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## **2026 YOUNG COMPOSERS INITIATIVE FINALE CONCERT TO SHOWCASE WORLD PREMIERES BY EMERGING VOICES**

CHICAGO — On [Friday, June 12, at 7:00 p.m.](#), members of the Young Composers Initiative (YCI) — a training program offered by the [Negaunee Music Institute](#) at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) — debut original works in a free public concert, performed by musicians from the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, in Symphony Center's Buntrock Hall.

Now in its fourth season, the YCI engages youth from across the Chicago area and empowers them to create new pieces of chamber music. With mentorship from [former CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery](#), these selected composers workshopped new pieces of chamber music throughout the 2025/26 Season:

- Delaney Baeza, 18, The Chicago Academy for the Arts
- Iain Blair, 17, Jones College Prep
- Amber Dong, 18, Adlai E. Stevenson High School
- Christopher Mertz (returning from 2024/25), 15, Adlai E. Stevenson High School
- Thomas Muñoz Velasquez, 17, Amundsen High School
- Wren Page, 17, Wheaton North High School

In addition to participating in monthly individual coaching sessions with Montgomery, the composers gathered in March for a practicum with Civic Orchestra musicians, who will record the compositions on June 10 in Buntrock Hall.

Montgomery, who hosts the upcoming concert on June 12, originally launched the Young Composers Initiative during the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's 2022/23 Season. The program will continue in the 2026/27 Season, providing emerging talent with the opportunity to receive direct mentorship from Montgomery. For more information about the program and its impact, visit [cso.org/yci](https://cso.org/yci).

## **Ticket Information**

Tickets are free; reservations are required and available beginning May 29 at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org).

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.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

The 2025/26 Civic Orchestra season is generously sponsored by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation, which also provides major funding for the Civic Fellowship program.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

The Young Composers Initiative is generously supported by Margo and Mike Oberman.

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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 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, became Music Director Emeritus for Life at the beginning of the 2023/24 Season. Joyce DiDonato is the CSO Artist-in-Residence for the 2025/26 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 domestically, and since 1892, has made 65 international tours, performing in 30 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 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. Donald Palumbo is the Director of the Chicago Symphony 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.