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FOUR STRING SOLOISTS TO PERFORM AT CRAIN-MALING FOUNDATION CSO YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION FINALS

CHICAGO — On [Saturday, January 17, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.](#), four young artists perform at Symphony Center in the final round of the [Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition](#), a prestigious platform showcasing Illinois' top young soloists.

The [Civic Orchestra of Chicago](#) accompanies the four string players in the free public performance, led by conductor [Naomi Woo](#). The finalists, who were selected through a rigorous live audition process before a distinguished panel of judges, include:

- Violinist Sebastian Manning, 16, performs Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major, I. Allegro moderato. Manning is a Scholarship Fellow at the Music Institute of Chicago Academy, where, as a member of the Hemingway Quartet, he won the Grand Prize at the 2025 Barnett Chamber Music Competition. He is a three-time scholarship recipient at the SoNoRo Interferențe Festival in Bucharest.
- Violinist Cecilia O'Malley, 17, performs Korngold's Violin Concerto in D Major, I. Moderato nobile. O'Malley has collaborated as a soloist with many Midwestern orchestras, including the Elmhurst Symphony and the Lakeview Orchestra. She was a Bronze Medalist in the 2025 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition; she also plays cello and piano.
- Cellist Gabriel Raviv, 17, performs Kabalevsky's Cello Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Cadenza I., II. Presto marcato. Raviv sat as a principal in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra's cello section. He recently won the 2025 Northern Illinois University Sinfonia Concerto Competition and, together with Cecilia O'Malley, the 2025 DePaul Concerto Competition's Duo Strings Division.

- Cellist Ella Wimbiscus, 15, performs Dvořák's Cello Concerto in B Minor, I. Allegro. Since making her solo orchestral debut at age 8, Wimbiscus has performed with Sinfonia da Camera and the Oistrakh Symphony of Chicago, among others. She is a Merit Scholarship Fellow at the Music Institute of Chicago Academy and recently won the Uttwiler Meisterkurse in Switzerland.

The winner will appear with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) as part of the CSO for Kids concert series during the 2026/27 Season.

The Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition provides a unique opportunity for talented young musicians to showcase their skills on a world-class stage. This year's competition was open to strings. Pianist Jeremy Liu, then an eighth grader, won the 2025 competition.

The competition is presented jointly by the League of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association and the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Ticket Information

Tickets are free; reservations are required and available 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 Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition is sponsored by the Crain-Maling Foundation.

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

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.

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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.