

50 SOLOISTS

BY EDDIE SILVA

TO CELEBRATE DAVID ROBERTSON'S 10TH SEASON,
50 SYMPHONY MUSICIANS TAKE CENTER STAGE.



DILIP VISHWANAT

Erin Schreiber performs The Lark Ascending on Opening Weekend.

In David Robertson's 10th season as St. Louis Symphony music director, he has given much of the season over to the St. Louis Symphony musicians. Fifty musicians are featured as soloists or in solo ensembles throughout the 2014-15 season. Such an appreciation for the individual artists that make up an orchestra is unprecedented. Robertson expressed his enthusiasm for the

50 Soloists



JERRY NAUNHEIM

Becky Boyer Hall performs a work by Symphony violist Christian Woehr in November.

scheme when the season was announced in January. “I’ve gotten to know how incredibly talented and brilliantly inspired are all of the musicians of the orchestra,” Robertson said. “So being able to have 50 of them present in a capacity where they can show the audience how amazing they are as individuals and as team members makes me more excited than I can say.”

Symphony violinist Becky Boyer Hall anticipates the opportunity to experience her colleagues as solo artists this season. “I am truly looking forward to every single performance that is featuring my colleagues,” she says. “We have such a wealth of talent in the orchestra, and we don’t always get a chance to hear individuals step out of their orchestra roles. Each

FIFTY ORCHESTRA MEMBERS ARE FEATURED AS SOLOISTS OR IN SOLO ENSEMBLES

performance will prove to be special.” Violist Morris Jacob has his own way of expressing his amazement and appreciation for receiving a solo bow during Robertson’s 10th, “I can’t think of another music director in the country that would ask an ‘old fart’ like me to be featured as part of a solo ensemble on a subscription concert. It’s a tremendous honor to have been asked.”

From September through May, St. Louis audiences are offered the opportunity to experience the individual artistic abilities that makes up its great orchestra. An orchestra is a community of individuals, as diverse as can be found in any urban environment. Fifty artists step out from the ensemble,

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50 people of different backgrounds, different ways of seeing and living in the world. Somehow, they come together each week, blend their individual talents and collective experiences, and create a single musical unit that is an inspiration to all who attend a St. Louis Symphony concert.

They are 50 reasons as to what makes the St. Louis Symphony extraordinary. Here are some facts about them.

- Three musicians are in their first season with the orchestra. One is nearing his 40th.
- Three musicians are from Romania, three from Korea, one from Japan, one from China, one from England. Four are from Kirkwood, one from Warrensburg, Missouri, and one is from Elsah, Illinois.
- Four musicians were members of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra.
- The musicians represent the hires of four music directors and one music advisor over five decades: Jerzy Semkow, Leonard Slatkin, Hans Vonk, Itzhak Perlman, and David Robertson.
- There are three married couples performing as soloists.
- The musicians are alumni of Julliard, New England Conservatory, Eastman, Rice University, USC, Indiana University, Curtis Institute, Bucharest Conservatory, Yale, McGill University, Peabody Conservatory, Cleveland Institute, Northwestern, Oberlin College, University of Maryland, Temple,

Manhattan School of Music, and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

- Two musicians were members of the St. Louis Symphony, left for other orchestras, and then returned to the St. Louis Symphony.
- Two musicians also play in a tango ensemble, one in a jazz combo, one grew up playing bluegrass.
- One musician played on an Ohio Players record.
- Two musicians played with military bands.
- The musicians are performing works by Vaughan Williams, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Bruch, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Beethoven, Michael Daugherty, Vivaldi, Lutosławski, Tippett, Bach, Fauré, Ravel, Bartók, Mozart, Elgar, Debussy, and Christian Woehr (St. Louis Symphony violist).
- Three musicians bicycle to work in almost any weather—including double-digit, below-zero temperatures last winter.
- Twenty-four musicians are parents, with five new babies in the last year.
- Four bassoonists will dress in leather for Michael Daugherty's *Hell's Angels*.

Every musician will tell you there is a special quality to this orchestra, a collegiality, a friendliness, a closeness among the members that you won't find anywhere else. They all mean it.

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