



**St. Louis Symphony  
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[December 9, 2020]

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

**THE ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND MUSIC DIRECTOR STÉPHANE DENÈVE  
ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENT OF STEPHANIE CHILDRESS AS ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR**

**Childress will also serve as Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra**

**(December 9, 2020, St. Louis, MO)** – Today, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra announced that the Franco-British conductor Stephanie Childress has been named the SLSO’s Assistant Conductor, an appointment made by Music Director Stéphane Denève following an international search.

**Stéphane Denève, Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra**, said, “In my entire life, I have never been so excited by the discovery of a new talent! Stephanie Childress is truly special and has a tremendously bright future. She impressed all of us deeply during her audition with the orchestra. We were all absolutely amazed by her refined musicality and her inspiring energy on the podium. She displayed a rare natural leadership through her powerful imagination and charmed everyone with her highly communicative passion for music. I know Stephanie will be a great asset to our entire organization.”

**Stephanie Childress, Assistant Conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra**, said, “I am delighted to join the SLSO family. I’m so impressed with the orchestra’s warm sound, welcoming energy, and beautiful home. The SLSO has a sterling reputation in the industry and I’m eager to work alongside these brilliant musicians and Stéphane Denève. I’m equally excited to become the Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra and make music with these tremendous young musicians.”

**Marie-Hélène Bernard, President and CEO of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra**, said, “Stephanie is a remarkable musician—a brilliant conductor and violinist—and she will be an ideal and central partner for the entire SLSO family. We are excited to welcome Stephanie to St. Louis and are eager to watch as she takes the podium with all of our ensembles. Our incredibly talented Youth Orchestra musicians will benefit greatly from her experiences, musicianship, and leadership. We look forward to Stephanie becoming a member of our artistic family.”

In her role, Childress will assume a variety of conducting responsibilities, including leading the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra as the 50-year-old ensemble’s Music Director. She will make her St. Louis debut conducting a chamber orchestra of SLSO musicians in spring 2021 and will also perform with the orchestra as violin soloist later this winter. Additional concerts will be announced at a later date.



A violinist-turned-conductor, Childress rose to prominence in several prestigious competitions and was a finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition both in 2016 and 2018. She has also found success in conducting competitions, recently earning the second prize at the inaugural *La Maestra* conducting competition in Paris. Described as a “seriously exciting talent” (*Operissima*), she has conducted several of Europe’s leading orchestras, including the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the BBC Philharmonic, and she most recently made her conducting debut with the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO). She counts the famed conductor Sir Simon Rattle, the current LSO Music Director, as one her mentors.

Childress’ initial contract will run through the 2021/2022 season. She succeeds former Resident Conductor Gemma New—the Music Director of the Hamilton (Canada) Philharmonic Orchestra and the Principal Guest Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra—who held that position with the SLSO from 2016 through May 2020.

### **About Stephanie Childress**

Second prize winner at the inaugural conducting competition, *La Maestra*, held in Paris in autumn 2020, Stephanie Childress is making her mark as a conductor and has been likened to “other notable young conductors of the past such as Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Sir Simon Rattle” (*Varsity*). In the 20/21 season, Childress makes debuts with the London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Orchestre de Paris. She also begins her tenure as Assistant Conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 2021.

Childress established her own ensemble, Orchestra Rheia, in 2019, leading them to make their first public performance of Brahms’ *Ein Deutsches Requiem* in May of the same year. She was also appointed to the position of Principal Conductor of the London Lawyers’ Symphony Orchestra for the 19/20 season.

Establishing herself in both symphonic repertoire and opera, Stephanie has already conducted a number of productions, including Jeremy Sams’ *The Enchanted Island* with the British Youth Opera, Benjamin Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia* at St. John’s College (Cambridge), Lennox Berkeley’s *A Dinner Engagement* for the Cambridge University Opera Society, and the world premiere of Anna Semple’s opera *The Next Station is Green Park* at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Childress is a regular assistant for Sir Simon Rattle, and has attended masterclasses with esteemed conductors such as Sir Mark Elder, Paavo Järvi, Neeme Järvi, Sian Edwards, Colin Metters, and most recently with Jukka-Pekka Saraste at the LEAD! Festival in Finland.

As a violinist, Childress rose to prominence when she became a finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition in both 2016 and 2018. She was featured in the BBC’s 2019 Proms Launch Video ahead of her Proms debut at the Royal Albert Hall with the Southbank Sinfonia and Jessica Cottis. Shortly after, Childress performed alongside the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at Glasgow’s Proms in the Park.



Known not only as a fantastic conductor and violinist, Stephanie is an active supporter of the Tri-borough Music Hub, an award-winning organization for music education. She has taken part in a number of programs with the association, including leading the junior string ensemble at an 'Artists for Inclusivity' event and speaking at the Youth Music Conference held at the Royal College of Music in February 2020. Last summer she appeared on BBC Radio 3's In Tune and BBC Proms Extra, as well as joining adjudicating panels for the RPS Awards (Storytelling Category) and the Ivor Novello Awards (Orchestral Category) last September.

### **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 141st year with the 2020/2021 season and its second 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; and the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, an ensemble focused on the music of African-American and African cultures. The SLSO family also includes 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 2021 festival season marking the 44th 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. For more information, visit [slo.org](http://slo.org).

# # #