New Season, New Era

Annual Report
2019/2020 Season–140th Year
MESSAGE FROM MUSIC DIRECTOR STÉPHANE DENÈVE

Bonjour, St. Louis,

I would like to thank all of you for welcoming me so warmly in my first season as Music Director of your St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

It was my great honor to welcome you to Powell Hall, our magnificent musical home. I was delighted to meet you there, and also throughout the community, in restaurants, museums, at Busch Stadium, Enterprise Center, and all around St. Louis. And I loved hearing you greet me back with your best bonne nuit and bonsoir before our concerts! During this special season, it felt indeed that we became a musical family.

Together, we celebrated an arch between American and French cultures, between classic repertoire and music of our time, between familiar guest artists and wondrous new talents.

While the season ended abruptly due to COVID-19, preventing us from bringing you a wondrous new season, it felt indeed that we became a musical family.

I will treasure so many unforgettable moments we shared—like starting our season under a propitious sun at Forest Park, welcoming John Williams to our stage, making music with both our talented choruses, and sharing the stage with our first Artist-in-Residence (and my dear friend) Jean-Yves Thibaudet. Thanks to our amazing musicians, I performed some core repertoire that felt new, including Mahler’s Second Symphony, Shostakovich’s First, and even Mozart’s Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. I so enjoyed your curiosity and open minds in discovering many brand new works I hope will become cherished favorites.

It was my great honor to welcome you to Powell Hall, our magnificent musical home. I would like to thank all of you for welcoming me so warmly in my first season as Music Director of your St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

I am extremely proud to be the Music Director of such a remarkable orchestra in this truly wonderful and welcoming community. Merci to you all for a marvelous first season together. Here’s to many, many more.

Amitiés,

Stéphane Denève and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra
Dear Friends,

Thank you for supporting your St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. As we reflect on the past year—the milestones and memories we shared—we are grateful for your generous, continued commitment and for the trust you place in our institution.

Our 2019/2020 season marked a new era in our extraordinary 140-year history. We welcomed Stéphane Denève—a remarkable musician, beloved collaborator, and heartfelt storyteller—as the SLSO’s 13th Music Director. He inspired all of us with his warmth, talent, and vision. Together, we made music accessible to all, with new pricing including our $15 Classical Concert tickets and new formats like Our Public Media Virtual Studio. We introduced our community to SLSO musicians and their instruments through the Instrument Playground Online, which was used by teachers, families, and also enjoyed by many of you.

It was also a historic year, with COVID-19 impacting us all. While we were disappointed to have to end our season early, we continued to share the power of music with you online through #SLSOatHome and Songs of America. We reached more than 3 million people between March and August. Combined, our online and broadcast content reached more than 30 million views, including more than 8 million views of our Artists in Residence program, which remains an institutional priority, and engaged our community in listening sessions to prepare for anti-racism and anti-bias training. We are grateful for the grant from the Mellon Foundation through the League of American Orchestras to support our EDI work, and to Bayer Fund for its long-time support of UNISON.

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to report a balanced budget for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2020, due to strong expense management, a Paycheck Protection Program loan, and—most importantly—your generosity. More than 40 percent of patrons donated the value of their tickets to canceled concerts back to the SLSO, totaling more than $370,000. Our spring challenge that honored Howard Witsma inspired significant new and increased gifts from 649 donors—more than half of whom were new. We are so inspired by your support.

I would like to thank Norm Eaker for his fearless leadership as Board Chair for the past three years. Norm has been extraordinarily generous with his time, support, and guidance. We appreciate all he has done during this time of significant change and meaningful growth and look forward to seeing the Eakers at Powell Hall often.

As we reflect on the past year, we look forward with hope for the future and all the musical magic we will share together. From our SLSO family to yours, thank you.

Laura Eaker
Chair, Board of Trustees
I wanted to celebrate Stéphane with you and celebrate what has been one of our greatest orchestras in this country for so many years. I wanted to congratulate you for supporting this great orchestra. Continue to do so. It has a great past and a great future with Stéphane Denève, who is as great a musician as there is in the world.

Composer/Conductor John Williams
MILESTONE MOMENTS FROM THE
ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA’S
2019/2020 SEASON

BIENVENUE, STÉPHANE
Stéphane Denève kicked off his first season as Music Director of the 140-year-old St. Louis Symphony Orchestra with the SLSO’s annual free concert in Forest Park, a beloved St. Louis tradition held in memory of Mary Ann Lee. During his first weeks as Music Director, Stéphane conducted eight more concerts, threw the first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals game, and met thousands of St. Louisans—members of his new musical family.

SHARING MUSIC ON AIR AND ONLINE
When live performances came to an abrupt halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SLSO continued to share music with the community in a variety of ways. Concert broadcasts continued on St. Louis Public Radio featuring previous performances. The SLSO developed and shared video projects including #SLSOatHome and Songs of America, which reached 250,000 people in its first month.

GALA CELEBRATION AND NIGHTCAP
To celebrate the new season and new era, guests enjoyed a special evening at the Ritz-Carlton, which included a surprise four-hands performance on piano by Music Director Stéphane Denève and Artist-in-Residence Jean-Yves Thibaudet.

STÉPHANE SEATS
For each of his concerts this season, Stéphane invited students, teachers, and community partners to attend for free as his guests in Stéphane Seats. Students from Gateway Music Outreach attended Opening Weekend—the first of more than 230 special guests this season.

YO50
The Youth Orchestra marked a special milestone in 2020: its 50th anniversary. The season-long celebration included a unique concert and homecoming—a play-in concert with current YO members performing alongside YO alumni, including members of the inaugural YO from 1970, musicians from every class, and current SLSO musicians who are proud YO alumni.

CRAFTED
On November 15, the SLSO presented its first-ever Crafted Concert—a casual concert experience with food and drink offerings from local restaurants, and Stéphane serving as a host and guide to welcome new audiences and draw listeners closer to the music-making process. More than one-third of Crafted attendees were new to the SLSO.
MUSIC, EXPERIENCE, AND EXCELLENCE
Sustain and enhance the excellence of our music, the concert experience, and the SLSO’s reputation and brand.

Stéphane Denève leads a performance by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Chorus at Powell Hall.
MUSCIES, EXPERIENCE, AND EXCELLENCE

For 140 years, the SLSO has been a treasured cultural gem and important artistic export for the region. Stéphane programmed his inaugural season in St. Louis as a tribute to the Franco-American arch of musical friendship, a celebration of his new musical family. Together, Stéphane and the SLSO shared the power of music and impacted audiences wherever they performed, whether at home in Powell Hall, throughout the community, or beyond the region—like opening the Lied Center’s season in Lincoln, Nebraska, or visiting the Krannert Center in Urbana, Illinois.

Special thanks to the Centene Charitable Foundation, the Steward Family Foundation, and World Wide Technology for their support of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra’s 2019/2020 Classical Season.

MUSICAL COLLABORATIONS

The SLSO is well known for its collaborative spirit, serving as a trusted musical partner to guest artists, composers, and community and arts organizations. The SLSO welcomed Jean-Yves Thibaudet, renowned pianist, longtime collaborator, and friend of Stéphane Denève as its Jean-Paul and Isabelle Montupet Artist-in-Residence for the season. Jean-Yves joined the SLSO for opening weekend and again in January, which included an evening of chamber music with SLSO musicians at Washington University.

Stéphane also brought to St. Louis another dear friend and collaborator: John Williams. The one-night-only concert included music spanning Williams’ legendary career, attracting audience members from across the country. Stéphane led the orchestra during the first half, then joined the audience as Williams conducted the second and shared stories from his career with the standing-room-only crowd. As the Post-Dispatch said of the evening: “The two conducted an ambitious lineup of Williams’ film music performed by an enthusiastic orchestra to an even more enthusiastic sold-out crowd.”

Daniel O’Keefe’s review in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch: “Stéphane Denève put his mark on all sorts of things at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Denève displayed his keen wit and won a lot of laughs from the audience, in this “music-focused affair.”

FAMILY AND TRADITIONS

Stéphane collaborated with the entire SLSO family this season. The IN UNISON Chorus, led by Kevin McBeth, joined him and the orchestra for the annual Forest Park concert. He supported the next generation of musicians by joining Gemma New and the Youth Orchestra for the annual side-by-side rehearsal with SLSO musicians.

Stéphane’s work with Amy Kaiser and the St. Louis Symphony Chorus on several performances throughout the season inspired audiences. Sarah Bryan Miller of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote of Stéphane’s second week, a performance of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, “Resurrection”: “If last weekend’s program showed something of Denève’s wide range, this one showed his considerable depth. May he give us many more such moments.” Chuck Lavazzi’s review of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 for KDHP simply stated: “SLSO Music Director Stéphane Denève conducted the orchestra and chorus in what was the best damn Beethoven Symphony No. 9 that I have ever heard, either live or on recordings. Olympian in its grandeur, electrifying in its impact and stunningly perfect in its execution, this was perhaps the Ninth against which all others must now be measured.”

Stéphane welcomed the new decade in St. Louis as he conducted his first BMO Wealth Management New Year’s Eve Celebration, themed as Dancing Around the World. As Sarah Bryan Miller wrote in her concert review for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch: “Stéphane Denève is putting his mark on all sorts of things at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Denève displayed his keen wit and won a lot of laughs from the audience, in this “music-focused affair.”

THANK YOU, GEMMA

The end of the 2019/2020 season also brought with it the conclusion of Gemma New’s tenure as SLSO Resident Conductor and Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. The SLSO is grateful for the countless gifts Gemma has given St. Louis as a member of the SLSO family, especially the hundreds of young musicians forever impacted through her smart and heartfelt leadership of the YO. She touched countless lives with her quiet command, engaging presence, grace on the podium, and palpable love of sharing music. The SLSO looks forward to welcoming her back to Powell Hall for years to come.

SOMETHING NEW

Throughout its history, the SLSO has championed new music and living composers. That focus continues under Stéphane’s leadership, with the intent to commission new works, perform them regularly, and secure their place in the repertoire of today and beyond. In the 19/20 season, the SLSO featured nine works by composers of today, alongside two world premieres of SLSO-commissioned pieces, and one U.S. premiere. This dedication to music of our time also played out in the 15th season of Live at the Pulitzer concerts, the collaboration between the SLSO and Pulitzer Arts Foundation.

The SLSO also experimented with a new concert format to engage new audiences: Crafted. This hour-long concert started and ended with a happy hour and featured commentary from Stéphane during the program. More than one-third of Crafted attendees were new to the SLSO. A second Crafted planned for spring was canceled due to the pandemic. Based on the enthusiastic audience response at the first program, Crafted will become a regular element of future SLSO seasons.
In March, as Stéphane, the SLSO, Symphony Chorus, and a stellar cast of soloists prepared for Berlioz’s The Damnation of Faust, the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact reached St. Louis. It became clear that the program would have to be canceled out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of musicians, patrons, staff, and the community.

In total, the SLSO had to postpone or cancel 36 concerts and 23 community programs. The entire Opera Theatre of Saint Louis festival season was also canceled, and OTSL graciously donated a portion of the orchestra’s fee to the SLSO. Through it all, patrons continued their generous support, with more than 40 percent donating the ticket value to canceled concerts back to the SLSO, helping sustain the orchestra during this unprecedented time. Even without live, in-person concerts, the SLSO shared the power of music in a variety of ways to connect with the community, even when physically apart.

To support teachers and parents as schools shifted to online learning, the SLSO quickly shared new and updated education resources on slso.org. Included in these was the new Instrument Playground Online, presented by PNC Arts Alive, a digital resource featuring videos and activities to introduce the instruments of the orchestra and the musicians who play them.

The SLSO returned to St. Louis Public Radio on Saturday, May 2, with rebroadcasts of previous concerts, which continued throughout the summer. The SLSO also hosted and performed at the Arts United STL virtual benefit in collaboration with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and area arts organizations. The event raised $350,000 for the Regional Arts Commission Artist Relief Fund.

As a gift to the community, the SLSO created the Songs of America video project, a series of six videos released daily, culminating in a performance of “Amazing Grace” featuring Kennedy Holmes on July 4. Two additional videos were added over the summer. The project celebrates the breadth of voices in American music and features St. Louis artists and landmarks that showcase the unique spirit of the community. The videos also aired on the Nine Network of Public Media.

The SLSO offered opportunities for patrons to connect, hosting virtual Lunch & Learns, including one about IN UNISON with Kevin McBeth, composer Nathalie Joachim, SLSO musicians, chorus members, and the IN UNISON team. The SLSO also hosted Whitaker Zoom happy hours prior to the radio rebroadcasts, with patrons chatting with Creative Partner Tim Muir and SLSO musicians about that evening’s program.

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AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY
Celebrate St. Louis and its unique history, talent, and diversity. Make investments to attract, retain, and cultivate new and existing audiences, while elevating the SLSO as a community and education leader.

An estimated crowd of 20,000 gathered on Art Hill in September 2019 to welcome new Music Director Stéphane Denève to his first Forest Park concert. The St. Louis Symphony, IN UNISON Chorus and members of the Youth Orchestra performed alongside the SLSO.
AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY
The SLSO is a world-renowned and community-supported orchestra. Proud to be part of the St. Louis region, concerts and programs are musical gifts to the community we call home. The SLSO focuses on delivering engaging and innovative programming that is accessible, so all guests—from young children and first-time attendees to families and long-time patrons—feel they are a welcomed part of the SLSO family.

For almost 100 years, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra has offered education concerts—one small part of its dedicated education efforts. In addition to welcoming more than 22,000 students to Powell Hall, the SLSO supported teachers and students in other meaningful ways.

INTRODUCING THE SLSO’S INSTRUMENT PLAYGROUND... ONLINE
For almost 15 years, the Symphony Volunteer Association has shared the SLSO Instrument Playground to give students, families, and all visitors a chance to experience the instruments of the orchestra. Thanks to a grant from PNC Arts Alive, the SLSO launched a virtual version as part of Music in Our Schools Month in March. The Instrument Playground Online (slso.org/ipa) features 10 musicians and their instruments in 20 videos, representing each instrument family of the orchestra. The webpage includes supplemental resources like discussion guides and activities teachers can use in class or families can use at home. The videos were incredibly popular—with more than 25,000 total views and 400 hours of total watch time. And 67 percent of those viewers were new to the SLSO. The timing also worked well, as teachers, students, and parents began adjusting to at-home learning in March and were looking for additional resources, especially in music. Said one teacher: “These are amazing videos. My students’ favorite part is the kids interviewing the musicians! Thank you for making them accessible to all and so well done.”

SENSORY-FRIENDLY CONCERTS
Students with disabilities generally have fewer opportunities to engage with the arts than their peers. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the SLSO regularly hosted concerts for children with special needs. In November, the SLSO brought back the idea with two Sensory-Friendly Education Concerts, presented by PNC Arts Alive. Musicians performed Prokofiev’s timeless classic, Peter and the Wolf, for hundreds of children, their teachers, and staff of Special School District of St. Louis County and other schools in partnership with the St. Louis Jewish Community Center. The SLSO worked closely with Paula Berner, a retired special education and music teacher from Special School District, to provide a concert experience in a sensory-friendly environment that was welcoming and judgment-free.

CREATIVE MUSIC MAKING
Now in its 11th year, Creative Music Making is a unique partnership between the SLSO, St. Louis Arc, and Maryville University Music Therapy that empowers people with disabilities to create and perform their own concert and helps train music therapy students. The program was the subject of a documentary made by PBS station WEDU in Florida that also aired locally on the Nine Network.

EXTRA CREDIT ON STAGE
In October, the SLSO celebrated music educators and welcomed them as very special guest artists, joining the SLSO and Resident Conductor Gemma New for Extra Credit, a side-by-side concert where teachers shared music stands with SLSO musicians. More than 100 teachers from the St. Louis region, across the state, and as far away as Tulsa, Oklahoma, participated in this unique community concert.

Clarinetist Tzuying Huang shares insights about her instrument with a curious student for the new Instrument Playground Online video series.

SLSO trombonist Tim Myers and Amanda Stewart perform with local teachers at Powell Hall.
INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND CAPACITY

Strengthen the institution to align with our core values and make the SLSO and Powell Hall a premier resource in the region for culture, education, and music.

The 442s—(L-R) Bjorn Ranheim, Bob DeBoo, Michael Casimir, Adam Maness, and Shawn Weil—were joined by vocalist Brian Owens to record Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come" in downtown St. Louis’ Kiener Plaza for the Songs of America series. Casimir, Ranheim, and Weil are SLSO musicians. The Songs of America videos reached more than 260,000 in their first month.
INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND CAPACITY

The culture of the SLSO is that of a family, including the Symphony Chorus, IN UNISON Chorus, Youth Orchestra, and Symphony Volunteer Association, plus donors, patrons, and the St. Louis Community. And this season, the SLSO family welcomed its newest member, Music Director Stéphane Denève for the orchestra’s historic 140th season.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The SLSO continued its focused work on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) throughout the season. A team led by Board members Dr. Donald Suggs, Sherry Sissac, and Molly Hyland worked with Dr. Kira Banks of Saint Louis University and Rebeccah Bennett of Emerging Wisdom to host community listening sessions to inform the SLSO’s EDI framework. The SLSO received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through the League of American Orchestras to support its ongoing EDI work. The SLSO also worked to share music of composers and artists of color through its Florence Price Project and the Songs of America video series.

SYMPHONY VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION

A cherished part of the SLSO family for decades, the Symphony Volunteer Association continued its steadfast support of the orchestra, volunteering 8,100 hours over the season. It hosted the Express the Music and Picture the Music programs. Picture the Music celebrated its 30th anniversary, with students submitting more than 12,000 pieces of original artwork. The SVA also continued its longtime support of the YO by hosting its first-ever Trivia Night. The sold-out evening raised $24,000 to support the YO’s young musicians. From welcoming Stéphane at the airport and handing out Stéph-fans at Forest Park, to providing tours of Powell Hall and attending Arts Advocacy Day in Jefferson City, the SVA champions the SLSO throughout the region.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

A generous grant from the Berges Family Foundation enabled the SLSO to make substantial technology enhancements and improvements, like upgrading cybersecurity and acquiring new digital tools, to bolster institutional capacity and help shape its future. These transformations have made the SLSO more efficient and impacted institutional priorities including artistic achievement, educational and community outreach, and expanding access to music.

When the world was reshaped by the coronavirus, these technology upgrades made it possible for the SLSO team to immediately work remotely and collaborate safely, efficiently, and effectively. The collaboration this gift enabled will reshape how the SLSO works, far beyond the crisis.

“STÉPHANE) IS STEADILY WINNING OVER ST. LOUISANS WITH HIS COMBINATION OF PERSONAL CHARM, SMART MUSICAL CHOICES AND CAREFULLY THOUGHT-OUT PROGRAMMING.”

– Sarah Bryan Miller, St. Louis Post Dispatch
FINANCIAL SUMMARY
OPERATING RESULTS: FISCAL YEAR 2020
September 1, 2019–August 31, 2020 ($ in Thousands)*

EXPENSES

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<td>Facilities</td>
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<td>General and Administrative</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</strong></td>
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*Preliminary and unaudited results

REVENUE

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**Contributed Revenue**

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**TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE** $27,616

*Preliminary and unaudited results

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
August 31, 2020 ($ in Thousands)*

**ASSETS**

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<td>Property and Equipment (net)</td>
<td>$5,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$271,605</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses</td>
<td>$1,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred Revenue</td>
<td>$2,935</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes Payable</td>
<td>$3,651</td>
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<td>NPV of Annuity Obligations</td>
<td>$266</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Pension Liability</td>
<td>$7,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,602</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$256,603</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** $271,605

*Preliminary and unaudited results
Founders Society

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the following donors whose lifetime of philanthropic support distinguishes them among the SLSO's most generous benefactors. Founders Society members are honored for their total cumulative giving as of August 31, 2020.

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$5,000,000 or more

Arts and Education Council
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Mr. and Mrs. Amy Lee Ann
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The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the following donors who have provided for the future of the SLSO through generous gift planning.

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| Mr. and Mrs. Paul C. Sellew | Mr. and Mrs. James T. Poor |
| Mr. and Mrs. Paul C. Sellew | Mr. and Mrs. James T. Poor |

Anonymously (10)
In thank you for their generosity, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra extends its deep appreciation to the following corporations, foundations, and agencies for their outstanding philanthropic and sponsorship support of the SLSO’s artistic, education, and community programs.

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-我觉得很感谢你们的支持。
The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra performing at Powell Hall.