



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA INVITES COMMUNITY TO FREE CONCERT HONORING
JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY**

On Monday, June 19, SLSO musicians and vocalists from the SLSO IN UNISON Chorus share music of celebration and remembrance at First Baptist Church of Chesterfield, an IN UNISON partner church

Tours of African Schoolhouse No. 4 in Faust Park offered in partnership with Saint Louis County Parks

(May 29, 2023, St. Louis, MO) – Today, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra announced details of its free community concert in honor of Juneteenth on Monday, June 19, 2023, from 2:00-3:00pm CDT. The concert, the SLSO's third annual commemoration of the Juneteenth Holiday, will be held in collaboration with long-time IN UNISON partner church First Baptist Church of Chesterfield (FBCC), Rev. Christopher L. Rogers, pastor.

No tickets are required for this community celebration; RSVPs are requested at slo.org. Doors open at 1:00pm and seating is first-come, first-served.

SLSO musicians and vocalists from the SLSO's IN UNISON Chorus and IN UNISON Scholars program will perform works by Black artists including John Carter, Rollo Dilworth, Robert Gibson, Florence Price, Andre Thomas, and William Grant Still. Throughout the collaborative program, Rev. Rogers and IN UNISON Chorus members will speak about the importance of Juneteenth, a federal holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved Black Americans, through spoken word and poetry.

The SLSO is partnering with Saint Louis County Parks to offer additional activities recognizing Juneteenth. Saint Louis County Parks will offer tours from 11:00am to 5:00pm of African Schoolhouse No. 4—a one-room schoolhouse that educated Black children in Chesterfield that was restored in Faust Park and dedicated earlier this year. Following the concert from 3:15 to 4:15pm, the FBCC memorial slave cemetery at the southeast corner of Wild Horse Creek Road and Chesterfield Parkway will be open to visitors. First Baptist Church of Chesterfield members and descendants of those memorialized at the cemetery will be on site to talk about the location's importance.

First Baptist Church of Chesterfield traces its history back to the 1840s, when a group of enslaved people and their owners attended worship services together in what is now Chesterfield valley. Housed in several buildings over the next 150 years, the church's current location on Wild Horse Creek Road was completed in 1996.



The SLSO's IN UNISON Program began in 1992 as a partnership between the institution and predominantly Black churches in the St. Louis area. In the 30 years since its founding, IN UNISON has grown to become the SLSO's flagship community engagement, including:

- Partnerships with 30+ churches throughout the region.
- The acclaimed IN UNISON Chorus, a resident chorus that specializes in the performance and preservation of music from African American and African expression. The chorus performs with the SLSO several times each season.
- The IN UNISON Academy, a series of academic support programs that include mentorships, scholarships, fellowships, and Young Artist opportunities with the IN UNISON Chorus.

Previous SLSO Juneteenth concerts have taken place at partner churches Washington Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church and Greater Mount Carmel Missionary Baptist Church, both in St. Louis.

Calendar listing:

Members of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and vocalists from the SLSO IN UNISON Chorus honor Juneteenth in a free community concert at First Baptist Church of Chesterfield (FBCC), 17103 Wild Horse Creek, Road, Chesterfield, MO 63005. The concert includes music by Black composers and traditional spirituals interwoven with spoken word and teachings about the importance of the federal holiday. No tickets are required. RSVPs are requested.

Monday, June 19, 2022, 2:00pm

First Baptist Church of Chesterfield (FBCC), 17103 Wild Horse Creek, Road, Chesterfield, MO 63005

Members of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Vocalists from the SLSO IN UNISON Chorus | Kevin McBeth, director

IN UNISON is supported by Bayer Fund.

Presented in partnership with Saint Louis County Parks.

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.



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About the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus

The St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus is an auditioned ensemble of 100+ volunteer singers that performs a variety of musical styles, with a focus on the interpretation, performance, and preservation of music from the African diaspora.

Founded in 1994 by Dr. Robert Ray as an extension of the SLSO's IN UNISON community outreach initiative, the IN UNISON Chorus performs several times each year with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and throughout the community. Chorus members often come from IN UNISON Program partner churches. Many chorus members sing in other vocal ensembles or church choirs. All share a love of music and of singing.

Bayer Fund has supported the Chorus since its inception. The Chorus has been led by Kevin McBeth since 2011. Learn more about the IN UNISON Chorus at slo.org.

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