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THE CSO AFRICAN AMERICAN NETWORK ANNOUNCES 2025/26 SEASON PROGRAMMING

Season Includes Networking Events and Concerts at Special African American Network Pricing

CHICAGO — The CSO African American Network (AAN) announces the 2025/26 Season of programming, deepening its commitment to celebrating Black composers, conductors and artists across genres including classical, jazz and new music. Celebrating its 10th season, the CSO African American Network presents popular networking events, celebrations and artist meet-and-greets. These events are held alongside six concerts featuring artists including Christian McBride & Brad Mehldau, soprano Julia Bullock with the CSO, José James with Lizz Wright and more.

A liaison and volunteer group with over 1,800 active members, the CSO [African American Network](#) was established in 2016. The group aims to engage Chicago's culturally rich African American community through the sharing and exchanging of unforgettable musical experiences while building relationships for generations to come. The AAN celebrates Black excellence in classical music and beyond at concerts, receptions and educational events throughout the season. Membership to the AAN is free and open to all. Sign up now at [cso.org/AAN](#).

More information is available at [cso.org](#).

African American Network Concerts & Events

A season subscription package is available, offering audiences the flexibility to choose three or more African American Network concerts at special prices, with subscriber benefits, including flexible ticket exchanges, exclusive parking rates and the opportunity to add on additional concerts at a discount, including Herbie Hancock and Samara Joy & the CSO. The following concerts feature an AAN event, where a separate, free reception ticket is required to join the celebrations, artist meet-and-greets and networking opportunities.

Christian McBride & Brad Mehldau ([October 10](#))

In a rare bass and piano duo performance, these Chicago favorites showcase their extraordinary musical rapport and captivating interplay. The combination promises an evening of nuanced musical conversation.

Till Eulenspiegel & Bullock Sings Aucoin ([December 6](#))

Star soprano Julia Bullock gives the world premiere of a new song cycle, written for her by former CSO Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprentice Matthew Aucoin. Set to the poetry of Chilean writer Raúl Zurita, the piece explores themes of memory, language and spirituality.

Merry, Merry Chicago! ([December 21](#))

Gather with friends and loved ones in Orchestra Hall — decked with boughs of holly — for a program of familiar carols, holiday songs and festive surprises.

José James with Lizz Wright: Marvin Gaye's I Want You ([February 6, 2026](#))

Singer Lizz Wright joins forces with internationally renowned José James to reimagine the music of this provocative album in celebration of its 50th anniversary. Experience this soulful homage to one of R&B's most influential recordings.

Mike Reed's Chicago Inspirations ([May 1, 2026](#))

Drummer-composer Mike Reed explores the legacy of Chicago bassist and ACM member Fred Hopkins with new works, including a commission by Henry Threadgill.

Gaffigan, Thibaudet & Bernstein ([June 13, 2026](#))

Chicago's Apostolic Church of God Sanctuary Choir performs a stirring selection of spirituals alongside sumptuous orchestral highlights from Gershwin and Weill musicals.

Additional Featured Concerts in the 2025/26 African American Network Season

showcase the artistry of Blacknificent 7 composers Jessie Montgomery, Carlos Simon and Joel Thompson, soprano Jeanine De Bique, jazz legend Wynton Marsalis, and more:

- Piccolo Play & Adagio for Strings ([October 3-4](#))
- Honeck Conducts Mozart Requiem ([November 20-23](#))
- Jaap van Zweden, Himari & Mozart Jupiter ([February 12-15, 2026](#))
- Nubya Garcia / Somi ([March 13, 2026](#))
- IMPACT: Showcasing Education & Community Programs of the CSO ([March 15, 2026](#))
- Miles Davis at 100: Gonzalo Rubalcaba / Unlimited Miles ([March 27, 2026](#))
- Alsop Conducts Adams, Copland & Marsalis ([June 4-6, 2026](#))
- Lincoln Portrait & Ellington Harlem ([June 18-21, 2026](#))

Ticket and Patron Information

CSO African American Network individual tickets and 2025/26 Season subscriptions are available for purchase now at cso.org/AAN or by phone at [312-294-3000](tel:312-294-3000).

Individual AAN concert tickets start at **\$40**. For concerts with an event, a separate, free, reception ticket is also required.

AAN membership is free and open to all, and members enjoy access to:

- Exclusive pre- and postconcert events
- An expansive networking community
- Ticket offers throughout the season
- And more

All artists and programs are subject to change.

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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 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. Launched in 2007, [CSO Resound](https://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://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://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://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://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.