



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RECEIVES GRANT TO CONTINUE EQUITY, DIVERSITY,
AND INCLUSION EFFORTS**

\$19,000 grant awarded from The Catalyst Fund of the League of American Orchestras

(July 20, 2020, St. Louis, MO) – The League of American Orchestras has awarded a nearly \$19,000 grant to the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra to strengthen its understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and to help transform organizational culture. Given to 28 orchestras nationwide, the one-year grant comprises the second round of The Catalyst Fund, the League’s three-year, \$2.1 million grant-making program, made possible by a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with additional support from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation.

“Recent events have underscored the deep racial disparities existing in our country, already amplified by the pandemic’s unequal impact on communities of color,” said **Jesse Rosen, President and CEO of the League of American Orchestras**. “The work orchestras are undertaking with support from the League’s Catalyst Fund highlights the urgency of addressing EDI as orchestras attempt to confront decades of inequity within our field. We must understand and address our personal and organizational roles in systems of inequity.”

The grant will support the SLSO’s ongoing EDI work, including anti-bias and anti-racism training done in collaboration with Rebecca Bennett and Dr. Kira Banks of Emerging Wisdom, LLC, and Crossroad Antiracism Organizing & Training. In 2015, SLSO President and CEO Marie-Hélène Bernard led work to create a roadmap for the SLSO to become more invested in EDI work. EDI was included as a key component in the SLSO’s 2016-2021 strategic plan that has since seen the creation of an EDI taskforce and listening sessions.

Catalyst Fund grants support orchestras’ use of EDI practitioners who help implement a range of organizational development activities involving musicians, staff, board, and, in some cases, volunteers and community leaders. These include anti-bias trainings, institutional audits, the creation of formal EDI plans, and work to build consensus and integrate EDI into mission statements and culture. Community building is a key component of the program; The Catalyst Fund Learning Cohort, made possible by the generous support of the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, enables past and present grantees to interact with colleagues through remote and (post-pandemic) in-person convenings as well as dedicated online forum.

League member orchestras were eligible to apply for Catalyst Fund grants; applications were reviewed by an independent panel of experts.



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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.

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