



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[November 13, 2024]

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

THE ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SHARES RESULTS OF ITS 2023/2024 SEASON, HIGHLIGHTING ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS, COMMUNITY IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT

The SLSO made music accessible throughout the region in several alternate venues, directly engaging more than 925,000 people in concert halls, classrooms, community spaces, and in digital and broadcast programs

The orchestra’s home under renovation and expansion—named the Jack C. Taylor Music Center in recognition of the transformational support of the orchestra by the late businessman and civic leader and a \$30 million gift from the Crawford Taylor Foundation he founded—is on track to open in September 2025 to coincide with the building’s centennial

(November 13, 2024, St. Louis, MO) – Today at its Annual Meeting, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra shared the artistic achievements, community impact, and financial results of its 2023/2024 season, its 144th year. The members elected four new trustees and re-elected two trustees and two officers for an additional three-year term. The full 23/24 Annual Report is available at slo.org/impact.

At the Annual Meeting, Members of the Board elected four new trustees: Elcio Barcelos (U.S. Bankcorp); Peter Czajkowski (Stifel); William “Bill” Polk (Egis Capital Partners); and Ray Simon (Architect). Members also re-elected two trustees: John Tvrdik (PwC) and Stephen Mackin (Mercy). Following the Annual Meeting, the Board proceeded to the re-election of two officers: Steven L. Finerty (Argent Capital Management) as Board Chair and David Steward (World Wide Technology) as Vice Chair. Nancy Galvin (community volunteer), current Board Vice Chair, was named Chair-Elect. The Board also elected the following officers: Elizabeth Mannen Berges (Berges Family Foundation) as Secretary and Sherry Sissac (Accenture) as Assistant Secretary. Two Board officers were named Honorary Trustees: Emily Rauh Pulitzer (Pulitzer Arts Foundation) and Dr. Donald Suggs (*St. Louis American*).

Steven L. Finerty, Chair of the SLSO Board of Trustees, said, “I congratulate our entire SLSO institution on an exceptional season. While our beloved home undergoes expansion and renovation, it has been a gift to connect with audiences all over St. Louis. The SLSO is one of the nation’s finest orchestras, bolstered by the energetic leadership of our music director Stéphane Denève and the talents of our two resident choruses and Youth Orchestra. I am grateful to our Board, and to President and CEO Marie-Hélène Bernard whose leadership over the past decade continues to inspire. We look forward to serving the community and making music accessible to



all this season, as we also look ahead to the reopening of our home, the Jack C. Taylor Music Center, in 2025.”

Marie-Hélène Bernard, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra President and CEO, said, “We are on the cusp of a transformational new era in the SLSO’s storied history. As the orchestra shared music throughout the area this past season, we are reminded of the deep engagement and extraordinary generosity of our audiences, education community, and many community partners, which energize and sustains us, as well as inspire us to reimagine how our institution can be of service. My boundless gratitude goes to Board Chair Steve Finerty, Music Director Stéphane Denève, and to each individual who comprises our Board; Advisory Council; orchestra; Symphony Chorus; IN UNISON Chorus, under the inspired leadership of director Kevin McBeth; staff; and volunteer association led by president Debbie Dillon. With the investment of this unparalleled team, we anticipate with great excitement and pride the September 2025 opening of the Jack C. Taylor Music Center.”

The 23/24 season’s successes were celebrated in tandem with the ongoing 65,000-square foot expansion and renovation of the orchestra’s home—began in March 2023. Led by the internationally acclaimed architecture firm Snøhetta and local architect of record Christner Architects, the project will transform the audience and artistic experience while protecting the venue’s historic character and celebrated acoustics, creating a state-of-the art center for community, innovation, and powerful music experiences. While construction continues, the SLSO will perform throughout the community. The Jack C. Taylor Music Center, with a renovated Powell Hall at its heart, will open in September 2025 to coincide with the building’s centennial.

Key Institutional and Artistic Highlights

- **Creative collaborations and partnerships across artforms and the community**
Throughout the 23/24 season, Denève and the SLSO welcomed renowned guest artists and acclaimed composers to Powell Hall, including nearly 30 artists in their SLSO debuts. The orchestra’s dynamic programming included acclaimed performances with its two resident choruses: the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, whose 30th anniversary the institution marked in 2024; its first concert commemorating Lunar New Year; a dance collaboration with Saint Louis Dance Theatre (formerly Big Muddy Dance Company); the 20th anniversary season of the Live at the Pulitzer chamber music series exploring the intersection of visual art and music; and the inaugural season of the Live at The Sheldon chamber music series, which gave SLSO musicians creative control over the lively and varied programming. This season also marked the 48th year of the SLSO’s partnership with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.
- **Championing today’s musical voices**
Stéphane Denève and the SLSO continued its long history of championing music of today, performing a world premiere by Jeff Beal; a U.S. premiere by Hannah Eisendle; and an SLSO co-commission by Julia Wolfe. SLSO musicians performed the world premieres of



three new chamber music pieces as part of the Live at The Sheldon series. In total, the SLSO presented for the first time music by 34 living composers, including as part of its St. Louis Symphony: Live at the Pulitzer and St. Louis Symphony: Live at The Sheldon chamber music series.

- **New album and publication partnership**

The SLSO added to its expansive catalogue of recordings with an internationally acclaimed album of music by Leonard Bernstein and John Williams featuring violinist James Ehnes—Denève’s first recording with the SLSO. A new partnership with MorningStar Music Publishers, begun in spring 2024, will elevate music performed by the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus composed by Black artists, improving worldwide access to music by Black composers for orchestra and chorus.

- **Artistic leadership appointments**

The SLSO welcomed two new members of its artistic leadership team in summer 2024. Erin Freeman, a versatile artist who has led orchestras, choruses, ballet, and opera, joined the SLSO as Director of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus. In her role, she will lead the St. Louis Symphony Chorus in preparation for performances of choral-orchestral repertoire. Samuel Hollister was named Assistant Conductor and the Fred M. Saigh Youth Orchestra Music Director. He will conduct a variety of SLSO concerts, assist Denève and a roster of international guest conductors, and guide the artistic vision of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Community Impact

- More than 226,000 people experienced the power of live music with the SLSO across the region. The SLSO presented more than 100 live performances across the region in dozens of spaces while Powell Hall remain closed for construction. Primary concert venues included the Touhill Performing Arts Center at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, Stifel Theater, The Sheldon, and the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, while concerts took place in a geographically broad region from the Metro East to St. Charles County.
- Education programming continued to grow, reaching more than 449,000 students and more than 1,300 teachers in 49 states and 13 countries through a combination of live and digital concerts, in-classroom programming and resources, and teacher training. More than 6,200 tickets were provided to Education Concerts to schools in financial need.
- The SLSO partnered with more than 130 community partners on an array of initiatives ranging from discounted tickets to robust event collaborations. The SLSO engaged with 18 social service agencies, providing more than 3,700 free tickets to clients in a bold strategic initiative. A new ticket partnership with St. Louis Public Library and St. Louis County Library resulted in free tickets to classical concerts for 1,300 patrons with 900 of those visiting the SLSO for the first time.



- An estimated 306,000 people experienced the SLSO through its weekly live broadcasts of Saturday classical concerts with longtime partner St. Louis Public Radio and simulcast partner Classic 107.3.

FY24 Financial Results

- For the fiscal year ending August 31, 2024, total operating revenue was \$30.268 million, while operating expenses totaled \$30.745 million, resulting in a cash operating loss of \$477,000. The operating loss stemmed from additional costs of holding concert activities outside of Powell Hall as it undergoes construction. A total of \$7.27 million was raised for the Annual Fund. The institution's endowment ended the fiscal year at \$256 million. The distribution from the endowment draw proved critical to the stability of the SLSO this year, providing approximately 36 percent of the SLSO's income.
- The SLSO launched the public phase of Music for All, its fundraising campaign to support the expansion and renovation of Powell Hall and enhance the SLSO's endowment. At the close of the fiscal year, more than \$150 million had been raised to the goal of \$155 million.

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 145th year with the 2024/2025 season and its sixth 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 core of the SLSO's artistic foundation is its dynamic partnership with Denève, whose energetic musicianship, visionary storytelling, and collaborative spirit have created stronger connections with local and visiting artists, as well as advanced the SLSO's role as a leader in music education. The SLSO musical family also includes two resident choruses: the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, founded in 1976, performs choral-orchestral music from the Baroque era to today; and the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, founded in 1994, focuses on the performance and preservation of music from the African diaspora. The St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, founded by Conductor Laureate Leonard Slatkin in 1970, is the region's premiere training orchestra for high school and college students.

In March 2023, the SLSO broke ground on a 65,000-square foot expansion and renovation of the orchestra's home, Powell Hall—the first major renovation project at the historic Grand Center building since it became the SLSO's permanent home in 1968. Led by the internationally acclaimed architecture firm Snøhetta, the project will transform the audience and artistic experience while protecting Powell Hall's historic character and celebrated acoustics, creating a



state-of-the-art center for community, innovation, and powerful music experiences. While construction is underway, the SLSO will perform throughout the community. The revitalized Powell Hall will open in 2025, coinciding with the building's centennial.

An integral part of the vibrant St. Louis community, the SLSO enjoys a long history of robust and enduring artistic collaborations with individuals and organizations locally and around the world. Orchestra musicians share dozens of education and community performances throughout the region each year at medical facilities, places of worship, community centers, and schools. For 20 years, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra: Live at the Pulitzer series has highlighted today's leading musical voices through innovative performances in collaboration with, and reaction to the exhibitions at, the Pulitzer Arts Foundation. The SLSO has served as the resident orchestra for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for more than 45 years. The orchestra also continues to foster impactful artistic collaborations, including a chamber music series with The Sheldon, as well as regular partnerships with The Muny, Saint Louis Dance Theatre, the Saint Louis Art Museum, and others. Beyond the St. Louis region, the SLSO's impact is realized through Saturday night concert broadcasts on St. Louis Public Radio and Classic 107.3, acclaimed recordings, regular touring activity, and a digital portfolio that includes a robust online education platform with curriculum materials, interactive programs, activities, and learning opportunities for all ages.

Since the arrival of Marie-Hélène Bernard as President and CEO in 2015, the SLSO has aligned its mission to make music more accessible, while fostering a culture welcoming to all. Building on its momentum, the SLSO serves as a convener of individuals, creators, and ideas, and is committed to building community through compelling and inclusive musical experiences. As it continues its longstanding focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, the SLSO embraces its strengths as a responsive, nimble organization, while investing in partnerships locally and elevating its presence globally. For more information, visit slo.org.

#