



Classical & Vocal Music

Chicago is the cultural center of the midwest after all, so it should come as no surprise that so many sophisticated classical music opportunities abound. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) which has become one of the world's most highly regarded orchestras is currently in front of Daniel Barenboim's baton and previously that of Sir Georg Solti who holds perhaps music's most distinguished title of having won the most Grammy Awards in history. In music, it doesn't get much better than that. The Symphony can be seen and powerfully heard September-May at Orchestra

Hall (220 S. Michigan Ave.) and often in the summer months at Ravinia, an open-air festival on the North Shore.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the training orchestra of the CSO, performs free concerts in the Symphony Center. Also at no charge are the Grant Park Symphony and Chorus performances in Grant Park.

The Chicago Sinfonietta with founding musical director Paul Freeman, concentrate on classical and romantic pieces as well as "imaginative new works by composers and soloists of color." Chamber

music lovers may enjoy the ever-rich Chicago Chamber Musicians but if you're going for baroque it's Music of the Baroque and Chicago Baroque Ensemble.

Of course, there is nothing richer than a human voice. Perhaps that's why one of the hottest tickets in town is the Lyric Opera of Chicago which has been wowing opera lovers across the globe for over 50 years. Gospel owes much to Chicago's South Side Baptist churches who've nurtured stars like the late, great Mahalia Jackson and Thomas A. Dorsey from Pilgrim Baptist Church in Bronzeville.



▲ Daniel Barenboim blows a kiss to the audience after conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* at Symphony Center (AP Photo/Brian Kersey)

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