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“An Absolute
Triumph”

BACKSTAGE
AT SYMPHONY CENTER
APRIL/MAY 2009



After a historic and triumphant three-week tour of Asia, Principal Conductor Bernard Haitink is back in Chicago!

The tour concerts blew away audiences and critics in every city. You won't want to miss these hometown performances, which are Maestro Haitink's last CSO appearances this season and part of our yearlong celebration of his 80th birthday.

"Musically, this has just been an absolute triumph. People try to explain what makes a great conductor, and what makes a great partnership with a great orchestra. To the best of my knowledge, no one has ever fully explained it, and what we have been seeing—and Chicago audiences have certainly witnessed it more than any other—is this partnership between Bernard Haitink...there is just a natural connection."

—Chicago Sun-Times on the CSO's historic Asia tour



Bruckner

Maestro Haitink begins his spring residency leading the Orchestra in four performances of Anton Bruckner's massive Symphony No. 8, which took three and a half years to write. Bruckner sent the score to conductor Hermann Levi, one of his most ardent fans, for review. Sadly, Levi could not understand or follow Bruckner's grand work. The news crushed Bruckner, and he spent more than a year making revisions. The symphony eventually had its first performance in 1892 in Vienna, where it was a critical success.

The CSO is revered as one of the world's foremost Bruckner orchestras and the Eighth Symphony also has a long and poignant history with Maestro Haitink. A leading Bruckner interpreter, he has recorded this symphony multiple times. When reminiscing about his introduction to music, Haitink said, "When I was eight years old, I started to listen to music. I think my first memory of a piece that made an enormous impression on me was Bruckner's Eighth Symphony."



Thursday, April 16, 8:00
Fidelity Investments Thursdays
Friday, April 17, 1:30
Saturday, April 18, 8:00
Tuesday, April 21, 7:30
United Airlines Tuesdays

Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Bernard Haitink conductor
Bruckner Symphony No. 8

Bernard Haitink

CSO Thursday series concerts are sponsored by Fidelity Investments.

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines.



Schubert

The prolific Franz Schubert died before hearing his *Great* Symphony. The score gathered dust for more than 10 years until Robert Schumann uncovered it amongst various manuscripts. He sent it to Felix Mendelssohn, who conducted it for the first time in Leipzig. Schumann was thrilled by the symphony and praised its "heavenly length." But its expansive form provoked laughing and eye-rolling from some musicians. Other orchestras flat out refused to play it because of its technical difficulty. Now it is regarded as Schubert's greatest orchestral work, and is beloved for its freshness, lyric beauty, and striking rhythmic vitality.

Johannes Brahms labored for 20 years on his first symphony. For years, friends and colleagues begged the composer for a symphony, but the shadow of Beethoven was a heavy burden, filling him with doubt. Brahms lamented, "You can't have any idea what it's like always to hear such a giant marching behind you!" He was at the peak of his skills at the age of 43, and this maiden symphony was ambitious, grand in scope, and triumphant in spirit. After its premiere, conductor Hans von Bülow called the Brahms First Symphony, "The Tenth"—his way of complimenting Brahms for continuing the magnificence that Beethoven had embodied in his Ninth.



Christianne Stotijn

- Thursday, April 23, 8:00
- *Fidelity Investments Thursdays*
- Friday, April 24, 8:00
- Saturday, April 25, 8:00
- Tuesday, April 28, 7:30
- *United Airlines Tuesdays*
- **Chicago Symphony Orchestra**
- **Bernard Haitink** *conductor*
- **Christianne Stotijn** *mezzo-soprano*
- **Webern** *Im Sommerwind*
- **Mahler** *Rückert Lieder*
- **Schubert** *Symphony No. 9 (Great)*
- (Thursday-Saturday performances only)
- **Brahms** *Symphony No. 1*
- (Tuesday performance only)

Mezzo-soprano Christianne Stotijn appears as soloist in Mahler's *Rückert Lieder*, a set of five beautiful songs filled with affection, love and tenderness.



DID YOU KNOW...

A twenty-year-old Anton Webern wrote *Im Sommerwind* ("In the Summer Wind"), inspired by a poem by the same name and the bliss of summer in the countryside. The score was buried—literally—for many years and received its first performance nearly 60 years after it was completed. This is the first time the CSO will perform the work.

Shostakovich

The Fifteenth Symphony, Dimitri Shostakovich's last, was written for a relatively small orchestra in a traditional four movement form. He wrote it quickly, sketching ideas starting in April 1971 and finishing the full score at the end of July. The work steers clear of the titles, texts, and hidden messaging of previous symphonies. Often described as enigmatic, this final symphony weaves a haunting musical retrospective and makes a compelling summation. With intermittent quotes from a number of works, most notably Rossini's *William Tell* Overture, Wagner's *Ring* cycle, and his own *Leningrad* Symphony, the fabric of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 15 is imbedded with touches of irony, menace, and heartbreak.

Acclaimed British tenor Ian Bostridge is the soloist in Britten's *Les illuminations*. He says, "For me, the great thing about Benjamin Britten's song cycles with orchestra is that they exist at all. The orchestral repertoire for tenor is all too small.... *Les illuminations* is full of a young man's anger, with a fizzing satirical edge.... And, by giving Rimbaud's prose visions a shape which, as published, they do not have—beginning, a middle and an end—Britten somehow gives free reign to all this savagery and invective while at the same time, ultimately, taming it."

Bostridge "has a way of submerging himself in the music at hand, of drawing us into the poetry so we are hearing not simply a singer but the voice of the composer and the character in his text."

—Chicago Sun-Times

- Thursday, May 7, 8:00
Fidelity Investments Thursdays
- Friday, May 8, 1:30
- Saturday, May 9, 8:00
- Sunday, May 10, 3:00
- **Chicago Symphony Orchestra**
Bernard Haitink conductor
Ian Bostridge tenor
- **Stucky** *Funeral March for Queen Mary*
(after Purcell)
- **Britten** *Les illuminations*
- **Shostakovich** Symphony No. 15



Ian Bostridge

