



## NEWS RELEASE

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*"Under Muti, the Chicago Symphony is all power and finesse....He barely had to move for the players to unleash torrents of stupendous, beautifully balanced sound," — The New York Times*

## ***Celebrating 15 Years of The Soraya!***

### **Chicago Symphony Orchestra Makes Debut with Maestro Riccardo Muti**

**Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7:30 p.m.**

**STRAUSS, JR.** Overture to *The Gypsy Baron*

**HINDEMITH** *Mathis der Maler*

**BRAHMS** Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98

***Tickets on Sale Now Starting at \$84 at [TheSoraya.org](https://www.thesoraya.org).***

**(Los Angeles, CA) Jan. 2, 2025** — The world-renowned **Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO)**, led by Music Director Emeritus for Life **Riccardo Muti**, will make its debut at The Soraya with a program that includes Brahms's final symphony, Hindemith's dramatic masterwork *Mathis der Maler*, and Strauss Jr.'s sweepingly romantic Overture to *The Gypsy Baron*. This performance is part of CSO and Maestro Muti's seven-city tour across the western United States.

The CSO concert on Thursday, Jan. 22 is one of five Crystal Series events celebrating The Soraya's [15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary](#). These performances highlight The Soraya's commitment to connecting audiences with world-class artists and international performing arts.

"Over the last 15 years, The Soraya has presented some of the world's finest orchestras, shining in the venue's exceptional acoustics," said Soraya Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber. "As a native-born Chicagoan who grew up attending CSO concerts, I relish the idea of bringing them to The Soraya before my tenure concludes. I am grateful to lead underwriter Anthony Pritzker, a fellow Chicagoan and great L.A. arts supporter."

The CSO concert will be followed by an intimate dinner celebrating The Soraya's 15th Anniversary and the final season of Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber. Funds raised from this dinner will benefit the 15th Anniversary as well as the newly announced [Thor Steingraber Fund for Artistic Innovation](#), which will ensure The Soraya's programming excellence into the future by securing funds for original programming.

### **About the Program**

On rare occasions has The Soraya's Great Hall resounded with Brahms, the Romantic composer often grouped with Bach and Beethoven as the most important composers of two centuries of music, encompassing the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods.

Johannes Brahms' **Symphony No. 4** directly alludes to both Bach and Beethoven. Capping the most prolific period of his career, the 1885 masterpiece has been called his greatest. Just weeks before his death of cancer in 1897, Brahms made his final public appearance at a concert of this composition, greeted with multiple prolonged ovations. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is known for its mastery of Brahms, including recordings by notable conductors Georg Solti, James Levine, and Daniel Barenboim.

Paul Hindemith's ***Mathis der Maler*** (*Mathias the Painter*) questions the role of the artist in society, was composed in 1934 and performed by the Los Angeles Symphony the same year under the baton of Otto Klemperer

CSO will open the evening with the overture to Johann Strass, Jr's ***The Gypsy Baron***, an operetta that premiered in Vienna in 1885 and became international success for the composer.

### **About the Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

Founded in 1891, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is consistently hailed as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra commands a vast repertoire ranging from Baroque to contemporary. Performing in over 150 concerts each year, the CSO's talented musicians are the driving force behind the ensemble's famous sound heard on best-selling recordings as well as in performances in Chicago and on tour throughout the United States and around the globe. For a complete bio, please visit [the Chicago Symphony Orchestra](#).

### **About Riccardo Muti, Music Director Emeritus for Life**

Riccardo Muti is one of the world's preeminent conductors. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's distinguished tenth music director from 2010 until 2023, Muti was named Music Director Emeritus for Life beginning with the 2023–24 Season.

His leadership has been distinguished by the strength of his artistic partnership with the Orchestra; his dedication to performing great works of the past and present, including eighteen world premieres to date; the enthusiastic reception he and the CSO have received on national and international tours; and twelve recordings on the CSO Resound label, with four Grammy awards among them. In addition, Muti's contributions to the cultural life of Chicago—with performances throughout its many neighborhoods and at Orchestra Hall—have made a lasting impact on the city.

Born in Naples, Riccardo Muti studied piano under Vincenzo Vitale at the Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella, graduating with distinction. He subsequently received a diploma in composition and conducting from the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan under the guidance of Bruno Bettinelli and Antonino Votto. For Maestro Muti's complete bio, please visit the [Chicago Symphony Orchestra](#).

### **About The Soraya's 15th Anniversary Events**

In addition to the CSO concert and 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration dinner on Jan. 22, the final event in the series, *Sacredness*, will take place on Saturday, Jan. 31 when pianist Gerald Clayton honors Duke Ellington's *Concert of Sacred Music* featuring Michael Mayo, Christie Dashiell, Tonality and Josette Wiggan. All of whom are nominated for 2026 GRAMMY® awards and will learn if they've won just one night after they perform in *Sacredness*. The Jan. 31 performance also marks the launch of the fifth-annual [Jazz at Naz](#) festival, running Jan. 31 – Feb. 21.

### **For story development and interview requests, please contact:**

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- [CLICK HERE](#) for your press kit, complete with photos, and press releases.

### **About the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)**

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for The Performing Arts (The Soraya) is an award-winning, state-of-the-art 1,700-seat theatre that opened in 2011 as the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Through a transformative gift by Younes and Soraya Nazarian, the venue was renamed The Soraya in 2017. The Soraya is located on the campus of California State University Northridge, the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley.

Executive and Artistic Director Thor Steingraber, in his 12th year leading the organization, sums up what makes The Soraya a central piece of Los Angeles arts and culture. "At The Soraya, we hold a high standard of excellence for every performance from a vast array of artistic disciplines, and we hold steadfast to our commitment to the value and impact of the performing arts in community-building, for the Valley's 1.8 million residents and beyond."

The Soraya's 2025-26 Season is a journey through the expansive sounds of orchestras, the freestyle vibes of jazz, the innovations of dance luminaries, and a vast array of global voices. The

Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to excelling, innovating, and amplifying access for Valley residents, students, and arts lovers across Southern California.

### **For Calendar Listings:**

#### **Chicago Symphony Orchestra**

Riccardo Muti, conductor

Thu Jan 22 | 7:30PM

Tickets:

- \$84 - \$207 (concert only)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner \$1,500 (includes dinner and concert)

#### **Program:**

- STRAUSS, JR. Overture to *The Gypsy Baron*
- HINDEMITH *Mathis der Maler*
- BRAHMS Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98

On rare occasions has The Soraya's Great Hall resounded with Brahms, the Romantic composer often grouped with Bach and Beethoven as the most important composers of two centuries of music, encompassing the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods.

Brahms' Symphony No. 4 directly alludes to both Bach and Beethoven. Capping the most prolific period of his career, the 1885 masterpiece has been called his greatest. Just weeks before his death of cancer in 1897, Brahms made his final public appearance at a concert of this composition, greeted with multiple prolonged ovations. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is known for its mastery of Brahms, including recordings by notable conductors Georg Solti, James Levine, and Daniel Barenboim. Riccardo Muti, Music Director Emeritus for Life, leads the CSO's debut at The Soraya.

#### **Sacredness**

Featuring Michael Mayo, Tonality, and Josette Wiggan

Gerald Clayton, piano and music director

Sat Jan 31 | 2PM

Tickets:

- \$59 - \$117 (concert only)
- 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Closing Party \$300 (includes concert ticket & post-concert reception)

The Soraya has assembled a company of musicians who are entirely 2026 Grammy nominees – pianist and music director Gerald Clayton, L.A.-based gospel choir Tonality, and jazz vocalists Christie Dashiell, and Michael Mayo. Opening The Soraya's 5th-annual Jazz at Naz festival, Clayton brings us *Sacredness*, his rendering of the work Duke Ellington considered his most important, the three Sacred Concerts that were performed between 1965 and 1973 in cathedrals

and churches in San Francisco and New York City. Ellington evoked a Cotton Club revue meets the African American Church that has endured as nondenominational and universal. Clayton brings Ellington's daring masterpiece into the present day with original arrangements, four dancers led by tapper/choreographer Josette Wiggan, an all-star jazz big band, and new spoken word creations.

**Where:** Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)  
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

**Website:** [TheSoraya.org](http://TheSoraya.org)

**Ticket Office:** 818-677-3000

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