



St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA’S SYMPHONY VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION WINS NATIONAL AWARD FROM LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS FOR LONG-RUNNING EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Picture the Music, a volunteer-administered SLSO program for more than 30 years, encourages students to listen to orchestral music and respond creatively through visual art**

**(March 14, 2023, St. Louis, MO)** – The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra’s **Symphony Volunteer Association** has been chosen by The Volunteer Council of the League of American Orchestras to receive a coveted Gold Award for its Picture the Music program. Picture the Music is a 30+-year cross-curricular music initiative that harnesses the power of creative expression to inspire students to get involved and stay involved in music.

The Volunteer Council is an arm of the League of American Orchestras—a support organization for 1,800+ music institutions in the United States. The Volunteer Council’s annual award program recognizes outstanding projects undertaken by volunteer associations from around the country that help ensure the success of their orchestras. The Gold Award recognizes best-in-class programs or initiatives that have made a significant impact on its orchestras.

Presented by the Employees Community Fund of Boeing, the SLSO’s Picture the Music is a free, cross-curricular art competition in which students in kindergarten through sixth grade from public, private, parochial, and homeschools across the bi-state area listen to a piece of orchestral music and respond creatively through visual art. This year, more than 16,000 students from 85 schools participated, submitting 522 paintings and drawings that expressed the thoughts and emotions the music evoked for them. This year, students discovered “Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity,” from Gustav Holst’s *The Planets*. Awards for the top 100 finalists will be presented at a ceremony in Powell Hall on Wednesday, March 29.

A panel of local judges with backgrounds in art selected the top 100 finalists in a blind review process. Artwork of the top 100 finalists will be on display at the following locations during the Picture the Music traveling exhibit:

March 30–April 12                      McDonnell Planetarium at the Saint Louis Science Center  
April 13-26                                Saint Louis Art Museum

**Marie-Hélène Bernard, President and CEO of the SLSO**, said, “The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra is committed to inspiring students to get involved and stay involved in music. For more than 30 years,



Picture the Music has encouraged creative expression through the intersection of music and visual arts in countless elementary schools. The SLSO deeply appreciates its dedicated Symphony Volunteer Association, under the leadership of President Kent McNeil, who share our vision of fostering a love of music in students through essential programs like Picture the Music.”

**Kent McNeil, President of the Symphony Volunteer Association**, said, “The award ceremony honoring 100 finalists from the thousands of participating students is a wonderful community moment celebrating the power of the arts in the lives of young people. From the young artists’ excitement to the pride on the parents’ and teachers’ faces, this shared experience inspires the SLSO and the volunteers who tirelessly run Picture the Music, and has become a cherished memory for the students, educators, and families served.”

**Janet Cabot, President of the LAO’s Volunteer Council**, said, “The League’s Volunteer Council knows firsthand the rewards and challenges of planning and executing volunteer projects. Our goal is to acknowledge and share innovative projects from across the country and, in doing so, provide inspiration to fellow volunteers. We look forward to honoring the winners and their outstanding projects at the League’s National Conference in June.”

#### **About the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra**

Celebrated as a leading American orchestra, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra is the second-oldest orchestra in the country, marking its 143rd year with the 2022/2023 season and its fourth with [Music Director Stéphane Denève](#). The SLSO maintains its commitment to artistic excellence, educational impact, and community collaborations, honoring its mission of enriching lives through the power of music.

The SLSO serves as a convener of individuals, creators, and ideas, and is committed to building community through compelling and inclusive musical experiences. As it continues its longstanding focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, the SLSO embraces its strengths as a responsive, nimble organization, while investing in partnerships locally and elevating its presence globally. For more information, visit [slo.org](https://slo.org).

#### **About the St. Louis Symphony Volunteer Association**

For almost 100 years, the St. Louis Symphony Volunteer Association has actively supported the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in a variety of ways, from unique education programs including Picture the Music/Express the Music and the Instrument Playground, to welcoming concertgoers, fundraising projects, giving tours of Powell Hall, and more. Originally founded in 1923 as The Women’s Committee of the Saint Louis Symphony Society, the more than 300 SVA members volunteer more than 11,000 hours annually as they help make music accessible to all and champion the mission of the SLSO: enriching lives through the power of music.

Learn more about the SVA at [slo.org](https://slo.org).



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### **About the League of American Orchestras**

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 1,800 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning Symphony magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. Visit [americanorchestras.org](http://americanorchestras.org).

### **About the Volunteer Council of the League of American Orchestras**

The Volunteer Council is a national leadership group of recognized volunteer leaders who have demonstrated outstanding support for their symphony orchestras. Our Council members represent nineteen volunteer associations affiliated with orchestras from coast to coast and across the entire spectrum of budget tiers.

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