



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[May 16, 2023]

Contacts: St. Louis Symphony Orchestra: Eric Dundon ericd@slo.org, 314-286-4134
National/International: Nikki Scandalios nikki@scandaliospr.com, 704-340-4094

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CELEBRATES THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TWO RETIRING ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS

(May 16, 2023, St. Louis, MO) – The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra celebrates the careers of two retiring orchestra musicians: Assistant Principal Double Bassist Chris Carson (49 years of service) and Associate Principal Trumpet player Tom Drake (36 years of service) who have performed with the SLSO for a combined 85 years.

Stéphane Denève, Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, said, “We are so very grateful for all that Chris and Tom have done for our wonderful orchestra and the St. Louis community through their extraordinary tenures. It has personally been a great joy to share the stage with both Chris and Tom. I admire their meaningful and friendly musical dedication, their deeply poetic curiosity, always-prepared musicianship, and remarkable personal integrity. They leave precious legacies with our orchestra and its sound DNA, and they serve as an inspiration to all. Merci de tout cœur, dear Chris and Tom.”

Chris Carson, Assistant Principal Double Bass, joined the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 1974 under Music Director Walter Susskind. Carson has performed under the baton of six Music Directors: Walter Susskind, Jerzy Semkow, Leonard Slatkin, Hans Vonk, David Robertson, and Stéphane Denève. During his tenure with the SLSO, Carson served on various committees, including the original version of what is now the Orchestra Council. He participated in multiple conductor searches and helped create the Succession Committee. He is the only current SLSO musician who attended the orchestra’s first international tour in 1976.

Prior to joining the SLSO, Carson performed six seasons in the Lyric Opera and Grant Park Orchestras, serving as Principal Double Bass during his final two seasons with both orchestras. He briefly attended Northwestern University before becoming a member of the SLSO.

Tom Drake, Associate Principal Trumpet, has served as Assistant Principal, Associate Principal, and Acting Principal Trumpet with the SLSO since he joined the orchestra in 1987. Drake has been an active committee participant since joining the SLSO, serving on the Musicians’ Council, Negotiating, Pension, Media, Broadcast, Long-Range Planning, Travel, Players’, Artistic, and Archive committees.

From 1996 to 2000, he helped produce and edit the orchestra’s National Public Radio broadcasts. In the mid-2000s, he produced an eight-CD retrospective of Hans Vonk’s tenure which garnered an Edison Award (The Netherlands’ equivalent of a Grammy) for Best Historical Recording.



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



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.

#