



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA INVITES AUDIENCES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
MUSICIANS AND THE INSTRUMENTS THEY PLAY THROUGH NEW ONLINE VIDEO SERIES**

**SLSO launches Instrument Playground Online, presented by PNC Arts Alive, as part of
Music in Our Schools Month**

(March 19, 2020, St. Louis, MO) – The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra launched its new Instrument Playground Online today. This online resource features videos, photos, and activities that introduce audiences to the instruments of the orchestra and the musicians who play them. The videos feature 10 SLSO musicians—representing the four instrument families—being interviewed by local children, most of whom are musicians themselves. The series was produced in collaboration with SLSO Creative Partner Tim Munro and Julie Ritchey, Founder and Artistic Director of Filament Theater, and funded by a grant from the PNC Foundation through the [PNC Arts Alive](#) initiative.

The web address of the SLSO’s Instrument Playground Online is: slo.org/en/edu/ipo

Marie-Hélène Bernard, SLSO President and CEO, said, “The new SLSO Instrument Playground Online is another way people can connect with the SLSO. It’s an opportunity to learn more about the instruments of the orchestra and connect with our musicians on a personal level.”

PNC Arts Alive is a multi-year initiative of the PNC Foundation that challenges visual and performing arts organizations to put forth their best, most original thinking to expand audience participation and engagement.

“A thriving arts community bolsters our economy and provides personal value to all of us who live, work and play in Greater St. Louis,” said **Michael Scully, PNC regional president for St. Louis**. “The SLSO’s Instrument Playground Online introduces orchestral music to new audiences and future musicians.”

The SLSO’s Instrument Playground Online is a digital extension of the orchestra’s popular Instrument Playground, a hands-on experience for children prior to each SLSO Family Concert. The videos are an entertaining and informative overview about 10 different instruments from the four instrument families: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Through the series, audience members—from elementary students to SLSO patrons—can hear directly from these remarkable musicians. SLSO musicians featured in the videos include:

- Ann Choomack, Flute and Piccolo



- Jelena Dirks, Oboe
- Tzuying Huang, Clarinet and Bass Clarinet
- Silvian Iticovici, Violin
- Will James, Percussion
- Thomas Jöstlein, Horn
- Vincent Karamanov, Bassoon and Contrabassoon
- David Kim, Cello
- Gerry Pagano, Trombone and Bass Trombone
- Shannon Wood, Timpani

The SLSO's Instrument Playground Online can be found at slo.org/en/edu/ipo. In addition to the interview videos, there also is a brief performance by each musician. The webpage will include additional resources for viewers, especially for teachers to use in the classroom (coming soon).

The SLSO's Instrument Playground is an initiative that allows kids and adults the chance to touch and try real orchestral instruments. The Instrument Playground, which is managed by the SLSO's Symphony Volunteer Association, is available at Powell Hall before every Family Concert and at select events throughout the season.

The Instrument Playground Online is part of the SLSO's commitment to accessibility and music education. For almost 100 years, the SLSO has welcomed students from across the greater bi-state area to education concerts. In addition, the SLSO conducts in-classroom visits, hosts professional development workshops for teachers, and mentors young musicians—all to make arts education accessible to students across the greater St. Louis region.

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.

The SLSO musical family also includes two resident choruses: the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, founded in 1976 by Music Director Jerzy Semkow; and the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, an ensemble focused on the music of African-American and African cultures founded in 1994; and also the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, founded by Conductor Laureate Leonard Slatkin in 1970.

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 presents *St. Louis Symphony: Live at the Pulitzer*, a four-program series at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation. The SLSO also serves as the resident orchestra for



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Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, with the upcoming season marking the 43rd year of the 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. Denève begins his tenure as the SLSO's 13th Music Director with the 19/20 season. For more information, visit slo.org.

About PNC Foundation

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

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