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TENG LI JOINS CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AS PRINCIPAL VIOLA

CHICAGO – The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) announces the appointment of Teng Li as principal viola of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), effective September 15, 2024. Li will hold the Paul Hindemith Principal Viola Chair, which is endowed by an anonymous benefactor. The chair is named for the renowned 20th-century composer Paul Hindemith who was also a distinguished violist, and [appeared as conductor and soloist with the CSO](#). Li succeeds Charles Pikler who served as principal viola from 1986 until 2017. Li-Kuo Chang, who held the assistant principal viola chair from 1988 until 2023, also served as acting principal viola from 2017 until his retirement in 2023. The chair was named the Paul Hindemith Principal Viola Chair in 2015.

After winning the international audition for principal viola in May 2023, Li performed with the CSO as guest principal viola on several occasions and was offered the position in September 2023 by Riccardo Muti, the CSO's Music Director Emeritus for Life. Li also joined Muti and the CSO for concerts in Chicago that month, as well as the concerts that opened Carnegie Hall's season in October and again for the critically hailed January 2024 European Tour. Additional CSO appearances for Li as guest principal viola include April 2024 concerts with Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä and this week's subscription concerts ([June 20-23](#)) with guest conductor Lahav Shani.

Li is currently principal viola of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a position she has held since 2018. Prior to that, she was principal viola for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra for 14 seasons. She has also appeared with other premier ensembles throughout the world, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, National Chamber Orchestra, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Shanghai Opera Symphony Orchestra and Esprit Orchestra.

An ardent chamber musician, Li is a founding member of the Rosamunde Quartet, together with violinists Noah Bendix-Balgley and Shanshan Yao and cellist Nathan Vickery, with whom she has given performances and masterclasses throughout the United States and Canada. She has also appeared at prominent music festivals, including those in Marlboro, Santa Fe, Rome, Cleveland, La Jolla and Moritzburg (Germany), and performed as part of the prestigious Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two program. She has performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and the 92nd Street "Y" Chamber Music Society in New York, and collaborated closely with the Guarneri Quartet, joining the ensemble in concerts during the quartet's final season in 2008/09.

Li's discography includes her critically heralded solo recording *1939*, for Azica Records, with violinist Benjamin Bowman and pianist Meng-Chieh Liu. She can also be heard on recordings with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Toronto Symphony Orchestra, most notably on the latter's Juno Award-winning Vaughan Williams album for Chandos, which features Li in a "ravishing" (*CBC Music*) performance of *Flos Campi*.

An award-winning artist, Li has been recognized with top prizes at the Johansen International Competition, Primrose International Viola Competition, Klein International String Competition and the ARD International Music Competition in Munich, Germany. She was also a winner of the Astral Artistic Services' 2003 National Auditions.

Originally from Nanjing, China, Li is graduate of the Central Conservatory in Beijing and the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Michael Tree, Joseph de Pasquale and Karen Tuttle. Also a committed educator, Li has taught at the Colburn School, University of Toronto, Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and Montreal's Conservatoire de Musique, and will join the faculty of Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts in the 2024/25 academic year.

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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. 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 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. 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.