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BASS DANIEL ARMSTRONG RETIRES AFTER 27 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CHICAGO – Daniel Armstrong, a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s bass section for 27 years, recently marked his retirement at the end of the 2023 North American Tour in Toronto. Growing up in Canada, his first bass was a plywood instrument bought by his father from a hardware store in his hometown of Kitimat, British Columbia, near the Alaska panhandle; coincidentally, that bass was manufactured in Chicago.

By June 1995, when Armstrong was appointed to the bass section of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) by Music Director Daniel Barenboim, he was playing a classic 18th-century Italian instrument. Prior to joining the CSO, he was assistant principal bass of the Milwaukee Symphony for 12 seasons. He also spent four seasons as a bassist in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

During his CSO tenure, Armstrong has performed in a wide variety of concerts across Chicago and the world, including numerous CSO tours and the 2017 and 2018 Concerts for Peace organized by the CSO’s Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant Yo-Yo Ma. A passionate music educator, Armstrong has also been heavily involved in Negaunee Music Institute programs, performing in schools, after-school programs, community centers, prisons, senior centers and hospitals, as both as a soloist and with a string quintet. Through the Institute, he has also performed in concert with members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

A founding member of the contemporary music ensemble Present Music, Armstrong continues to play with them as time allows. He has appeared as soloist on WFMT, CBC Radio and with orchestras in Milwaukee and Ottawa. He also performs new music with the Jason Seed Stringtet and has performed regularly on the CSO MusicNOW series. More recently, his compositional interests have helped him reach out to audiences throughout the Chicago area, arranging music for the CSO ensemble Cinco, creating songs for Literacy Chicago, and through involvement in the Lullaby Project, which partners with young mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds to bring music into their children’s lives.

“While it is deeply gratifying and a huge honor to be part of this great orchestra, and to perform for wonderful CSO audiences, the opportunities to bring music to people who might never see the inside of Symphony Center have been some of the most enriching experiences the CSO has given me,” Armstrong says.

Having started on piano at the age of four Armstrong taught himself ukulele, guitar and bass, taking his first formal bass lesson during his third year at the University of British Columbia. That marked his switch from Engineering to the Music Department, and he went on to earn music degrees at the University of British Columbia and The Juilliard School.

In retirement from the CSO, Armstrong plans to further his musical interests in chamber music, orchestra, piano, arranging, and songwriting. He rejoined the CSO bass section as a guest for the Kansas City/Florida tour that capped the CSO’s touring activities in the 2022/23 Season and hopes to be back with the CSO on future occasions. Dan and his wife, Judith Harway, are excited about returning to Canada and enjoying their new home in Stratford, Ontario, as well as continuing to spend time in Chicago and the Midwest. He will receive the CSO’s Theodore Thomas Medallion for distinguished service at a date to be announced.

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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 greatest orchestras in the world. Since 2010, the pre-eminent conductor Riccardo Muti has served as its 10th music director. Jessie Montgomery is Mead Composer-in-Residence, and Hilary Hahn is CSO Artist-in-Residence.

From baroque through contemporary music, the CSO commands a vast repertoire. Its renowned musicians annually perform more than 150 concerts, most at Symphony Center in Chicago and, each summer, at the suburban Ravinia Festival. They regularly tour nationally and internationally. Since 1892, the CSO has made 62 international tours, performing in 29 countries on five continents.

People around the globe listen to weekly radio broadcasts of CSO concerts and recordings on the WFMT radio network and online at [cso.org/radio](https://www.cso.org/radio). Recordings by the CSO and Chorus have earned 64 Grammy Awards from the Recording Academy, including two in 2011 for Muti’s recording with the CSO and Chorus of Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem* (Muti’s first of eleven releases with the CSO to date). Find details on these and many other CSO recordings at [cso.org/resound](https://www.cso.org/resound).

The CSO is part of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which also includes the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (Ken-David Masur, Principal Conductor), a training ensemble for emerging professionals. Through its prestigious Symphony Center Presents series, the CSOA presents guest artists and ensembles from a variety of genres—classical, jazz, world and contemporary.

The Negaunee Music Institute at the CSO offers community and education programs that annually engage more than 200,000 people of diverse ages and backgrounds. Through the Institute and other activities, including a free annual concert led by Muti, the CSO is committed to using the power of music to create connections and build community.

The CSO is supported by thousands of patrons, volunteers and institutional and individual donors. The CSO’s music director position is endowed in perpetuity by a generous gift from the Zell Family Foundation. The Negaunee Foundation provides generous support in perpetuity for the work of the Negaunee Music Institute.

