

Fall Preview: Concerts to get you in the mood for Muti

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Once upon a time, if you didn't "Subscribe Now!," in the immortal words of the late publicity maven Danny Newman, you were left out in the cold for much of the classical music scene in Chicago.

Nowadays, whether due to changing lifestyles, economic uncertainties or more eclectic musical and artistic tastes, what Newman used to dismiss as "fickle single-ticket buyers" are more easily able to "pick the raisins out of the cakes" on offerings from area presenters.

A subscription is still almost always a good idea — it can save you money, ink dates into your calendar and allow you to make various ticket exchanges or returns. But here are some of the raisins that we might pluck from the fall season if we didn't think Danny was looking down on us from press representative heaven.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti takes up the title of the CSO's music director a year from now, but his concerts until then are highly anticipated. On Oct. 15-18, the maestro leads Mozart's Symphony No. 35 and the one Bruckner Symphony he's been close with, the Second, and Oct. 22-27, the sublime Brahms "German" Requiem (which he conducted for the first time just last summer), featuring the Chicago Symphony Chorus. On Oct. 17, Muti and the CSO will celebrate the centennial of the Daniel Burnham Plan of Chicago with a free performance of the Bruckner, followed by a town hall meeting.

During his three years in Chicago, CSO principal conductor Bernard Haitink has been so much more than a placeholder that it is hard to accept that this will be his last season in the top spot. Fortunately the fall holds generous helpings of Haitink leading the CSO: Nov. 5-10, in Ravel and Mendelssohn (complete incidental music from "A Midsummer Night's Dream"), and Nov. 12-14, Haydn (with CSO principal players as soloists) and Bruckner's Ninth.

One of the world's finest pianists, British-born Paul Lewis, debuts Nov. 19-22 with the CSO in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12. The engaging "Beyond the Score" series, which expands to two performances of each musicological exploration this season, kicks off with a look at Mahler's Fourth Symphony Dec. 4 and 6. And Redmoon Theatre debuts Dec. 16-19 with the CSO in pageant-like interpretations of Tchaikovsky works.

Symphony Center Presents

The CSO's presenting series kicks into full swing after the winter break. But this fall holds several unusual occasions.

There's not much that German violinist Christian Tetzlaff cannot or will not do, and on Oct. 11 the intellectual and passionate performer will play all of Bach's sonatas and partitas for solo violin in a marathon recital that will include an hourlong intermission.

A rare Chicago visit by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, long considered one of the world's greatest, is set for Nov. 16 with music director Simon Rattle conducting the music of Wagner, Schoenberg and Brahms' Second Symphony.

Afro-Canadian pianist Stewart Goodyear, just 30 and following his acclaimed CSO debut last year, offers on Dec. 13 what should be a terrific recital program of Scriabin, Samuel Barber and Beethoven's mighty "Hammerklavier" sonata.

MusicNOW

The CSO's hugely popular contemporary series, presented at the Harris Theater in Millennium Park, gets off to an earlier start this season with two tantalizing fall programs. The works of two wonderful iconoclasts, American septuagenarian Frederic Rzewski and Hungarian octogenarian Gyorgy Kurtag, will be heard Oct. 5, and jazz-inspired music by polymath Richard Rodney Bennett and CSO Mead composer-in-residence Mark-Anthony Turnage is set for Nov. 23. The exacting Cliff Colnot will conduct both concerts.

Civic Orchestra

The CSO's venerable training orchestra starts its season of free concerts on Sept. 28 while the CSO itself is just catching up from its European tour, as Colnot conducts Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony and music of Hindemith. German conductor Markus Stenz leads the Civic on Dec. 8 in Schumann and — very rare for Chicago — Hans Werner Henze.

Music of the Baroque

Music director Jane Glover leads the acclaimed ensemble in Handel's "Acis and Galatea" featuring soprano Elizabeth Futral on Oct. 16 at the Harris Theater and on Oct. 17 at First United Methodist Church in Evanston.

Harris Theater for Music & Dance

The Millennium Park venue continues its own presenting series with the Chicago debut Oct. 12 of Brazil's Orquestra de Sao Paulo with young conductor Kazem Abdullah and star percussionist Evelyn Glennie. And mercurial American soprano Kathleen Battle will join the Chicago Children's Choir on Dec. 18.

The Chicago-based, Grammy-winning ensemble eighth blackbird makes two landings this fall: as a part of the University of Chicago's Contempo series at Roosevelt University's Ganz Hall on Nov. 14 and in its own season beginning Dec. 8 at the Harris with a new production of Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire" featuring soprano Lucy Shelton and works of Weill, Berg and the late George Perle.

The University of Chicago Presents

Highlights include Christopher Taylor unveiling his unusual dual-manual Steinway interpretation of Bach's "Goldberg"

Variations on Oct. 30, and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra with

soprano Dawn Upshaw on Nov. 6 in music of Osvaldo Golijov and Alberto Iglesias.