon, ensemble features the Montreal International Jazz Festival's Ella Fitzgerald Award-winning singer China Forbes performing a selection of beloved hits and latest songs.

Civic Orchestra of Chicago

Boulanger, Ravel & Debussy *La mer* ([February 10](#))

Artistic and Music Director of Artis—Naples and Music Director of Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra Alexander Shelley makes his Civic Orchestra debut leading a French program featuring Lili Boulanger's *D'un matin de printemps*, Debussy's *La mer* and Paul Tortelier's orchestration of Ravel's Piano Trio.

The CSO Student Ambassadors host [Teen Night](#) at Symphony Center. Attendees between the ages of 13 and 19 can enjoy complimentary pizza and treats, mingle with new friends and attend a teen arts panel discussion before a concert in Orchestra Hall.

Reservations are required and open January 27.

Notes for Peace Reunion ([February 16](#))

Launched in March 2018 in partnership with Purpose Over Pain, the Notes for Peace project empowers parents who have lost children to gun violence to create original songs of tribute. Join families from Purpose Over Pain, Fellows of the Civic Orchestra, guest vocalists and musicians from the Irene Taylor Trust for a concert of songs of tribute, reprising projects spanning from the initiative's beginnings and growing the Notes for Peace community.

This free event takes place at the Sanctuary at Epiphany Center for the Arts (201 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL); reservations are encouraged.

Civic Fellows x Chicago Refugee Coalition ([February 23](#))

Civic Orchestra Fellows present a program celebrating cultural identity through music and storytelling curated in partnership with participants from the Chicago Refugee Coalition.

This free event takes place in Buntrock Hall at Symphony Center; reservations are required and open February 7.

Food and Beverage

The Thomas Club, located on the ninth floor of Symphony Center with sweeping views of Lake Michigan, offers a prix fixe menu featuring traditional American fare for a seamless preconcert dining experience. View menus, make reservations, and learn more about dining at the Thomas Club at 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 located at Symphony Center's 67 E. Adams St. entrance, and is available for select performances. A round-trip North Shore Shuttle service is available for Friday matinees. Visit cso.org/parking for more parking and transit options.

Patron Information

Contact Patron Services for personalized assistance online at 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.

United Airlines is the Official Airline of the CSO.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association 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.

The appearance of Christian Tetzlaff is made possible by the Grainger Fund for Excellence.

The 2024/25 Civic Orchestra season is generously sponsored by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation, which also provides major funding for the Civic Fellowship program.

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The Seong-Jin Cho Plays Prokofiev concerts are generously sponsored by Zell Family Foundation.

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

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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](#) 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](#), 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.