



**For Immediate Release:**  
September 12, 2023

**Press Contacts:**  
[Eileen Chambers](#)  
312-294-3092

## **SIX MUSICIANS JOIN THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AS 2023/24 SEASON IS SET TO BEGIN**

**New Members of the Orchestra include Principal Horn Mark Almond;  
Assistant Principal Second Violin Danny Yehun Jin;  
Principal Librarian Justin Vibbard; and  
Basses Ian Hallas, Alexander Horton and Andrew Sommer**

CHICAGO — Music Director Emeritus for Life Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) announce the appointments of six new members who join the Orchestra as the 2023/24 Season begins in September. Muti, who participated in final auditions as part of his activities as music director in the 2022/23 Season, appointed Mark Almond as Principal Horn, Danny Yehun Jin as Assistant Principal Second Violin and Justin Vibbard as Principal Librarian, as well as three new members of the bass section: Ian Hallas (who officially joined the CSO during its 2023 residency at the Ravinia Festival), Alexander Horton and Andrew Sommer.

### **Mark Almond, Principal Horn**

Dr. Mark Almond joins the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as principal horn having previously worked as associate principal horn of the San Francisco Symphony, co-principal Horn of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and third horn of the Philharmonia Orchestra, London.

A native of Bolton, England, Dr. Almond began his musical education at the age of nine playing tenor horn in local brass bands. He studied medicine at Cambridge and Oxford universities, during which time he made his professional debut with the London Symphony Orchestra aged 19. He holds a PhD in virology from Imperial College,

London and worked as a respiratory physician in a number of London teaching hospitals before becoming a full-time horn player.

Dr. Almond has appeared as a guest principal with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic orchestras among others. He is an active chamber musician and has recently performed at the Music@Menlo, Cleveland ChamberFest and Santa Fe Chamber music festivals.

He currently teaches horn at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts and is a visiting professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

### **Danny Yehun Jin**, Assistant Principal Second Violin

Originally from South Korea, violinist Danny Yehun Jin made his debut as a soloist with the Seoul Royal Symphony at the age of nine. Jin, who was co-concertmaster of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and concertmaster of the Music Academy of the West Orchestra in 2023 has also recently appeared as a soloist with the Seoul Philharmonic, Suwon Philharmonic, and Charleston Symphony orchestras. Jin is an award-winning violinist, having received Fifth Prize at the Menuhin Competition Beijing in 2012 and being named the winner of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra's second Young Artist Competition in 2016. After studying at Korean National University of Arts and the Korean National School for the Gifted in Arts as a young violinist, Jin recently received his bachelor's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music in 2023 as a Sandra G. and David G. Marshall Fellow. At Curtis, he was a student of Ida Kavafian and Erin Keefe.

### **Justin Vibbard**, Principal Librarian

Justin Vibbard has built a distinguished career as an orchestra librarian since his 2004 appointment as principal librarian of the Florida West Coast Symphony (now the Sarasota Orchestra). In his addition to his tenure with the Sarasota Orchestra, Vibbard has also served as librarian for the Mostly Mozart Music Festival at Lincoln Center from 2007-2014, 2022 and 2023 as well as providing library services for organizations including the Britt Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, Joffrey Ballet, Grant Park Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, National Youth Orchestra (USA), Columbia University (NY) and Santa Fe Opera. A respected voice in the field, Vibbard has been a member of the Major Orchestra Librarians Association (MOLA) since 2000, having served on the MOLA Publications Committee for many years and presenting as a speaker at several annual conferences.

Originally from Clovis, New Mexico, Vibbard pursued a bachelor's degree in trombone performance at Union College (Lincoln, NE) and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln

where he became interested in a career as a performance librarian. As an undergraduate, Vibbard pursued librarianship under the mentorship of Tim Howe (formerly of the Ohama Symphony). He also served as the first library fellow for the Civic Orchestra of Chicago from 2000-2003 under the mentorship of Chicago Symphony Orchestra Librarians Peter Conover, Carole Keller and Mark Swanson. Following his time with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Vibbard's training continued under the guidance of Robert Sutherland at the Metropolitan Opera and Robert O'Brien of the Cleveland Orchestra.

### **Ian Hallas, Bass**

Ian Hallas has maintained a versatile career as an orchestral musician in the greater Chicago area in recent years after first joining the bass section of the Lyric Opera Orchestra in 2016 and later being appointed its principal bass in 2019. He was also the principal bass for the 2022 Season at Santa Fe Opera. Hallas has also performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Detroit, Atlanta, Pittsburgh and Milwaukee symphonies, and the Grant Park Orchestra. Hallas was an award-winning fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, being recognized with Tanglewood's prestigious Maurice Schwartz Prize in 2013, and was also invited to be a guest chamber musician at Spoleto Festival USA where he performed with the St. Lawrence Quartet and members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has also participated in several other summer music programs including the Aspen Music Festival, Music Academy of the West and the Domaine Forget Summer Music Academy. As an educator, Hallas is on the faculty at Northwestern's Bienen School of Music and maintains a private studio in Chicago's north suburbs. He also teaches at the National Music Festival and was a teaching assistant at the Double Base Workshop at BUTI.

Hallas holds a bachelor's degree with distinction in research and creativity from Rice University where he studied with Paul Ellison and a master's degree from the University of Southern California where he studied with David Moore. He has also been heavily influenced by bassists Chris Hanulik and Todd Seeber and has worked extensively with master luthier Mike Shank.

### **Alexander Horton, Bass**

Originally from Tallahassee, Florida, Alexander Horton has established a career as an orchestral musician and music educator in Alabama since 2017 when he was appointed principal bass of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Grant Park Orchestra, and received fellowships to attend the Aspen Music Festival, Marrowstone Music Festival and National Music Festival. Horton completed his bachelor's degree at Florida State University, where he studied with Melanie Punter, and completed one year of

graduate study at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music as a student of Bruce Bransby before joining the ASO. He has served on the faculties of Auburn University, Samford University, the University of North Alabama and Birmingham-Southern College.

### **Andrew Sommer, Bass**

Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Andrew Sommer has established a career as an orchestral musician, having served as principal bass for the Richmond Symphony Orchestra since 2019. Sommer has also performed as a substitute for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, including on their 2014 tour to Carnegie Hall, and also performed with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. He spent three summers as a member of the Verbier Festival Orchestra in Verbier, Switzerland, and was a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival where he performed with the Aspen Chamber Symphony. Sommer also performs with the chamber orchestra Taiwan Connection. In addition to his orchestral work, Andrew enjoys playing bass in other genres, and performed at the 2013 Grammy Awards ceremony with the Grammy Jazz Combo alongside Latino superstar Juanes.

Sommer received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School where he studied with Albert Laszlo. He also studied with Leigh Mesh and Hal Robinson. His jazz mentors include Kevin Bales and John Patitucci. Sommer's father, the late Douglas Sommer, was his first mentor and teacher and was a renowned bassist and educator who was a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for 25 years.

###

### **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. 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](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 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://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](#) is a training ensemble for emerging professionals with Ken-David Masur serving as its principal conductor. [Symphony Center Presents](#) features guest artists and ensembles across an expansive array of genres, including classical, jazz, world and contemporary. The [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.