



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[March 18, 2024]

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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP WITH  
MORNINGSTAR MUSIC PUBLISHERS FOR NEW IN UNISON CHORUS MUSIC SERIES,  
CHAMPIONING MUSIC BY BLACK COMPOSERS AND ARRANGERS**

**Works commissioned and performed by the SLSO's IN UNISON Chorus, now in its 30th year, will be  
available worldwide**

**Scores by Emorja G. Roberson and Isaac Cates will be published and available by April 1 with  
additional compositions added to the series later**

**(March 18, 2024, St. Louis, MO)** – Today, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO) announced a visionary partnership with MorningStar Music Publishers that will make sheet music of pieces performed and commissioned by the SLSO's IN UNISON Chorus available worldwide. The collaboration will significantly broaden the impact of the IN UNISON Chorus, a resident chorus of the SLSO that performs and preserves music from the African diaspora. The IN UNISON Chorus marks its 30th anniversary in 2024.

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra IN UNISON Choral Series—as the collection of published scores is called—highlights and elevates Black composers and arrangers, deepening the portfolio for and improving access to music for combined choral and orchestral forces by these composers. Publication begins this spring.

**Marie-Hélène Bernard, SLSO President and CEO**, said, “We are delighted that this new partnership will make music by Black composers and arrangers available for performance by ensembles internationally, advancing the mission of the IN UNISON Chorus. For 30 years, the IN UNISON Chorus has been a pioneering ensemble, meaningfully expanding the choral-orchestral repertoire of music by Black voices. This vital SLSO ensemble is a nexus of the institution’s community engagement initiatives, and the talents of its members demonstrate the vitality of the music they perform. MorningStar Music Publishers, with its strong network globally, is an essential partner in sharing this important body of music.”

**Mark Lawson, President of MorningStar Music Publishers**, said, “All of us at MorningStar Music Publishers are excited to have a chance to work with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the IN UNISON Chorus on this significant series of publications. The SLSO and its choruses are known around the world for impeccable musicianship, and this series will help provide a unique body of musical compositions for orchestras with choruses around the world. The SLSO was visionary in establishing the IN UNISON Chorus 30 years ago. It is an honor to now collaborate with the institution in this



publication partnership.”

**Kevin McBeth, Director of the SLSO IN UNISON Chorus**, said, “Since becoming the IN UNISON Chorus Director, it has been a dream of mine to expand the gospel symphonic repertoire. The legacy of this new choral series is not only the realization of a dream, but an opportunity to share the SLSO’s vision with choruses and orchestras around the world. I am grateful to MorningStar Music Publishers for helping to create this avenue for new music and tremendously honored to be a part this legacy.”

The series’ initial offerings include:

- “Lord, I Am Grateful,” by Emorja G. Roberson, Assistant Professor of Music and African American Studies at Oxford College of Emory University, first performed by the IN UNISON Chorus and the SLSO at the 2023 Lift Every Voice concert; and
- “It’s Working” by Isaac Cates—a Missouri-based composer, pianist, vocalist, and teacher—an SLSO-commissioned piece for the IN UNISON Chorus that received its world premiere in February 2019 by the SLSO, IN UNISON Chorus, and soprano soloist Jennifer Kelley.

Additional pieces will be added to the series on an ongoing basis. McBeth will edit the series for MorningStar.

Since its founding in 1994, the IN UNISON Chorus has performed several times each season with the SLSO, including the annual IN UNISON Christmas and Lift Every Voice: Celebrating Black History Month concerts, as well as a free community concert. Core to the chorus’ mission is engagement with leading Black composers and arrangers. Composers who have engaged with the chorus include Jeffery Ames, Rollo Dilworth, Moses Hogan, Nathalie Joachim, André Thomas, the late Dr. Robert Ray—prolific composer, teacher, and founding director of the IN UNISON Chorus, and others. The chorus’ portfolio spans many genres, singing in many languages, including Swahili and Latin. Led by McBeth since 2011, the chorus continues to expand its range and impact while remaining focused on Black composers. The chorus has been supported since its founding by Bayer Fund.

The chorus is an arm of the SLSO’s IN UNISON program, a multi-pronged initiative begun in 1992 to engage primarily with St. Louis’ Black community. Embraced by the institution and its Music Directors for more than 30 years, IN UNISON also includes a partner church program—which has grown to involve more than 30 churches in the St. Louis region, and the IN UNISON Academy—which provides support and mentorship for students seeking careers in music fields.

The partnership with MorningStar Music Publishers, a prominent publisher of classical and choral music, will fortify the chorus’ position as a leading ensemble in the development and performance of choral-orchestral repertoire by Black composers. Founded in 1986, MorningStar’s composer list has grown significantly over the past 35 years, and new composers are added each year. Based in Fenton, Missouri, MorningStar is part of the ECS Publishing Group, which publishes all genres of classical and sacred music, with a focus on choral music. ECS Publishing Group also owns Canticle Distributing, which maintains a large network of music dealers worldwide.



### **About the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus**

The St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus is an auditioned ensemble of volunteer singers that performs a variety of musical styles, with a focus on the interpretation, performance, and preservation of music from the African diaspora.

Founded in 1994 by Dr. Robert Ray as an extension of the SLSO's IN UNISON community engagement initiative, the IN UNISON Chorus performs several times each year with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and throughout the community. Chorus members often come from IN UNISON Program partner churches. Many chorus members sing in other vocal ensembles or church choirs. All share a love of music.

Bayer Fund has supported the Chorus since its inception. The Chorus has been led by Kevin McBeth since 2011. Learn more about the IN UNISON Chorus at [slo.org](https://slo.org).

### **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 144th year with the 2023/2024 season and its fifth with [Stéphane Denève, The Joseph and Emily Rauh Pulitzer Music Director](#). Widely considered one of the leading American orchestras, the Grammy® Award-winning SLSO maintains its commitment to artistic excellence, educational impact, and community collaborations—all in service to its mission of enriching lives through the power of music.

The transformational expansion and renovation of its historic home, Powell Hall, slated to be completed in 2025, builds on the institution's momentum as a civic leader in convening individuals, creators, and ideas, while fostering a culture welcoming to all. Committed to building community through compelling and inclusive musical experiences, the SLSO continues its longstanding focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, embracing its strengths as a responsive, nimble organization, while investing in partnerships locally and elevating its presence globally. For more information, visit [slo.org](https://slo.org).

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