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CIVIC ORCHESTRA OF CHICAGO ANNOUNCES PROGRAMMING DETAILS FOR 2023/24 SEASON PERFORMANCES

Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur Leads Three Programs

Civic Welcomes Guest Conductors James Gaffigan, Tito Muñoz, Andrew Grams, Roberto Kalb, Kyle Dickson, Giancarlo Guerrero and Former CSO Solti Conducting Apprentice Lina González-Granados to Lead Concerts

Programming Includes Special Collaborations with Chicago Symphony Chorus, Eighth Blackbird and Ryan Opera Center

Civic Community Concerts Offered in Neighborhood Venues Across the City Throughout the Season

CHICAGO — The Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's prestigious training ensemble for early-career musicians, announces programming details of its 2023/24 Season. The Civic Orchestra's Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur, who is also music director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, leads three programs this season, including the finale concert of the annual Bach Marathon in December, this year featuring three *Brandenburg* concertos and two cantatas of J.S. Bach. Other highlights include former CSO Solti Conducting Apprentice and LA Opera Resident Conductor Lina González-Granados returning to Symphony Center to lead Civic in a program featuring acclaimed contemporary music ensemble Eighth Blackbird, a collaboration with the Patrick G. and Shirley Ryan Opera Center led by Roberto Kalb and a lineup of extraordinary conductors.

Civic Orchestra concerts are free to the public and presented on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. at Symphony Center, unless otherwise noted. Civic tickets will be available to reserve two weeks prior to each concert. Tickets for Civic's season-opening concert on October

23 with guest conductor James Gaffigan may be reserved beginning October 9 at 10:00 a.m. More information is available at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org).

Founded in the 1918/19 Season by the CSO's second music director, Frederick Stock, the Civic Orchestra marks its 105th season in 2023/24. In the year ahead, Ken-David Masur will continue in his role as Civic Principal Conductor, leading three programs, two of which will be performed at Symphony Center and repeated at community venues. Masur's programming highlights include the [December 4](#) Bach Marathon finale concert featuring Civic musicians in the *Brandenburg* Concertos Nos. 3, 4 and 5, with the Chicago Symphony Chorus joining them for Cantatas Nos. 110 and 40; a program performed [January 7](#) and [8](#) that is inspired by traditional American folk music and includes the *Negro Folk Symphony* of William Dawson and Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 (*From the New World*), and a program performed [April 7](#) and [8](#) featuring a diverse set of works by composers Shulamit Ran (CSO Composer-in-Residence from 1990-97), Martinů and Prokofiev. Masur holds The Robert Kohl and Clark Pellett Principal Conductor Chair.

In addition to Masur's programs with Civic, the Orchestra also welcomes renowned guest conductors to the podium to lead concerts. James Gaffigan who last led Civic in 2009, conducts the opening concert of the 2023/24 Season on [October 23](#). The Civic season continues with programs led by returning guest conductors Tito Muñoz ([November 19 & 20](#)), former CSO Solti Conducting Apprentice Lina González-Granados ([February 12, 2024](#)) and Andrew Grams ([March 11, 2024](#)). Conductor Roberto Kalb makes his Civic Orchestra and Symphony Center debut in a concert featuring singers from the Ryan Opera Center on [June 3, 2024](#). Conductors Kyle Dickson and Giancarlo Guerrero also make Civic podium appearances this year. Dickson leads the Finals concert of the Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition ([February 24, 2024](#)), and Guerrero leads the culminating performance of the 2024 Chicago Youth in Music Festival ([April 29, 2024](#)).

Civic Orchestra repertoire features core symphonic works, as well as a broad array of music by living composers, including current and former CSO Mead Composers-in-Residence. Highlights include Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 and Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances, Gabriella Smith's *Tumblebird Contrails*, Viet Cuong's *Vital Sines* and Margaret Brouwer's *Remembrances*, as well as the *Negro Folk Symphony* by William Dawson, who was a Civic trombone player from 1927-30, and Florence Price's Symphony No. 1. Repertoire by former CSO composers-in-residence includes Elizabeth Ogonek's *All These Lighted Things*, Mason Bates' *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology*, Shulamit Ran's *Vessels of Courage and Hope* and current Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery's *Coincident Dances*.

[Explore](#) the Civic Orchestra of Chicago 2023/24 Season.

Civic at Symphony Center

Symphonic Dances ([October 23](#))

The Civic Orchestra opens its season with three works rooted in American soil, anchored by Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*. Written during the composer's exile in the U.S., the suite combines memories of old Russia with a jazzy, new-world exuberance. Commissioned by the CSO, Elizabeth Ogonek's 2017 *All These Lighted Things* expresses what she calls "a sense of overwhelming happiness and joy." John Adams' kinetic *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* evokes an exhilarating ride in a sports car.

Natural Wonder ([November 20](#))

In Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, birds warble, peasants celebrate together outdoors and a thunderstorm rages across the countryside. The music was inspired by Beethoven's own walks outside his home in Vienna, Austria. Gabriella Smith's *Tumblebird Contrails* from 2014 captures her feelings of ecstasy and wonder as she hiked along the rugged California coastline. The vast, arching melodies of Hovhanness' *Mysterious Mountain* suggest metaphorical summits — where "the mundane and spiritual worlds" are said to meet.

New World Perspectives ([January 8, 2024](#))

Antonín Dvořák's *New World Symphony* has captivated generations of listeners with its majestic fanfare and yearning themes. Written during the Czech composer's first sojourn in New York City, the piece draws on his impressions of spirituals and folk melodies, creating a unique musical vision of America. William Dawson — a Civic trombonist from 1927-30 — evokes his own heritage and point of view in the emotionally rich and masterfully crafted *Negro Folk Symphony*, composed in 1934 in Chicago.

Fantastic Zoology ([February 12, 2024](#))

In his CSO-commissioned work *Anthology of Fantastic Zoology*, Mason Bates uses a teeming array of sounds to portray sprites, sirens, a gryphon and other extraordinary beasts over 11 marvelously surreal movements. Einojuhani Rautavaara's ethereal concerto for birds and orchestra, *Cantus Arcticus*, features recorded bird calls from arctic Finland. Viet Cuong's *Vital Sines* highlights the virtuosity of four-time Grammy Award-winning Chicago sextet and critically hailed contemporary music ensemble Eighth Blackbird.

Courage & Hope ([April 8, 2024](#))

Prokofiev's *Fifth Symphony*, which pays tribute to the grandeur of the human spirit, closes a program of music shaped by World War II. Martinů's symphonic poem *Memorial to Lidice* remembers the Czechs killed during the destruction of their village by

the Nazis in 1942. Israeli American composer and former CSO Mead Composer-in-Residence Shulamit Ran commemorates a pivotal ocean voyage of German Holocaust refugees in 1947 in her piece *Vessels of Courage and Hope*.

Civic & Ryan Opera Center ([June 3, 2024](#))

Members of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's renowned artist development program join the Civic Orchestra of Chicago for this grand finale to the 2023/24 Season. Program to be announced.

Civic in the Community

Natural Wonder ([November 19](#))

The Civic Orchestra performs a free community concert at Nicholas Senn High School (5900 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago) on Sunday, November 19, at 2:00 p.m. The program will also be performed at Symphony Center on Monday, November 20, at 7:30 p.m.

Bach Marathon ([December 4](#))

The Civic Orchestra presents a Bach Marathon, continuing its beloved annual tradition with a day of J.S. Bach's joyous and inventive music. This includes performances in communities throughout the city and in a culminating concert at Fourth Presbyterian Church (126 E. Chestnut St., Chicago) on Monday, December 4, at 7:00 p.m. The Civic Orchestra's virtuosity is put on display, and the *Brandenburg* Concertos lift spirits with their pulsing rhythms, novel instrumental combinations and an electrifying harpsichord solo. Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur leads two Christmas cantatas that showcase Bach's masterful writing for voices, here brought to life by the Chicago Symphony Chorus and soloists.

New World Perspectives ([January 7, 2024](#))

The Civic Orchestra will make its 17th consecutive appearance at the historic South Shore Cultural Center (7059 S. South Shore Dr., Chicago) on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. The program will also be performed at Symphony Center on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Celebrating Women Composers ([March 11, 2024](#))

The Civic Orchestra will perform at a community venue (to be announced) on Monday, March 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Conductor Andrew Grams will lead a program featuring the works of women composers in honor of Women's History Month. Florence Price's joyous and sumptuous Symphony No. 1 anchors a multigenerational program of works by women composers. When the CSO premiered Price's symphony in 1933, she became the first Black woman to have a piece played by a major American orchestra. Mead Composer-in-Residence Jessie Montgomery portrays a bustling urban

streetscape in *Coincident Dances*, while Margaret Brouwer's *Remembrances* is a poignant elegy.

Courage & Hope ([April 7, 2024](#))

The Civic Orchestra performs a community concert at Kenwood Academy High School (5015 S. Blackstone Ave., Chicago) on Sunday, April 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. The program, led by Principal Conductor Ken-David Masur, includes Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony as well as a side-by-side performance with the Kenwood Academy High School Orchestra.

Civic Chamber Music

Each season, members of the Civic Orchestra present chamber music concerts both in Buntrock Hall at Symphony Center and in Chicago-area venues. Information about additional Civic chamber music performances will be posted to [cso.org](#) as it becomes available.

Civic Fellows Chamber Concerts ([January 28](#) and [May 10, 2024](#))

The 2023/24 Civic Fellows curate and perform two chamber music programs this season. The first will be performed on January 28 in Buntrock Hall at Symphony Center. The second will take place on May 10 at Epiphany Center for the Arts and feature members of International Contemporary Ensemble, as well as special guest Douglas Ewart.

Civic Fellows

Thirteen members of the Civic Orchestra have been appointed as Civic Fellows for the 2023/24 Season and will participate in additional professional development activities throughout the season. The Fellowship program, which launched in fall 2013, immerses the musicians in rigorous training that builds skills in artistic planning, music education, community engagement and program management. Fellow reflections on past events and information about upcoming events can be found at [cso.org/civic](#).

Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition

Founded in 1919, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Youth Auditions have featured extraordinary young soloists from across Illinois. Now known as the [Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition](#), this concerto competition identifies one outstanding young performer to be featured in a CSO School and Family Concert the following season.

This year's competition is open to woodwinds, brass, percussion and harp, and finalists will play one movement of a concerto onstage in Orchestra Hall, accompanied by the Civic Orchestra and conducted by Kyle Dickson, in the final, public round on [Saturday, February 24, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.](#) This event is free and open to the public; tickets can be reserved two weeks prior to the event.

Chicago Youth in Music Festival ([April 29, 2024](#))

A panorama of sarcastic waltzes, brassy outbursts, ghostly effects and echoes of Mahler, Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony represents the composer at his most deliriously inventive. The piece was so experimental that Shostakovich canceled its 1936 premiere, knowing that it would antagonize Stalin. The Civic Orchestra joins forces with Chicago-area high school students to perform this monumental work and conclude the annual Youth in Music Festival.

Supporters

The 2023/24 Civic Orchestra season is generously sponsored by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation, which also provides major funding for the Civic Fellowship program.

Major support for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago also provided by Robert and Joanne Crown Income Charitable Fund; Leslie Fund, Inc.; Judy and Scott McCue; Barbara and Barre Seid Foundation; The George L. Shields Foundation, Inc., the Maval Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

Civic Orchestra programs are partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Program & Ticket Details

Civic Orchestra of Chicago performances at Symphony Center and in neighborhood venues are free, but tickets are required unless otherwise noted. Seating is general admission, and there is a nonrefundable \$5 per ticket service fee for most performances that take place at Symphony Center. Tickets will become available two weeks prior to each concert.

Ticket reservations for Civic Orchestra of Chicago performances can be made online at [cso.org](https://www.cso.org), by phone at [312-294-3000](tel:312-294-3000) or in person at the CSO box office at 220 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604.

Artists, programs and prices are subject to change.

For more information about the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, visit cso.org/civic.

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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. Riccardo Muti, the Orchestra's distinguished 10th music director from 2010 until 2023, was recently named Music Director Emeritus for Life beginning with 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 63 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](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 64 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://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://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.