



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[August 17, 2023]

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**THE ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND MUSIC DIRECTOR STÉPHANE DENÈVE
WELCOME THE ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY TO FOREST PARK FOR ANNUAL FREE COMMUNITY
CONCERT, SEPTEMBER 21**

Denève leads the SLSO and members of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus in its annual concert for the community in works by Leonard Bernstein, Georges Bizet, George Gershwin, Pietro Mascagni, Florence Price, John Philip Sousa, Johann Strauss, Jr., Sergei Prokofiev, Samuel Ward, and John Williams

Celebratory opening of SLSO’s 144th season includes food trucks on Art Hill and concludes with fireworks display over Forest Park’s Grand Basin

(August 17, 2023, St. Louis, MO) – Led by Music Director Stéphane Denève, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra marks the beginning of its 2023/2024 season with the return of its free concert in Forest Park at 7:00pm CDT, Thursday, September 21, on Art Hill. Since its inaugural Forest Park concert more than 50 years ago, the SLSO has performed for more than 15,000 people each year as a community celebration of music and the kick-off of the SLSO’s season.

The program serves as preview for the orchestra’s 144th season and Denève’s fifth as Music Director. Selections include favorites by Johann Strauss, Jr.’s, *On the Beautiful Blue Danube* and *Radetzky March*, along with selections from Georges Bizet’s opera *Carmen*. Music by Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin, and Florence Price brings an American flavor to the program. The orchestra will be joined by singers in the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus in performances of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” and “America the Beautiful.” A close collaborator of the inimitable film composer John Williams, Denève programmed selections of Williams’ scores from *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Amistad*. The festivities end with a show-stopping fireworks display following John Philip Sousa’s patriotic anthem *The Stars and Stripes Forever*.

Performed in memory of longtime SLSO supporter Mary Ann Lee, this concert marks the 55th anniversary of the first Forest Park concert in 1968. Attendees are encouraged to come early, bring chairs and blankets, and enjoy food trucks at the top of Art Hill. New this year, the SLSO’s education and community teams will host a family fun zone at the top of Art Hill, encouraging families to engage with music through activities including music creation, conducting musicians of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, and a scavenger hunt. Local vendors at the concert will include Angie Burger, ByJack, Cajun Seduction, Cha Cha Chow, Delicious Delights by Uniqlly D’zynd, Doggie Mac’s Food Truck, Fire and Ice Cream Truck, Five Aces Bar-B-Que, Go Gyro Go, Grace Meat +3, Holy Crepe, NY Tom’s Food Truck, Picture Perfect Panini, Soul Burgers, STL BarKeep, Takozz Real Mexican Food,



The Popcorn Bar, and Urban Chestnut Brewing Company. Food and drink vendors will be available starting at 5:00pm.

Following the concert in Forest Park, Denève leads the orchestra in its first classical concerts of the season, September 23-24, featuring renowned violinist Hilary Hahn—notable for her emphasis on accessibility to music, social media presence, and performances on film scores—in her first SLSO concerts in more than 20 years. Concerts take place at the Stifel Theatre in downtown St. Louis and include Richard Strauss’ *Don Juan* and *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks*, Felix Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto with Hahn, W.A. Mozart’s *The Magic Flute Overture*, and Paul Dukas’ *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*.

Tickets for all 23/24 season concerts are on sale now and can be purchased at slo.org or by calling the SLSO Box Office at 314-534-1700.

Calendar listing:

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Stéphane Denève open its 2023/2024 season with a free community concert on Forest Park’s Art Hill at 7:00pm Thursday, September 21. The annual concert—featuring classical music, film music, and patriotic tunes—concludes with a festive fireworks display.

**Thursday, September 21, 2023, 7:00pm CDT
Art Hill at Forest Park, 1 Fine Arts Drive, St. Louis, Missouri, 63110**

Stéphane Denève, conductor
Members of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus
Members of the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus | Kevin McBeth, director

- John Stafford Smith (arr. Sousa/Damrosch)** *The Star-Spangled Banner*
- J. Rosamund Johnson** “Lift Every Voice and Sing”
- Johann Strauss, Jr.** *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*
- Johann Strauss, Jr.** *Radetzky March*
- Sergei Prokofiev** March and Scherzo from *The Love for Three Oranges*
- Leonard Bernstein** *Candide Overture*
- Georges Bizet** Selections from *Carmen* Suite No. 1 & 2
- Pietro Mascagni** Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana*
- Florence Price** “Juba” from Symphony No. 3
- George Gershwin** *Girl Crazy Overture*
- John Williams** “The Raiders March” from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*
- John Williams** *Dry Your Tears, Afrika* from *Amistad*
- Samuel Ward** “America the Beautiful”
- John Philip Sousa** *The Stars and Stripes Forever*



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This concert is performed in memory of Mary Ann Lee.

About the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Celebrated as one of today's most exciting and enduring orchestras, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra is the second-oldest orchestra in the country, marking its 144th year with the 2023/2024 season and its fifth with [Music Director Stéphane Denève](#). Widely considered one of the leading American orchestras, the Grammy® Award-winning SLSO maintains its commitment to artistic excellence, educational impact, and community collaborations—all in service to its mission of enriching lives through the power of music.

The transformational expansion and renovation of its historic home, Powell Hall, slated to be completed in 2025, builds on the institution's momentum as a civic leader in convening individuals, creators, and ideas, while fostering a culture welcoming to all. Committed to building community through compelling and inclusive musical experiences, the SLSO continues its longstanding focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, embracing its strengths as a responsive, nimble organization, while investing in partnerships locally and elevating its presence globally. For more information, visit slo.org.

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