**ABOUT CS**

**DO NOT MODIFY WITHOUT PERMISSION**

CONTACT: equist@chicagosinfonietta.org

**SHORT | 100 WORDS**

About Chicago Sinfonietta

Since 1987, Chicago Sinfonietta has been a defiantly different kind of orchestra. Chicago Sinfonietta is a professional orchestra dedicated to modeling and promoting diversity, inclusion, and both racial and cultural equity in the arts through the universal language of symphonic music. Known for daring and innovative concerts, the performances consist of both the classical cannon, diverse and often overlooked historical voices, and a variety of contemporary influences. Beyond the concert hall, Chicago Sinfonietta supports future generations by offering outreach and music education in schools throughout Chicagoland, and through its signature mentoring program, the prestigious Freeman Fellowship program.

**LONG | 350 WORDS**

About Chicago Sinfonietta

Since 1987, Chicago Sinfonietta has been a defiantly different kind of orchestra. Chicago Sinfonietta is a professional orchestra dedicated to modeling and promoting diversity, inclusion, and both racial and cultural equity in the arts through the universal language of symphonic music.

Our core values are built around being bold and daring in all aspects of our work, providing a source of connectivity through music, and ensuring and inspiring a continued investment in diversity and inclusion in classical music.

In 2011, Maestro Mei-Ann Chen began her tenure with the orchestra (as only the second music director in the Sinfonietta’s history). In her first season, the Sinfonietta was named by ASCAP as the recipient of the 2011- 12 Award for Adventurous Programming, and in 2013 was dubbed, “the city’s hippest orchestra” by Chicago Tribune, before going on to be honored in 2016 with a prestigious MacArthur award. Embracing daring programming has always been part of its history. In turn, audience response has been unprecedented. The legacy, passed to Maestro Chen and all of us at the Sinfonietta, goes far beyond what you will see on stage.

Maestro Freeman was, throughout his lifetime, a fierce advocate for early-career, diverse musicians. Many of the musicians you see on stage are the direct beneficiaries of this vision and personal investments Maestro Freeman made in so many people. In 2008, this practice was formalized to create our Project Inclusion Fellowship Program. Since this program began, Project Inclusion has served more than 80 fellows– more than all other similar fellowship programs in the country combined. Chicago Sinfonietta also supports early musicians in schools through our Audience Matters and SEED (Student Ensembles for Excellence and Diversity) programs, and ensures classical music is accessible to all through neighborhood collaborations and our Residents Orchestrate Project.

During its rich history, Chicago Sinfonietta has influenced broad cultural change and emerged as an innovator within the classical music industry by presenting provocative programs and by engaging diverse audiences through community partnerships. As we approach 35 years of being on the cutting edge of classical music, we see Maestro Freeman’s vision is just as relevant and crucial today.

**ABOUT MUSIC DIRECTOR MEI-ANN CHEN | 563 WORDS**

Praised for her dynamic, passionate conducting style, Taiwanese American conductor Mei-Ann Chen is acclaimed for infusing orchestras with energy, enthusiasm and high-level music-making, galvanizing audiences and communities alike. Music Director of the 2016 MacArthur Award-winning Chicago Sinfonietta since 2011, Ms. Chen is highly regarded as a compelling communicator and an innovative leader both on and off the podium. Also a sought-after guest conductor, Ms. Chen continues to expand her relationships with orchestras worldwide (over 110 orchestras to date).

Upcoming highlights include debut at Vienna's Musikverein with Tonkünstler Orchester and debuts with Würth Philharmonic in Germany and Helsinki Philharmonic in Finland, as well as return engagements to San Francisco Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic in Norway, Norrlandsoperan in Sweden, and serving on the jury for the prestigious Malko Competition for Young Conductors. Debuts with New York Philharmonic & Carnegie Hall’s NYO2, Basque National Orchestra in Spain, and Staatsorchester Darmstadt in Germany, an engagement with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra (Ms Chen was scheduled to conduct the opening season concert at Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw), and with the Taiwan Philharmonic have been postponed due to COVID.

Recent guesting highlights include England’s BBC Symphony in London, Finland’s Tampere Filharmonia, Germany’s NDR Radiophilharmonie Hanover, Netherland’s Residentie Orkest at The Hague, Sweden’s Gävle & Helsingborg Symphonies, Switzerland’s Luzerner Sinfonieorchester, Taiwan’s Kaohsiung Symphony Orchestra at Weiwuying (the world’s largest performing arts center since 2018), in addition to return engagements with symphonies of America’s Atlanta, Detroit, and Pacific.

Other North American guesting credits include appearances with symphonies of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Chicago, Houston, Indianapolis, National, Oregon, San Diego, Seattle, Toronto, Tucson, and Vancouver, to name a few. Amongst her overseas guesting credits are the symphonies of BBC Scottish; Brazil’s São Paulo (OSESP); Denmark’s National, Aalborg, Aarhus, Odense and Copenhagen Philharmonic; Germany’s Badische Staatskapelle Karlsruhe; Mexico’s National; Norway’s Radio and Trondheim; Sweden’s Gothenburg, Malmö and Norrköping; Switzerland’s Basel; and Turkey’s Bilkent.

As Music Director of Chicago Sinfonietta, Ms. Chen has made two recordings for Cedille Records: "Project W - Works by Diverse Women Composers" (March 2019, nominated for GRAMMY® Award for Producer of the Year, Jim Ginsburg) and "Delights and Dances" (June 2013). In 2018, Innova Records released River Oaks Chamber Orchestra's debut album "ROCO: Visions Take Flight” (recognized with a GRAMMY® Award for Producer of the Year, Blanton Alspaugh) featuring 5 commissioned contemporary works conducted by Ms. Chen.

Past honors include being named one of the 2015 Top 30 Influencers by Musical America; the 2012 Helen M. Thompson Award from the League of American Orchestras; Winner, the 2007 Taki Concordia Fellowship founded by Marin Alsop; and 2005 First Prize Winner of the Malko Competition (she remains as the only woman in the competition history since 1965 to have won First Prize).

Named the first-ever Principal Guest Conductor of Austria’s Recreation Grosses Orchester Graz and the first-ever Artistic Partner of Houston’s River Oaks Chamber Orchestra (ROCO), both in September 2019, Mei-Ann Chen has served as Artistic Director & Conductor for the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra Summer Festival since 2016. She is also Conductor Laureate of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra after serving as Music Director 2010 – 2016. Born in Taiwan, Ms. Chen came to the United States to study violin in 1989 and became the first student in New England Conservatory’s history to receive master’s degrees simultaneously in both violin and conducting, and she earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting at the University of Michigan.