

**For Immediate Release:**  
April 3, 2025

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## **ZELL MUSIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE KLAUS MÄKELÄ RETURNS TO CHICAGO TO LEAD TWO CSO PROGRAMS THIS SPRING**

**Mäkelä Leads the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus,  
Uniting Voices Chicago and Contralto Wiebke Lehmkuhl in  
Mahler's Symphony No. 3 (April 24-26)**

**CSO Artist-in-Residence Daniil Trifonov Joins Mäkelä and the Orchestra for  
Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 on Program with Boulez's *Initiale* for Brass Septet  
and Dvořák's Symphony No. 7 (May 1-4)**

### **APRIL 24-MAY 4**

CHICAGO — Klaus Mäkelä, Zell Music Director Designate, returns to Chicago in April for the first time since being named the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's 11th music director in April 2024. Mäkelä launches his tenure as music director beginning in the 2027/28 Season. His CSO residency in April and May features two subscription concert programs, as well as a CSO open rehearsal for donors and a private reading session of Dvořák's Symphony No. 7 with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

In his first CSO subscription program of the residency, Mäkelä leads the combined artistic forces of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Uniting Voices Chicago and contralto Wiebke Lehmkuhl in her CSO debut for three performances of Mahler's Third Symphony ([April 24-26](#)). James Bass is the guest chorus director, and Josephine Lee is the artistic director of Uniting Voices Chicago. These performances represent Mäkelä's first return to the music of Gustav Mahler with the CSO following his acclaimed

2023 performances of Mahler's Fifth Symphony with the Orchestra. For Mäkelä's second set of subscription concerts, he leads a varied program that includes Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 with 2024/25 CSO Artist-in-Residence Daniil Trifonov as soloist, as well as the CSO's first performances of *Initiale* for brass septet by Pierre Boulez, in recognition of the composer's centenary in 2025, and Dvořák's Symphony No. 7 ([May 1-4](#)).

As recently announced, Mäkelä returns to Chicago in four CSO residencies during the 2025/26 Season in October, December, February and March. He also leads the CSO on a U.S. tour in 2026 and makes his Ravinia Festival debut with two CSO programs in summer 2026.

For program, ticket and patron information, visit [cso.org](https://www.cso.org).

### **Mäkelä Conducts Mahler 3 ([April 24-26](#))**

Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä leads composer Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 3, an epic ode to nature as the season of spring arrives. Scored for a massive musical ensemble that includes the full range of orchestral instruments, two choruses and an alto soloist, the symphony's six movements take the listener on a journey between darkness and light that explores humanity's relationship with nature. The sounds of the world are heard in brass fanfares, military marches, bird calls and folk dances, and children's voices evoke the sound of angels and pealing bells. The fourth movement is an orchestral song setting of the poem "O Man" from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, that conveys a deep longing for joy.

Mahler's Third Symphony was first introduced into the CSO's repertoire in 1967 performances conducted by Music Director Jean Martinon with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Chicago Children's Choir and mezzo-soprano Regina Resnik. In 2006, Principal Conductor Bernard Haitink made a live recording of the symphony that served as the inaugural release on the CSO Resound label.

Internationally acclaimed contralto Wiebke Lehmkuhl makes her CSO debut in these performances. Lehmkuhl is heard regularly with international orchestras including the Berliner Philharmoniker, Cleveland Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre de Paris, among others. On opera stages, her signature role as Erda in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* has received acclaim for performances at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Bavarian State Opera and the Opéra de Bastille in Paris. An active recording artist, Lehmkuhl is featured on several recordings of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

### **Mäkelä & Trifonov ([May 1-4](#))**

In his second subscription program, Mäkelä and the CSO welcome CSO Artist-in-Residence Daniil Trifonov for performances of Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 on a varied program that also includes Dvořák's Symphony No. 7 and the CSO's first performances of *Initiale* for brass septet by Pierre Boulez in recognition of the distinguished conductor and composer's centenary in 2025.

The program opens with Brahms' Second Piano Concerto featuring Trifonov as soloist. One of the composer's later works, the concerto opens with a memorable horn solo and includes a playful Scherzo movement that gives way to a richly lyrical adagio movement before reaching a powerful rondo finale.

Daniil Trifonov is the CSO Artist-in-Residence in the 2024/25 Season. Prior to these concerts with the CSO, Trifonov performed on the Symphony Center Presents Piano series in November and with renowned violinist Leonidas Kavakos on the Symphony Center Presents Chamber Music series in March. He coached college-level pianists from four area universities at a masterclass hosted at the DePaul University School of Music last fall and on April 30 leads a masterclass in Orchestra Hall with the four finalists of the 2025 Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition. Trifonov also participates in a post concert CD signing on Thursday, May 1. The signing takes place in the Rotunda at Symphony Center and is open to all ticketholders.

Trifonov is a Grammy Award-winning pianist who is a champion of the concerto repertoire, chamber and vocal collaborator, and composer. Combining consummate technique with rare sensitivity and depth, his performances are a perpetual source of wonder to audiences and critics alike. He won the Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Solo Album of 2018 with *Transcendental*, the Liszt collection that marked his third title as an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist. His latest recording on the label, *My American Story — North*, was released in October 2024. Trifonov was named Gramophone's 2016 Artist of the Year and *Musical America's* 2019 Artist of the Year and was recognized with the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 2021.

In 2011, Trifonov won the International Tchaikovsky Competition, taking first prize and the grand prix, one of only three pianists to hold this distinction. In May 2012, Trifonov participated in the Keys to the City festival at Symphony Center. He appeared that summer in a Ravinia Festival piano recital before making his Chicago Symphony Orchestra debut in subscription concerts that same year performing Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1. Since 2012, he has returned to Chicago regularly for multiple recitals on the Symphony Center Presents Piano series and for solo appearances with the CSO in 2016 with Riccardo Muti for a Symphony Ball concert, as well as CSO subscription concerts in 2015, 2018 and 2023. Trifonov's most recent CSO appearance

was in 2024 as soloist in the Orchestra's first performances of the Piano Concerto by Mason Bates, a former CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence from 2010-2015.

The second half of the program opens with *Initiale* for brass septet by Pierre Boulez. Boulez served as principal guest conductor and conductor emeritus for the CSO and, across four decades, conducted the Orchestra and Chorus in Orchestra Hall, Carnegie Hall, and on tour through Asia and Europe, as well as on numerous award-winning recordings. [Pierre Boulez @ 100](#) explores his extraordinary artistic contributions.

The program concludes with Dvořák's Symphony No. 7. Written in D Minor, the majestic opening theme signals the emotional power and drama that unfolds across the work. The spirited Scherzo movement references lively Czech folk dances, and the finale builds to a thrilling conclusion in D Major.

### **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](https://www.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](https://www.cso.org/parking) for more parking and transit options.

### **Patron Information**

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. 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.

The CSO's music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation.

United Airlines is the Official Airline of the CSO.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

Leadership support is provided by the Zell Family Foundation.

The appearance of the Chicago Symphony Chorus has been made possible by a generous gift from The Grainger Foundation.

Major support is provided by Mr. and Mrs. William Adams IV, Nancy Dehmlow, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Eastwood, and the Sargent Family Foundation.

Program support is provided by Nancy A. Abshire, Ms. Marion A. Cameron-Gray, James Edward McPherson, COL (IL) Jennifer N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (retired), Caroline Foulke Wettersten, and Gifford Zimmerman.

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**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

Thursday, April 24, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 25, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 26, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

**Klaus Mäkelä**, conductor

**Wiebke Lehmkuhl**, contralto

**Chicago Symphony Chorus**

**James Bass**, guest chorus director

**Uniting Voices Chicago**

**Josephine Lee**, artistic director

MAHLER

Symphony No. 3

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**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

Thursday, May 1, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 2, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 3, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 4, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

**Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

**Klaus Mäkelä**, conductor

**Daniil Trifonov**, piano

BRAHMS

Piano Concerto No. 2

BOULEZ

*Initiale*

DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 7

## Klaus Mäkelä

Finnish conductor Klaus Mäkelä has held the position of chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic since 2020 and music director of the Orchestre de Paris since September 2021. He assumes the title of chief conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in September 2027 and, in the same season, begins his tenure as Zell Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. An exclusive Decca Classics artist, he has recorded two albums featuring Ballets Russes scores by Stravinsky and Debussy with Orchestre de Paris. With the Oslo Philharmonic, he has recorded the complete Sibelius Symphonies, Sibelius' and Prokofiev's first Violin Concerto with Janine Jansen and Shostakovich's Symphonies Nos. 4, 5 and 6.

Shostakovich continues as the composer spotlight in Mäkelä's fifth season with the Oslo Philharmonic, which opened with performances of Symphony No. 5 at the Salzburg and Berlin Music Festivals. This season he also conducts Shostakovich's Symphonies Nos. 1, 11 and 15 at home in Oslo, while additional program highlights include Andrew Norman's *Play*, Anders Hillborg's new piano concerto *MAX* with soloist Emanuel Ax, and Sibelius' *Lemminkäinen* Suite.

With a focus on French composers and new works, Mäkelä's fourth season with the Orchestre de Paris pays tribute to the anniversaries of both Ravel and Boulez and features music by Berlioz, Fauré, Debussy, Poulenc and Messiaen. The season also includes premieres of new commissions: Thierry Escaich's *Lux Aeterna* and Charlotte Bray's *A Sky Too Small*. In addition to celebrating the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Philharmonie de Paris, the orchestra tours extensively throughout Europe and returns to Asia in June.

As artistic partner to the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Mäkelä recently conducted the world premiere of a new work by Pulitzer Prize winning composer, Ellen Reid, on tour in the United States and led the traditional Christmas Matinée for the fourth consecutive year. This Spring he leads the orchestra in performances of Mahler's Symphonies Nos. 1 and 8 at the Concertgebouw Mahler Festival.

For his second appearance as Zell Music Director Designate of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Mäkelä leads two weeks of performances at Symphony Center in Spring 2025, with Mahler's Symphony No. 3 followed by a program featuring Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 with soloist Daniil Trifonov, Boulez's *Initiale* and Dvořák's Symphony No. 7.

Guest conducting engagements in the 2024/25 Season include performances with the London Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra and Berliner Philharmoniker. Mäkelä recently made his first appearance with the Vienna Philharmonic in Vienna and on tour. This season he is also a Focus Artist at the Vienna Musikverein and Portrait Artist at the Essen Philharmonie and Brussels Bozar.

As a cellist, Mäkelä partners with members of the Oslo Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris and Concertgebouw Orchestra for occasional programs, and each summer he performs at the Verbier Festival.

Klaus Mäkelä records exclusively for Decca Classics.

[klausmakela.com](http://klausmakela.com)

### Chicago Symphony Orchestra: [cso.org](http://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](http://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.