



**St. Louis Symphony  
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RECEIVES \$160,000 GRANT FROM BAYER FUND**

**Grant will continue Bayer Fund's longtime support of the SLSO's IN UNISON programs, including signature chorus, community outreach, and academic programs**

**(July 20, 2020, St. Louis, MO)** – Today, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra announced it has been awarded a grant from Bayer Fund, which will be used to support the orchestra's IN UNISON programs, including the IN UNISON Church Program, IN UNISON Chorus, and IN UNISON Academy. The grant is in the amount of \$160,000.

Bayer Fund has supported the SLSO's IN UNISON activities since the program's inception in 1992. Over the past 28 years, Bayer Fund has given a total of more than \$8 million to support the SLSO and to create and sustain its IN UNISON programs.

**Marie-Hélène Bernard, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra President and CEO**, said, "We are deeply grateful for Bayer Fund's visionary and longtime support of IN UNISON programs, which enable the SLSO to connect meaningfully with our community and engage the entire St. Louis region in deepening its appreciation for the performance and preservation of music with African and African-American origins. The SLSO pioneered this unique program in the country in service to our community thanks to the generous support of Bayer Fund".

The SLSO's [IN UNISON program](#) began in fall 1992 with the support of Bayer Fund and in partnership with the St. Louis Clergy Coalition to broaden connections between the SLSO and the greater St. Louis community through partner churches. What began as a pilot program with five African-American partner churches has grown to 33 partner churches today; launched a groundbreaking chorus dedicated to the performance and preservation of music from African and African-American cultures; and has provided coaching, mentorship, and college assistance to more than 200 youth and young adults. Today, the SLSO's IN UNISON program serves 15 counties in the bi-state region and impacts more than 11,000 people each year.

In 2019, Bayer Fund awarded more than \$14 million to over 3,200 charitable and nonprofit organizations to help address essential needs in food and nutrition, STEM education and community development. Over the last five years, nonprofit organizations across the U.S. have received more than \$79 million.

To learn more about Bayer Fund visit [www.fund.bayer.us](http://www.fund.bayer.us).



### **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 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](http://slo.org).

### **About Bayer Fund**

Bayer Fund, a philanthropic arm of Bayer, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the communities where Bayer customers and employees live and work by providing funding for food and nutrition, education and community development projects.

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