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JANUARY PROGRAMMING AT SYMPHONY CENTER AND IN THE COMMUNITY

CHICAGO — The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association (CSOA) welcomes the new year with a variety of programs at Symphony Center and in community venues.

In its first concerts of 2026, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performs Stanley Kubrick's sci-fi film *2001: A Space Odyssey* under the direction of André de Ridder. The performances — part of the CSO at the Movies series — also feature the Chicago Symphony Chorus, led by guest chorus director Benjamin Rivera (January 9-10). At the end of the month, conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen and former CSO Artist-in-Residence Daniil Trifonov return to Symphony Center for a program featuring Bruckner's *Romantic* Symphony and Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto with the CSO (January 29-February 1).

The Symphony Center Presents (SCP) Piano series continues with Kirill Gerstein's program exploring works by Romantic-era luminaries Liszt and Brahms on January 25. CSO for Kids: Once Upon a Symphony continues with performances of The Ugly Duckling on January 10 and 31. Finalists from the Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition — a prestigious concerto competition for Illinois' top young soloists — perform at Orchestra Hall January 17, accompanied by the Civic Orchestra and led by Naomi Woo. On January 25, Civic Orchestra Fellows and members of the International Contemporary Ensemble perform at Epiphany Center for the Arts.

The CSO embarks on a seven-city U.S. tour with Music Director Emeritus for Life Riccardo Muti from January 15-24, 2026. More information is available at cso.org/ustour.

Tickets and more information are available at cso.org.

[Explore](#) a chronological list of January 2026 concert programs.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Salonen, Trifonov & Beethoven ([January 19-February 1](#))

Over a misty landscape of storybook castles and deeply carved valleys, a solitary horn calls out at dawn. Bruckner's *Romantic* Symphony begins its four-movement journey, encompassing birdsong, forest dances and hymns of thanksgiving. Pianist and former CSO Artist-in-Residence Daniil Trifonov takes on Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto, a work that crackles with invention and ends with a rollicking, dance-like finale.

CSO for Kids

Once Upon a Symphony: The Ugly Duckling ([January 10 & 31](#))

A young duckling is teased for being different. After facing loneliness and other struggles, the duckling matures into a stunning swan, realizing true beauty comes from within. Explore this musical portrait of self-discovery, acceptance and inner strength, with vivid storytelling and small ensemble performances. Produced and presented in partnership with Chicago Children's Theatre, Once Upon a Symphony is designed to introduce children ages 3 to 5 to the world of classical music and the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

CSO at the Movies

A Live Presentation of 2001: A Space Odyssey ([January 9-10](#))

Hailed as one of the greatest films of all time, Stanley Kubrick's sci-fi epic *2001: A Space Odyssey* — renowned for its stunning visuals and groundbreaking use of classical music — features the opening of Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Johann Strauss Jr.'s *The Blue Danube* and the ethereal works of György Ligeti. André de Ridder leads the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in breathtaking live-to-picture performances of this iconic score.

Presented in association with Warner Bros. Discovery, Southbank Centre London and the British Film Institute.

Symphony Center Presents

Kirill Gerstein ([January 25](#))

Join pianist and polymath Kirill Gerstein for a program exploring Liszt and Brahms, two Romantic-era luminaries. Celebrated for his "insightful, boldly projected playing" (*Chicago Classical Review*), Gerstein opens with Liszt's gem-like *Three Petrarch Sonnets* and fantastical *Dante* Sonata. The second half features Brahms' youthful and impetuous Scherzo and the majestic warmth of his Sonata No. 3.

Civic Orchestra of Chicago

Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition Finals ([January 17](#))

The Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition is a prestigious concerto competition for Illinois' top young soloists. This year's competition is open to strings. Finalists perform live in Orchestra Hall, accompanied by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and led by Naomi Woo.

Tickets are free; reservations are required and open on January 5.

Civic Fellows & International Contemporary Ensemble ([January 25](#))

Civic Orchestra Fellows collaborate with members of the International Contemporary Ensemble to curate a concert of music by living composers.

This concert takes place at Epiphany Center for the Arts (201 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago). Tickets are free; reservations are required and open on January 9.

Food and Beverage

Explore Symphony Center's on-site dining options for a seamless preconcert experience. Preorder a Sound Bites meal to enjoy in the Rotunda at Symphony Center before the concert — or make a reservation to dine at the Thomas Club, offering a prix fixe menu featuring traditional American fare and a spectacular view of lake Michigan. View menus and learn more at cso.org/dining.

Parking and Transit Options

Exclusive parking rates are available through Millennium Garages, the Preferred Parking Partner for Symphony Center. The closest parking garage is the Grant Park South Garage, located at 325 S. Michigan Ave. Valet parking is available for select performances at Symphony Center's 67 E. Adams St. entrance. A round-trip North Shore Shuttle service is available for Friday matinees. Visit cso.org/parking for more parking and transit options.

Patron Information

Contact Patron Services for personalized assistance online at cso.org/contact or by calling [312-294-3000](tel:312-294-3000), Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

All artists and programs are subject to change.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

A Live Presentation of 2001: A Space Odyssey is part of the CSO at the Movies series, which is generously sponsored by Megan and Steve Shebik.

The appearance of the Chicago Symphony Chorus for A Live Presentation of 2001: A Space Odyssey has been made possible by a generous gift from The Grainger Foundation.

Support for Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association programming for children and families is provided by BMO, ComEd, John Hart & Carol Prins, Kinder Morgan, PNC Bank, Megan & Steve Shebik, Linda & Michael Simon and the Walter and Caroline Sueske Charitable Trust.

The 2025/26 Civic Orchestra season is generously sponsored by Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation, which also provides major funding for the Civic Fellowship program.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

The appearance of Daniil Trifonov for the Salonen, Trifonov & Beethoven concerts is made possible by an anonymous donor.

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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 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](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 Negaunee Music Institute. The [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](#) 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.