



**St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS RATIFY AMENDED CONTRACT FOR
2020/2021 SEASON**

(January 11, 2021, St. Louis, MO) – Today, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra management, members of the orchestra, and the American Federation of Musicians, Local 2-197, jointly announced the ratification of a side letter to amend the collective bargaining agreement for the 2020/2021 season, effective January 11 through August 29, 2021.

To provide relief from longer-term financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, all parties have worked in a collaborative spirit to temporarily amend the current contract. Goals to ensure the health and safety of audiences, musicians, and staff, and to continue to deliver on the orchestra’s mission of enriching lives through the power of music were paramount during negotiations. The SLSO management is grateful for the sacrifices made by orchestra membership, which has agreed to \$3.75 million in compensation reduction from March 13, 2020, through August 29, 2021.

Steven Finerty, Chair of the SLSO Board of Trustees, said, “All of us are extremely grateful to the St. Louis community for its remarkable and generous support of the SLSO as we adjusted operations over the last 10 months due to the pandemic. The Board and management greatly appreciate the sacrifices made by SLSO orchestra membership to maintain and support the financial health of the organization and recognize the genuine collaborative spirit all parties brought to the process. We are grateful we can continue providing musicians with competitive salaries during this challenging time. SLSO President and CEO Marie-Hélène Bernard and her staff are working diligently to ensure that the SLSO can continue to share music safely with the St. Louis community in every way possible, as well as to continue to support the remarkable musicians of the SLSO family. We look forward to emerging from the pandemic as a healthy institution on all fronts and are eager to welcome patrons back to Powell Hall to enjoy experiencing music with our world-class SLSO.”

Timothy Myers, Chair of the Orchestra Negotiation Committee and Principal Trombonist for the SLSO, said, “The musicians of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra are grateful for the outstanding support of the Board of Trustees and our donor community during this challenging time. This agreement reflects the orchestra’s commitment to continuing our performance and outreach activities during the pandemic. The union’s flexibility regarding work rules and media activities will provide numerous opportunities for the SLSO to engage our audiences and donors. Despite the pandemic, we look forward to continuing orchestra concerts in Powell Hall and smaller, socially distanced performances throughout the region, as well as educational activities. We believe that this



agreement adequately protects musicians, and that it is fair, flexible, and sustainable. The union Negotiating Committee wishes to thank American Federation of Musicians Local 2-197 President Vicky Smolik for her support and perseverance throughout this process. The committee also expresses its gratitude to the musicians, who have stoically navigated this difficult time while continuously upholding the great tradition of the orchestra.”

Highlights of the agreement include:

- Musicians will retain 85% of their base pay and 80% of other compensation, including career track and overscale, in addition to health benefits and pension contributions. In the fall, musicians agreed to a significant pay cut of 40% in addition to a further 20% reduction in overscale.
- Continued flexibility of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement rules to accommodate programming and scheduling needs of performances, educational programs, and recorded content during the pandemic.
- Instrument loan program payments are deferred through August 29, 2021, without interest accrual.

Highlights of previous agreements from March 12, 2020, through January 11, 2021 include:

- Musicians received full pay during our forced cancellation from March 12 until April 6, 2020, after which and through September 9, 2020, the orchestra’s Members accepted a salary reduction, retaining 78% of their regular wages. The SLSO continued to provide full health insurance benefits and pension contributions.
- All parties again worked collaboratively to temporarily amend the contract from September 11, 2020, through January 11, 2021. For that period of time, the orchestra membership agreed to \$1.5 million of compensation reduction. This included musicians retaining 60% of their total compensation, plus health benefits and pension contributions. An additional 20% reduction on all overscale was applied, and 40% of compensation was available to be used as electronic media guarantee towards media activities. Instrument loan program payments were deferred through January 11, 2021, without interest accrual. And, musicians agreed to a flexible service allotment to allow production of performances, educational, and recorded content to continue during this unprecedented crisis.

The SLSO—which hosted a series of live concerts with audiences this fall—continues to adapt to the changing environment and to adjust plans to resume live offerings. Related updates will be shared as they are available. In the meantime, the SLSO continues to offer a robust menu of digital content for all audiences. Due to the cancellation of the season as originally planned, the SLSO is projecting a negative \$8 million revenue impact for fiscal year 2021 ending August 31.

To help offset the projected loss of revenue and financial impact of the crisis on the short- and long-term health of the institution, the SLSO has reduced its \$31 million budget to \$19 million, making more than \$10 million in expense reductions thus far, including reductions of direct expenses associated with performances at Powell Hall and outside vendors that support facilities and advertising.



Effective September 1, 2020, the SLSO implemented a salary freeze, followed by a furlough week taken by the entire staff in November. Since March 2020, Music Director Stéphane Denève took a salary reduction commensurate to the musicians' while the President & CEO and Executive Team have taken salary reductions ranging from 10% to 25%, enabling the institution to save significant salary expenses. Management continues to explore additional measures to guarantee the SLSO's ability to maintain a healthy financial situation into the future, and to continue to serve the community and its loyal audiences. SLSO musicians and management recognize the shared sacrifice by all those employed by the SLSO.

SLSO Digital Content

The SLSO and musicians have made a variety of performances and content available online, including:

- [Songs of the Holidays](#) presented by Mercy – An online video series that celebrates the many special occasions during the winter season.
- [Songs of America](#) – This collection of nine digital videos showcases the spirit of St. Louis and celebrates the breadth of voices in American music.
- [Live at the Pulitzer](#) – An adaptation of the SLSO's yearly *Live at the Pulitzer* series, this collection of solo and chamber performances of music by composers of today began in November 2020 with a performance of Nathalie Joachim's *Dam Mwen Yo*.
- [Radio Rebroadcasts on St. Louis Public Radio](#) – This page features the schedule of upcoming encore broadcasts, plus links to listen to archived concerts for 30 days.
- [Night at the Symphony](#) – The Nine Network of Public Media airs *Night at the Symphony* the first Sunday of each month at 5:00pm, with selected episodes appearing on ninenet.org.
- [Lunch & Learns](#) – This library includes recordings of all the virtual Lunch & Learn events hosted monthly since May with Music Director Stéphane Denève, SLSO musicians, and other members of the SLSO family. Topics range from the SLSO's IN UNISON program to a conversation about movie music, the women of the SLSO to a conversation with composers of today the SLSO collaborates with.
- [Instrument Playground Online](#) presented by PNC Arts Alive – a video introduction to the instruments of the orchestra and the SLSO musicians who play them.

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 founded in 1994 and 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.



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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 collaboration with the Pulitzer Arts Foundation focused on music of today. 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.

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