

For Immediate Release:
October 30, 2024

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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION SHARES ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS AND OPERATING RESULTS OF ITS 133RD SEASON

CHICAGO — The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) released the operating results of fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024) at its Annual Meeting on October 30, 2024. Mary Louise Gorno, Chair of the Board of Trustees, and CSOA President Jeff Alexander conducted the meeting at Symphony Center with CSOA supporters in attendance. Gorno and Alexander shared artistic highlights from the 133rd season, and CSOA Treasurer Renée Metcalf reported the organization's financial results. Dale Hedding, CSOA Vice President of Development, announced the confirmation of new Trustees and CSOA Officers. Additional reports were shared by James Smelser, Chair of the Members' Committee of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), and Chair of the CSOA Governing Members Merrill Blau, who also conducted the annual induction of new Governing Members.

The meeting concluded with a performance by CSO Principal Viola Teng Li of music by Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Zimbalist, arranged by the renowned violist and string pedagogue William Primrose. Li, who holds the Paul Hindemith Principal Viola Chair, was appointed to the position in 2024 and is currently in her first season in the Orchestra.

The CSOA's 2023/24 Season included landmark performances for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Riccardo Muti in Chicago, at Carnegie Hall in New York City and on a critically acclaimed 11-city European tour in January 2024. Muti became Music Director Emeritus for Life at the beginning of the 2023/24 Season. In April 2024, Klaus Mäkelä returned for his third CSO engagement and by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees as recommended by the Music Director Search Committee was named the 11th music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Following regular appearances with the CSO that are planned for the next three seasons as Zell Music Director Designate, Mäkelä's official tenure as Zell Music Director will begin in the 2027/28 Season with a five-year term. CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery and CSO Artist-in-Residence Hilary Hahn culminated their three-year appointments in 2024 with performances, as well as residency activities that connected with young musicians and community members.

During the 2023/24 Season, the CSOA offered 494 public programs, representing an overall increase of more than 7% from the previous year as levels of concert and community event activity continue to recover in the post-pandemic period. This included 296 free programs offered at Symphony Center and in community venues across 44 weeks through June 2024. A highlight was the CSO's return to Apostolic Church of God in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood at a February 2024 free community concert performed for a capacity audience. CSOA season programming was preceded by the CSO's annual six-week residency at the Ravinia Festival in Summer 2023.

The number of tickets sold was 292,000 across 198 paid, ticketed concerts in a variety of venues ranging in size from 250 to 2,500 seats and representing \$23 million in ticket sales. This is the highest reported annual ticket revenue since fiscal year 2018 when ticket revenue reached a record high level of \$23.3 million and an increase of nearly \$1 million from the previous fiscal year.

Ticket buyer households increased to 57,000 unique households, including 29,000 first-time ticket buyers, representing continued improvement over the previous year and exceeding the highest level of unique ticket buyer households on record since fiscal year 2018 with 54,000 households. The CSOA's student ticket program also saw a record number of 22,000 student tickets sold to concerts across the season, representing 8% of total tickets sold.

Donor support experienced further growth with 15,740 individual gifts contributed by 11,799 donors and representing \$23.8 million in direct operational support. The CSOA's results from operations included total revenues of \$78.8 million and expenses of \$80.2 million resulting in an operating deficit of \$1.4 million.

[View details](#) of CSOA financial highlights from the 2023/24 Annual Report.

In addition to the presentation of financial results, the meeting included the election of three new CSOA Trustees, who were elected to three-year terms, and the election of CSOA board officers, including Mary Louise Gorno as Board Chair and Chester Gougis, Steven Shebik and Helen Zell as Vice Chairs and Renée Metcalf as Treasurer. With her re-election at the Annual Meeting, Gorno begins a new three-year term as Board Chair after her initial term as Chair from 2021-2024.

CSOA Board Chair Mary Louise Gorno said, "Throughout this remarkable season, I was reminded of the loyalty of longtime audience members and thrilled to see many newcomers and young people engaging in the music of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and stellar guest artists. I also witnessed the enthusiastic welcome that Klaus Mäkelä received from audiences and musicians alike, and the warm reception that audiences gave to Maestro Muti and the CSO while on our first European tour since 2020. The continued generosity of our supporters was key to these achievements."

CSOA President Jeff Alexander said, "It was an incredibly positive sign to see concert audiences continue to grow during this ongoing period of recovery in the arts. We welcomed

significant numbers of new ticket buyers and a record number of student ticket buyers to a wide variety of programs last season. There were also memorable occasions such as Maestro Muti's concerts in Chicago and on tour, as well as the appointment by unanimous vote of Klaus Mäkelä as the CSO's 11th music director. This historic announcement followed the conclusion of a music director search process that began in 2019. The warm reception of Klaus' appointment from musicians and audiences signals good things to come in the years ahead."

CSO Members' Committee Chair James Smelser said, "The Musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra enjoyed a full season of wonderful concerts here in Chicago, which were all warmly received by our generous and loyal patrons. We were fortunate to have been able to continue our special musical relationship with Maestro Muti, our Music Director Emeritus for Life, which included a glorious tour in Europe in January 2024. The announcement of Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä is a milestone of anticipation of what the future will hold for us, and we look forward to beginning our new relationship with Maestro Mäkelä. Throughout the season, the Staff, led by Jeff Alexander and the Trustees led by Mary-Lou Gorno provided comfort and financial stability for our great orchestra, and the Musicians are grateful for this continued commitment. We look forward to another fulfilling season with our Chicago audiences."

Ticket Sales and Operating Revenue for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

- Ticket sales totaled \$23 million.
- In addition to ticket revenue, other operating revenue totaled \$9.4 million including performance fees, Symphony Store retail sales, facility lease and rental income and media and royalties.
- Total operating revenue was \$32.4 million.

Contributed Revenues for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

- Total operating support, net of fundraising event expense, was \$46.4 million. This included direct operational support and the organization's annual 5% endowment draw.
- Direct operational support totaled \$23.8 million.
- The *SEMPRE* ALWAYS campaign is a major fundraising initiative that launched in fiscal year 2020 with a leadership gift and challenge from the Zell Family Foundation. The campaign goal to secure \$175 million in support for the CSOA builds a strong financial foundation for the organization to continue promoting the CSO's preeminent role as a cultural organization showcasing musical brilliance, leadership and innovation. Gifts to the *SEMPRE* ALWAYS campaign are incremental, additional contributions, above and beyond a donor's annual contributions toward general operating support for the CSOA and are assigned to long-term strategic needs.

During the 2023/24 Season, the *SEMPRE* ALWAYS campaign secured 34 new commitments totaling \$46 million. With these new gifts, the campaign reached a total of \$159.9 million as of June 30, 2024, of which \$39 million represent gifts made through estate plans or planned giving.

Final Revenue and Operating Expense Information for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

- Total revenues (earned revenue and operating support) were \$78.8 million.
- Total operating expenses reached \$80.2 million, resulting in operating deficit of \$1.4 million.

Endowment

- Total endowment and other investments were \$453.5 million at June 30, 2024.
- Endowment investments increased from \$359.8 million at June 30, 2023, to \$406.8 million at June 30, 2024, as a result of investment gains and new gifts to the *SEMPRE* ALWAYS campaign. Over the same period, other investments, including beneficial interest in trusts, increased from \$41.7 million to \$46.7 million. The CSOA continued to reduce its long-term debt, which totaled \$117 million as of June 30, 2024, and has reduced the balance by nearly 20% since June 30, 2017.

Total Assets

- Total assets at year-end were \$581.8 million. Net assets increased \$77 million as of June 30, 2024, to \$420.3 million.

CSOA Trustees, Governing Members and Officers Elected

- Three new CSOA Trustees were elected to three-year terms: Jennifer Amler Goldstein, former manager of Jamler Group LLC; Christopher A. O’Herlihy, president and chief executive officer of Illinois Tool Works Inc.; and Santa J. Ono, president of the University of Michigan.
- 16 Trustees were re-elected to additional three-year terms, and 18 new Governing Members were installed. Special acknowledgement was given to 30 individuals who have served on the CSOA Board of Trustees for 30 years or more.
- The following individuals were elected as officers of the CSOA Board of Trustees: Mary Louise Gorno, Chair; Chester Gougis, Steven Shebik and Helen Zell, Vice Chairs; and Renée Metcalf, Treasurer. Gorno was elected to a second three-year term as Board Chair through 2027. The following CSOA staff were elected as officers of the CSOA Board of Trustees: Jeff Alexander, President; Stacie Frank, Assistant Treasurer; Kristine Stassen, Secretary of the Board; and Dale Hedding, Vice President for Development.

A moment of silence was observed for those trustees who passed away since the last Annual Meeting: Kay Bucksbaum, Howard Gottlieb, Dietrich Gross, Paul Judy, John Lillard and Earl Rusnak, and musicians Charles Geyer, trumpeter from 1966 to 1978; Frank Kaderabek, trumpeter from 1958 to 1966; Albert Payson, percussionist from 1958 to 1997; and Paul Phillips, violinist from 1980 to 2020.

CSOA Programming Highlights – 2023/24 Season

The CSOA's 2023/24 Season opened as Riccardo Muti stepped into the role of Music Director Emeritus for Life following 13 years of celebrated artistic partnership with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO). Muti led the opening CSO concerts in Chicago, as well as the opening concerts of Carnegie Hall's season in October. These programs included appearances by celebrated violinist Leonidas Kavakos as soloist and the world premiere of the CSO-commissioned work *The Triumph of the Octagon* by composer Philip Glass who attended the performance in New York. Muti reunited with the Orchestra in Europe in January 2024 to lead the CSO's first European tour since 2020, traveling to 11 cities in seven countries in 19 days. There were critically heralded performances at stops including Brussels, Paris, Frankfurt, Vienna, Milan and Rome, with the Vienna and Brussels programs including performances of Florence Price's Symphony No. 3, which Muti and the CSO first performed in Chicago in 2022. Price's First Symphony was premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933, marking the first performance of a large-scale composition by a Black woman composer given by a major U.S. orchestra.

In addition to the Philip Glass premiere, contemporary music was present across CSOA programming throughout the season. Following the April 2, 2024 announcement of Klaus Mäkelä as the CSO's 11th Music Director beginning in the 2027/28 Season, Mäkelä led a program that opened with the U.S. premiere of Sauli Zinovjev's *Batteria*. The balance of the program, which included Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10 and the composer's first cello concerto with the internationally acclaimed cellist Sol Gabetta in her CSO debut, received critical acclaim in reviews from *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Chicago Tribune*, among others.

Two CSO principal musicians gave the world premieres of CSO-commissioned concertos written for them: Principal Flute Stefán Ragnar Höskuldsson in Lowell Liebermann's Flute Concerto No. 2 and Principal Percussion Cynthia Yeh in *Procession*, a percussion concerto by CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery. Montgomery's concerto represented her third CSO world premiere during her tenure in the role from 2021-2024.

Montgomery's CSO MusicNOW-commissioned work Concerto Grosso received its world premiere at a concert that was inspired by composer-performers and included the world premiere of the CSO MusicNOW commission, *Resonance*, by violinist and composer Curtis Stewart. To launch the season of her curated CSO MusicNOW concerts, Montgomery also performed in a concert that highlighted works by the Blacknificent 7, a collective of contemporary Black composers including Montgomery, Jasmine Barnes, Dave Ragland, Shawn Okpebholo, Damien Geter, Joel Thompson and Carlos Simon.

Other contemporary works featured during the season included the first CSO subscription performances of the Violin Concerto No. 1 by Philip Glass with Karen Gomyo as soloist and Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell as soloist in *The Elements*, a suite of five works for violin and orchestra, commissioned by Bell and written by American composers Kevin Puts, Edgar Meyer, Jake Heggie, Jennifer Higdon and Jessie Montgomery. In the closing subscription concerts of the season, Daniil Trifonov, the acclaimed pianist who is the CSO Artist-in-Residence for the 2024/25 Season, was soloist in the Orchestra's first performances of the Piano Concerto by former CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Mason Bates.

Other CSO programming highlights featured CSO Artist-in Residence Hilary Hahn's appearance in Brahms' Violin Concerto with guest conductor Mikko Franck; the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis onstage with the Orchestra for a jazz-inspired, CSO-commissioned arrangement of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*; concerts with the Chicago Symphony Chorus including performances to capacity audiences of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 (*Resurrection*) with Neeme Järvi on the podium; the free CSO community concert at Apostolic Church of God conducted by Paavo Järvi and featuring cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason as part of his first CSO appearances; CSO Concertmaster Robert Chen and Principal Oboe William Welter as soloists in Bach's Concerto for Violin and Oboe; and the three-concert CSO at Wheaton series, with guest conductors Philippe Jordan, Susanna Mälkki and Tugan Sokhiev. Capping the season were four, sold-out concerts of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performing the music of composer and pianist Joe Hisaishi with the composer conducting. Hisaishi is widely known for his scores for films directed by Academy Award-winning Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki.

During the 2023/24 Season, Symphony Center Presents (SCP) offered more than 30 concerts on its series for Jazz, Piano, Chamber Music and Orchestras, as well as additional concerts that welcomed the world's leading soloists and ensembles to Orchestra Hall. The SCP Jazz series launched with the series debut of Samara Joy, the 2023 Grammy winner for Best New Artist and Best Jazz Vocal Album and welcomed the return of eight-time Grammy winner Christian McBride who led a musical tribute to civil rights icons in *The Movement Revisited*. The SCP Piano series introduced Chopin International Competition winner Bruce Liu and Dutch piano duo Lucas and Arthur Jussen in their debuts. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma and pianist Kathryn Stott performed a varied program in a sold-out concert as part of the SCP Chamber Music series. Visiting orchestras this season included the Staatskapelle Berlin conducted by Jakub Hrůša, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Simon Rattle and the all-Black Gateways Festival Orchestra, led by conductor Anthony Parnter and featuring a special appearance by the a cappella group Take 6.

Programs of the Negaunee Music Institute (NMI) at the CSO engaged diverse communities across the Chicago area and while the orchestra toured domestically and internationally. 36 CSO for Kids concerts for children pre-K through grade 12 and families reached more than 22,000 audience members. 13,000 of these attendees were Chicago Public Schools students who were provided with free tickets and school bus transportation through an access initiative launched by the NMI during the 2019-20 season. In addition, in-depth partnerships with 41

Chicago Public Schools and five west suburban schools expanded access to music education.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago – the CSO’s prestigious training program for early-career musicians – gave seven full orchestra concerts at Symphony Center and five in community venues, including the annual Bach Marathon. Highlights of the Civic season were collaborations with Eighth Blackbird, the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and members of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. 11 Civic Fellows participated in supplemental training that built skills in artistic planning, music education, social justice and project implementation.

Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery mentored six musicians as part of the second annual Young Composers Initiative (YCI). 16-year-old Jaden Teague- Núñez won the 2024 Crain-Maling Foundation Young Artists Competition with a steelpan concerto – *A Visit to Hell* – written by his father, Liam Teague. The Chicago Youth in Music Festival engaged hundreds of young musicians from CPS as well as community youth orchestras through side-by-side activities with the Civic Orchestra at Symphony Center.

CSO Artist-in-Residence Hilary Hahn joined Civic Orchestra musicians and family members at A Notes for Peace Celebration concert, which marked six years of partnership with Purpose Over Pain through this ongoing program that empowers family members to create songs of tribute that honor loved ones lost to gun violence. Hahn also led a unique workshop with young conductors and the Civic Orchestra focused on the collaboration and rehearsal techniques for soloists with orchestras.

Musicians from the CSO led master classes at Carnegie Hall, in Belgium and Paris, and a CSO chamber ensemble performed for asylum seekers at a social service center in Brussels. This complemented a new pilot program of the NMI that supports migrants and refugees in Chicago, presented in partnership with the Chicago Refugee Coalition. The first concert took place in Buntrock Hall at Symphony Center in March 2024 and celebrated the lived experiences and cultures of participants from Kenya, Nigeria, Congo, Venezuela, Benin, Somalia and Brazil.

CSO Resound, the ensemble’s Grammy Award-winning independent record label launched in 2007, was recognized as a 2024 Grammy Award winner. The CSO Resound recording *Contemporary American Composers* featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Riccardo Muti in performances of music by Philip Glass, Jessie Montgomery and Max Raimi was recognized with a Grammy Award in the category of Best Engineered Album, Classical (David Frost & Charlie Post, engineers; Silas Brown, mastering engineer), bringing the CSO’s overall total to 65 Grammy awards from the Recording Academy.

More artistic programming, education and community engagement highlights and information about the CSOA’s digital engagement platforms including CSOradio, CSOtv, as well as the partnership with Apple Music Classical are available by accessing the [CSOA 2023/24 Annual Report](#).

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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.