



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ST. LOUIS BLUES AND ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCE WINNER OF  
THIRD ANNUAL NATIONAL ANTHEM CONTEST**

**Quartet of St. Louis-area high school instrumentalists selected to perform *The Star-Spangled Banner* at upcoming Blues Home Game**

**(August 26, 2019, St. Louis, MO)** – Today, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Stanley Cup Champion St. Louis Blues announced the winner of their third annual National Anthem contest. After 250 initial submissions and live auditions by 25 acts, a panel of judges selected a quartet of high school trombone players to perform *The Star-Spangled Banner* at a Blues home game during the 2019-2020 season.

The quartet was commended by judges for their original Blues-inspired rendition of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, arranged by 15-year-old Thomas Gustafson. The quartet consists of Gustafson, a sophomore at Clayton High School; Daniel Jung, a senior at Ladue Horton Watkins High School; Geoffrey Ladue, a senior at Lafayette High School; and Evan Smith, a senior at O’Fallon Township High School. All four are members of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra.

The audition was part of an ongoing partnership between the SLSO and Blues.

The quartet competed against dozens of contestants from the St. Louis region following a video application phase, which generated more than 250 entries. Auditions for the finalists were held at Powell Hall on August 24. Vocalists, instrumentalists, and small groups competed for the opportunity. Former Blues National Anthem Singer Charles Glenn; SLSO IN UNISON Chorus Director Kevin McBeth; SLSO musician Gerry Pagano; Kennedy Holmes, St. Louis native and finalist on season 15 of NBC’s *The Voice*; and James Bertels, who was a winner of the inaugural contest in 2017-2018, judged the competition.

**Charles Glenn, former St. Louis Blues anthem singer, said,** “The talent we heard throughout the competition was staggering. Any one of the finalists could have gone to a larger market, auditioned, and won. The level of competition was unparalleled.”

The quartet will perform the anthem at an upcoming St. Louis Blues game.

**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 140th year with the 2019/2020 season and its first with Music Director Stéphane Denève. Widely considered one of the world’s finest orchestras, the SLSO maintains its commitment to artistic excellence, educational impact, and community connections – all in service to its mission of enriching lives through the power of music.



In addition to its regular concert performances at Powell Hall, which has been the permanent home of the SLSO for more than 50 years, the orchestra is an integral part of the diverse and vibrant St. Louis community, presenting dozens of free education and community programs and performances throughout the region each year. It has an ongoing commitment to championing music of our time, through commissions, a collaboration with the Mizzou New Music Initiative, and its popular St. Louis Symphony Live at the Pulitzer. The SLSO also serves as the resident orchestra for Opera Theatre Saint Louis, with the upcoming season marking the 43rd year of this unique partnership.

The Grammy Award-winning SLSO's impact beyond the St. Louis region is realized through weekly Saturday night concert broadcasts on St. Louis Public Radio, acclaimed recordings, and regular touring activity. A sought-after artistic partner by preeminent musicians and composers from across the globe, as well as by local and national organizations, the SLSO enjoys a long history of robust and enduring artistic collaborations that have developed and deepened over the years.

Today, the SLSO builds on the institution's current momentum on all fronts, including artistic, financial, audience growth, and community impact, and looks toward the future with Stéphane Denève. For more information, visit [slo.org](http://slo.org).

**About the St. Louis Blues**

The St. Louis Blues have been a part of the NHL since 1967. During more than 50 years of operation, the organization has established itself as one of the premier professional sports franchises in the country. With nine division titles, a Presidents' Trophy and more than 20 former team members enshrined in the Hockey Hall of Fame, the Blues have etched one of the most storied histories in the NHL. Through their history, the Blues have hosted more than 35 million fans and invested millions in the St. Louis community via Blues for Kids, the team's charitable foundation.

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