

**For Immediate Release:**

June 17, 2025

**Press Contact:**[Eileen Chambers](#)

312-294-3092

## **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL TRUMPET MARK RIDENOUR TO RETIRE AFTER 31-SEASON CAREER IN THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

CHICAGO – Mark Ridenour, assistant principal trumpet, will retire in June following 31 seasons as a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO). His final concerts will be the four performances of Verdi's Requiem ([June 19-24](#)) conducted by Riccardo Muti, the CSO's music director emeritus for life.

Across Ridenour's distinguished tenure with the Orchestra, he has performed under music directors Daniel Barenboim and Riccardo Muti, as well as Music Director Laureate Sir Georg Solti, Principal Conductor Bernard Haitink, Principal Guest Conductor Pierre Boulez, and Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä. He participated in 34 international tours, including the Orchestra's first tours to South America and Mexico, as well as the 2025 European Tour that included performances at the Mahler Festival in Amsterdam with guest conductor Jaap van Zweden.

Ridenour has held the position of assistant principal trumpet since his appointment by Daniel Barenboim in 1994. He performed with the Orchestra for the first time during the 1994 Ravinia Festival season. From 2003 to 2005, 2016 to 2019 and during the 2024-25 season he performed as acting principal trumpet. Ridenour will be recognized with the CSO's Theodore Thomas Medallion for Distinguished Service at a date to be announced.

Reflecting on his time in the CSO, Ridenour said: "It has been an honor to work with incredible musicians and share great music with audiences in Chicago, across the country and around the world as a member of this Orchestra. To touch the heart and the soul of the listener is the goal of any musician, and to connect to people through music is something that I hope I can continue to do whenever I have the opportunity. I am grateful for the memories of countless great performances and experiences during my years with the Orchestra."

Ridenour credits former CSO Principal Trumpet Adolph "Bud" Herseth as the ultimate influence and mentor throughout his tenure. They played together for seven years, before

Herseth's retirement in 2004. Notable performances where Ridenour and Herseth played together included 1996 European tour performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 conducted by Solti, as well as 1997 performances of Brahms' Symphony No. 2 and Mahler's Symphony No. 2 (*Resurrection*) with Bernard Haitink. Ridenour also recalls the generosity of Herseth, who lent him one of his own Bach E-flat trumpets to use in 2005 appearances as a soloist with the CSO in Hummel's Trumpet Concerto with Nicholas McGegan conducting.

Other performance highlights across Ridenour's CSO career include the 1995 performances and recording of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* with the Chicago Symphony Chorus under the baton of Sir Georg Solti with soloists Karita Mattila, José van Dam, René Pape and Ben Heppner that was later released as a commercial recording and recognized with the 1997 Grammy award for Best Opera recording. Additional highlights for Ridenour in that year include the Teldec release of *African Portraits* by American jazz trumpeter and composer Hannibal Lokumbe with Daniel Barenboim conducting.

As a member of the CSO brass section, Ridenour performed in the original Brass Buddies concerts initiated by Principal Trombone Jay Friedman in the 1990s that included an innovative arrangement by Friedman of Strauss' *Alpine* Symphony, written for more than a dozen brass musicians in one of the first programs. He has also been part of the CSO brass concerts that have grown to attract capacity audiences each year at Symphony Center. For the popular CSO brass live recording released on the CSO Resound label, Ridenour was featured as performer and conductor in music of Bach and Gabrieli and in the music of Walton, Grainger, Revueltas and Prokofiev.

In addition to his past solo appearances with the CSO, Ridenour has performed as a soloist with the Florida Orchestra, Highland Park Strings, and Roosevelt University Orchestra, as well as with brass bands in the United States and Canada. He is also heard on the Telarc release of Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 and *Lieutenant Kijé* and the Grammy Award-winning recording of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and *Night on Bald Mountain* with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Ridenour began his professional career as third trumpet in the Lexington Philharmonic while a senior in college. He continued in this position through graduate school and also became a member of the Dayton Philharmonic. He was then appointed to the trumpet section of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, where he also served as acting principal trumpet his first season, before accepting the position of principal trumpet with the Florida Orchestra, where he spent six seasons before coming to Chicago.

Ridenour began playing the trumpet at the age of 10. His first private lesson came when he enrolled at Asbury College, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree. He earned a master of music degree at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and completed two years of doctoral studies.

Among his other major influences and teachers are former New York Philharmonic principal trumpet and brass educator Philip Smith, former Cincinnati Symphony trumpets Marie Speziale

and Philip Collins, and Eugene Blee, former principal trumpet at the Cincinnati Symphony who was Ridenour's primary trumpet professor at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Having earned a recognition as a renowned brass clinician, Ridenour has regularly been invited to lead master classes in Canada, Europe and Asia and has also led master classes during CSO national and international tours.

After raising his three children (Michele, Amanda and Matthew) with his wife Linda, Ridenour is looking forward to moving to his farm in Kentucky to enjoy spending more time outdoors, and with his children and grandchildren. He will also continue to teach at the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music and participate regularly in performances with the Salvation Army Southern Staff Band.

# # #

**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 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.