



**St. Louis Symphony  
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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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

**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA RECEIVES \$160,000 GRANT FROM BAYER FUND TO  
SUPPORT IN UNISON PROGRAMS**

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

**(July 12, 2021, St. Louis, MO)** – Today, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra announced it has been awarded a grant from Bayer Fund for \$160,000 to support the orchestra's IN UNISON programs, including the IN UNISON Church Program, the IN UNISON Chorus, and IN UNISON Academy.

Bayer Fund has supported the SLSO's IN UNISON activities since the program's inception in 1992 as a way to more meaningfully connect the St. Louis community and SLSO through music. Over the past 29 years, Bayer Fund has given the SLSO more than \$8 million to help the orchestra create and sustain its IN UNISON programs. Today, the SLSO's IN UNISON programs serve 15 counties in the bi-state region and impact more than 11,000 people each year.

**Marie-Hélène Bernard, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra President and CEO**, said, "We are deeply grateful for Bayer Fund's visionary and longtime support of our IN UNISON programs. Thanks to their generous support, the SLSO has worked with community partners and fostered deeper relationships throughout our region. And together, through music, we help nurture a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse St. Louis."

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. Through IN UNISON, the SLSO also launched a groundbreaking chorus dedicated to the performance and preservation of music from African American and African cultures, and has provided coaching, mentorship, and college assistance to more than 200 youth and young adults. Over the past year, the SLSO quadrupled the scope of its Peer to Peer program, an academic support program with roots in IN UNISON, to connect young musicians with SLSO musicians and musicians in the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra through weekly virtual learning sessions.

In 2020, Bayer Fund awarded more than \$17 million to over 3,400 charitable and nonprofit organizations to help address essential needs in food and nutrition, STEM education and community development. Over the past five years, nonprofit organizations across the U.S. have received more than \$80 million.



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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 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.

The dynamic partnership with Stéphane Denève is seen through his visionary storytelling, which is at the heart of the SLSO's artistic profile and has resulted in stronger connections with artists, as well as the elevation of the SLSO's role as music education leader. 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 centered on music of today. The SLSO also serves as the resident orchestra for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

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. The SLSO is also growing its digital presence that helps make music accessible to all.

This expanding content portfolio includes digital concerts filmed at Powell Hall on the SLSO's new high-definition camera equipment, videos series such as *Songs of America*, virtual Lunch & Learn events, and a robust online education program platform that features curriculum materials, Instrument Playground Online, and SoundLab—a four-part video series for teachers, students, and families to create music and engage in the science of sound.

Since the arrival of Marie-Hélène Bernard as President and CEO in 2015, the SLSO has realigned its mission to making music more accessible, while fostering a culture of radical welcome and belonging for all. Building on current momentum, the SLSO serves as a convener of individuals, creators, and ideas, and is committed to build community through compelling and inclusive musical experiences.



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Having sharpened its longstanding focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, the SLSO embraces its strengths as a responsive, nimble organization while invigorating partnerships locally and elevating its presence globally. For more information, visit [slo.org](https://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.

#### **Bayer Fund Media Contact:**

Carolyn Nagle

[carolyn.nagle@bayer.com](mailto:carolyn.nagle@bayer.com)

201-419-0337

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