



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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# News

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## CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES WINNER OF FIRST INTERNATIONAL SIR GEORG SOLTI CONDUCTING COMPETITION AND APPRENTICESHIP

### Sean Kubota from Japan Wins Two-Year Apprenticeship

CHICAGO — The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association is pleased to announce that **Sean Kubota** was named the winner of the CSO's First International Sir Georg Solti Conducting Competition and Apprenticeship on Saturday, February 19, at Symphony Center.

Kubota receives a two-season apprenticeship, which includes at least four weeks a year in Chicago studying with Music Director Riccardo Muti and Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus Pierre Boulez, along with key guest conductors of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. A \$20,000 cash award each year, as well as travel and lodging expenses, help support apprenticeship activities.

The creation of the CSO's First International Sir Georg Solti Conducting Competition and Apprenticeship was announced by Riccardo Muti in October 2009 as part of his larger vision that includes building on the CSO's great tradition of training young musicians through the creation of a program that would be a vital investment in the future of the art form.

"When I accepted the Music Directorship of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, one of the first ideas that I had was to create an apprenticeship position for young conductors to come to Chicago and study both with me and also with some of my most experienced colleagues whom I have had the pleasure of inviting to conduct this wonderful Orchestra," said CSO Music Director Riccardo Muti.

"I feel it is very important to identify conductors early in their development and to encourage them to study, not only to understand deeply the structure and content of the music, but also to know what it is they want to convey when they stand in front of an orchestra and chorus and how to communicate it.

"I spoke to my good friend Valerie Solti and asked her permission to name this apprenticeship after her husband, Sir Georg Solti, who led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for many years," Muti continued. "We named the competition and apprenticeship in his honor not only because of the great leadership he gave to this Orchestra, but also because he shared my concern that young people, when studying the craft of conducting, should develop the ability to work with singers and instrumentalists from the piano. I believe this study is crucial in the development of a complete musician, one who is able to stand in front of an orchestra with natural authority.

"It is truly gratifying to see this initiative come to fruition with the appointment of the first Sir Georg Solti Apprentice, Sean Kubota," Muti concluded.

RICCARDO MUTI  
Music Director

WILLIAM A. OSBORN  
Chairman

DEBORAH F. RUTTER  
President

YO-YO MA  
Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

The CSO's First International Sir Georg Solti Conducting Competition and Apprenticeship joins the existing training programs run by the Institute for Learning, Access, and Training. The specific responsibilities and activities of the apprenticeship will be tailored to the individual who holds the position. The first year of this distinguished competition attracted applications from 225 young conductors from 40 different countries on five continents.

The semifinal round of the competition was held at Symphony Center from February 4-6, 2011. The 10 semifinalists coached singers from the piano and rehearsed and led the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. The semifinalists were evaluated by a distinguished jury composed of Director of Conducting and Orchestral Studies at The Juilliard School **James DePreist**, bass-baritone **Samuel Ramey**, and Detroit Symphony Orchestra Music Director **Leonard Slatkin**. The semifinal panel was completed by CSO musicians Robert Chen (concertmaster), J. Lawrie Bloom (clarinet/bass clarinet), Katinka Kleijn (cello), and Michael Mulcahy (trombone).

From those evaluations, four finalists were chosen to compete for the apprenticeship: **David Danzmayr** (age 31, Austria), **Sean Kubota** (age 29, Japan), **Lio Kuokman** (age 29, Portugal), and **Ryan McAdams** (age 28, United States). The finals were held on Saturday, February 19, at Symphony Center. CSO Music Director **Riccardo Muti**, bass-baritone **Samuel Ramey**, and CSO musicians Chen, Bloom, Kleijn, and Mulcahy, served on the final jury. The finalists were asked to coach singers from the piano and rehearse and lead the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Sean Kubota was named the winner of the apprenticeship.

Funding for the CSO's First International Sir Georg Solti Conducting Competition and Apprenticeship is provided by a generous grant from The Claire Rosen & Samuel Edes Foundation. The Foundation's deep commitment to education and the arts in America will provide a promising young artist the financial means to focus exclusively on their study with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Maestro Muti and the rare opportunities it provides. Additional funding is provided by Nancy Lauter McDougal and Alfred L. McDougal.

**SEAN KUBOTA** has appeared as a conductor with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Civic Symphony, the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, the Sofia Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestra della Toscana. His conducting teachers include Hugh Wolff, Marin Alsop, Leonard Slatkin, David Zinman, and Kurt Masur. During the summers of 2004 to 2007, Sean was invited to the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Italy. There, he worked with Gianluigi Gelmetti and received the Emma Contestable Fellowship. In 2008, he made several appearances as a fellow conductor at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen. A native of Tokyo, Japan, Kubota received a Masters of music in orchestral conducting in 2005 from The Juilliard School. He later continued his studies and received a professional study diploma from Mannes College of Music. He is a 2008/09 season recipient of the Japanese Government Artist Fund.

Born in Naples, Italy, **RICCARDO MUTI** first came to the attention of critics and public in 1967, when he won the Guido Cantelli Competition for conductors in Milan. In 1971, Muti was invited by Herbert von Karajan to conduct at the Salzburg Festival; his association with the Vienna Philharmonic and the festival continues today. Muti has served as principal conductor of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, chief conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra, music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra and music director of the Teatro alla Scala. In 2006, he was appointed artistic director of Salzburg's Pentecost Festival.

Over the course of his extraordinary career, Riccardo Muti has conducted most of the important orchestras in the world, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, among others. Maestro Muti made his debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the Ravinia Festival in July 1973. His appointment as the CSO's tenth music director was announced in May 2008, and in September 2010, he assumed the post for a five-year contract.

The **CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** is consistently hailed as one of today's leading orchestras. Live performances by the CSO are much in demand at home and in the most prestigious musical venues around the world. In collaboration with preeminent conductors and guest artists on the international music scene, the CSO performs well over 150 concerts each year at its downtown home, Symphony Center, and at the Ravinia Festival on Chicago's North Shore, where it is in residence each summer. With the launch of its Institute for Learning, Access, and Training, the CSO engages more than 200,000 Chicago-area residents annually. Music lovers outside Chicago enjoy the sounds of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra not only through its Chicago Symphony Orchestra Radio Broadcast Series and best-selling recordings on its highly acclaimed record label CSO Resound, but also through frequent sold-out tour performances in the United States and around the globe. Since 1971, the CSO has undertaken 36 overseas tours: 27 to Europe, six to the Far East, as well as one each to Russia, Australia, and South America. For more information about the CSO, visit [www.cso.org](http://www.cso.org).

The **INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING, ACCESS, AND TRAINING AT THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**, launched in October 2008, is dedicated to transforming lives through music and provides a continuum of initiatives that follow the age spectrum—from infancy through early adulthood—promoting lifelong musical citizenship, creating meaningful learning experiences for a wide range of music lovers, providing increased access for Chicago communities, and fostering the next generation of aspiring musicians.

The Institute advocates for the individual and societal benefits of active engagement in music; provides opportunities for expanded, highly visible, and sustainable connections between Chicago's remarkable communities, music institutions, and educational organizations; and ultimately ensures the long-term vitality of the organization and the art form.

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