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TWO LONGTIME CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS TO RETIRE IN SEPTEMBER

James Ross and Loren Brown to Retire After Decades of Service to the Orchestra

CHICAGO — Two longtime members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) — James Ross, percussion, and Loren Brown, cello — are set to retire in September after decades of service. Ross will perform in his final CSO concert on August 18 in the concluding concert of the CSO's summer 2024 residency at Ravinia. Brown, who is currently on sabbatical, last performed with the Orchestra in 2023. Following their retirements in September, Ross and Brown will receive the Theodore Thomas Medallion for Distinguished Service at a date to be announced. Ross, who joined the Orchestra in 1979, will retire after 45 years. Brown, who joined the Orchestra in 1985, will retire after 39 years.

James Ross, percussion

Appointed to the Orchestra in 1979 by Music Director Sir Georg Solti, James Ross hails from a distinguished musical family. His father, James Ross, was also a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra percussion section from 1954 to 1967 under music director Fritz Reiner and Jean Martinon. After musical studies at Northern Illinois University, Ross performed with the Grant Park Orchestra for six years before joining the CSO. Across his distinguished tenure with the Orchestra, he has performed under music directors Sir Georg Solti, Daniel Barenboim and Riccardo Muti, as well as Principal Guest Conductor Claudio Abbado, Principal Conductor Bernard Haitink and Principal Guest Conductor and Conductor Emeritus Pierre Boulez. He credits Albert Payson, a former member of the CSO percussion section, as an important mentor and colleague in his early career. Ross was also the soloist in 1986 subscription concert performances of Milhaud's Concerto for Percussion, conducted by Erich Leinsdorf, and has performed regularly with brass and percussion colleagues in the annual CSO Brass concerts. Among his favorite performances were those on the more than 50 domestic and international tours he participated in after joining the CSO. A dedicated educator, Ross has also served as a percussion coach for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and as an adjunct percussion faculty member at Northwestern's Bienen School of Music and the Eastman School of Music.

Reflecting on his years in the CSO, Ross said “I have been so fortunate to work with great musical colleagues in the Orchestra, and to make music with exceptional conductors and soloists across my career. Being on stage to participate in and listen to incredible performances of this amazing Orchestra has been a joy and a privilege. and I feel lucky that I’ve been able to do that in Chicago and on tour for so many years.”

After he retires, Ross looks forward to spending more time with his family and having more opportunities to travel, including a trans-Atlantic trip with his daughter on the Queen Mary 2.

Loren Brown, cello

Loren Brown joined the CSO under music director Sir Georg Solti in 1985. This followed 10 years as principal cello of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. While in Milwaukee he also performed with Pro Musica Nova, a new music ensemble, in addition to giving numerous recitals, concerto and chamber music performances. Earlier in his career, Brown lived in Washington D.C. and spent four years as a member of the U.S. Navy String Quartet and also performing as principal cello of the National Gallery Orchestra and in the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra.

During his CSO tenure, Brown has performed under music directors Sir Georg Solti, Daniel Barenboim and Riccardo Muti, as well as Principal Conductor Bernard Haitink and Principal Guest Conductor and Conductor Emeritus Pierre Boulez. In 1992, he was a soloist in the Orchestra’s first performances of David Ott’s Concerto for Two Cellos alongside fellow CSO cello Donald Moline. As a featured member of the CSO cello section, Brown also performed with Yo-Yo Ma in a Silk Road Ensemble concert at Symphony Center during Ma’s tenure as Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant and in Villa-Lobos’ *Bachianas brasileiras* with distinguished cellist Lynn Harrell and the CSO at Ravinia. He also performed with such ensembles as Chicago Pro Musica, the Chicago Chamber Musicians and the Chicago Symphony Chamber Players. With these and other ensembles, he has concertized extensively throughout the U.S., Europe and Australia. In Japan, Brown participated in several chamber music tours and served on the faculty of the Affinis Arts Foundation summer festival. Other concert highlights with the CSO include Brown’s participation in more than 40 domestic and international tours, including eight tours to Asia and the Orchestra’s first tours to Russia and Australia.

About his years performing with the CSO, Brown noted “I find it remarkable that there is such synergy across more than 100 musicians who come together to carry the legacy of this great Orchestra to make music at the highest level with the best conductors and soloists. That feeling is very special, and I have felt honored and lucky to be a part of it.”

In retirement, Brown and his wife, cellist Anne Monson, look forward to a new chapter living closer to family and friends in Utah and enjoying more travel together.

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Chicago Symphony Orchestra: 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](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 the 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. 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.