



Lucas Waldin, conductor
Capathia Jenkins, vocals
Ryan Shaw, vocals
Members of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra
IN UNISON Chorus
Kevin McBeth, Director

Friday, October 11, 2019, at 7:30PM

VARIOUS
arr. **Bill Holombe**

Aretha Overture

**BURT BACHARACH/
HAL DAVID**

I Say a Little Prayer
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist

DON COVAY
arr. **Sam Shoup**

Chain of Fools
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist

**BUDDY DESYLVA/
LEW BROWN/
RAY HENDERSON**
arr. **George Rhodes/
orch. Mort Stevens**

Birth of the Blues
Ryan Shaw, vocalist

PAUL SIMON
arr. **Bill Holombe**

Bridge Over Troubled Water

**MARVIN HAMLISCH/
CAROLE BAYER SAGER**
arr. **Nic Raine**

Nobody Does It Better
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist

TRADITIONAL
arr. **Matt Podd**

What a Friend We Have in Jesus/
Climbing Higher Mountains
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist

JIMMY WEBB
arr. **Bill Holombe**

MacArthur Park

**KATHERINE BATES/
SAM WARD**
arr. **Sam Shoup**

America the Beautiful
Ryan Shaw, vocalist

OTIS REDDING
arr. Roger Holmes

Respect
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist
Ryan Shaw, vocalist

INTERMISSION

VARIOUS
arr. Lee Norris

Salute to Ray Charles

JAMES BROWN
arr. Kenneth Bernier

I Got You (I Feel Good)
Ryan Shaw, vocalist

IRVING GORDON
arr. Bill Holombe

Unforgettable
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist
Ryan Shaw, vocalist

**GERRY GOFFIN/
CAROLE KING/JERRY WEXLER**
arr. John Bachalis

(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist

SAM COOKE

A Change is Gonna Come
Ryan Shaw, vocalist

STEVIE WONDER
arr. Bill Holman

Isn't She Lovely

HARRY WARREN
arr. Riley Hampton

At Last
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist

**HARRY M. WOODS/
JIMMY CAMPBELL/
REG CONNELLY**
arr. Sam Shoup

Try a Little Tenderness
Ryan Shaw, vocalist

TRADITIONAL
arr. Matt Podd

Amazing Grace
Capathia Jenkins, vocalist
Ryan Shaw, vocalist



LUCAS WALDIN

Lucas Waldin is a dynamic and versatile conductor whose performances have delighted audiences across North America. He has collaborated with some of today's most exciting artists including Carly Rae Jepsen, Ben Folds, The Canadian Brass, and Buffy Sainte-Marie, in addition to conducting presentations such as Disney in Concert, Blue Planet Live, Cirque de la Symphonie, and the groundbreaking symphonic debut of R&B duo Dvsn as part of the global Red Bull Music Festival.

Waldin has been a guest conductor for numerous orchestras in the U.S. and Canada, including the Houston Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, the Grant Park Festival Orchestra, the Modesto Symphony, the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Vancouver Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic, and the Toronto Symphony.

Having joined the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra as Resident Conductor in 2009, Waldin was subsequently appointed Artist-in-Residence and Community Ambassador—the first position of its kind in North America. He appeared with the ESO over 150 times and conducted in Carnegie Hall during the orchestra's participation in the 2012 Spring for Music festival. In recognition of his accomplishments he was awarded the Jean-Marie Beaudet Award in Orchestral Conducting and received a Citation Award from the City of Edmonton for outstanding achievements in arts and culture.

A native of Toronto, Canada, Waldin holds degrees in flute and conducting from the Cleveland Institute of Music.



CAPATHIA JENKINS

Capathia Jenkins can definitely act, but all those who know her also know that this diva can blow and blow and blow you right off this planet. This woman grapples with two dueling passions, each with a strong grip—acting and music—yet she refuses to pick one because they both represent her soul. Jenkins approaches a song the same way she approaches a script, like an artist. She looks for the nuances, the secret hidden within the notes or text. She seeks the melody, harmony, and rhythm. She asks herself: what am I trying to say? What do I want my audience to experience with me? She wants to take her audience on a journey.

This Brooklyn-born-and-raised actress most recently starred as Medda in the hit Disney production of *Newsies* on Broadway. She made her Broadway debut in *The Civil War*, where she created the role of Harriet Jackson. She then starred in the Off-Broadway 2000 revival of *Godspell*, where she wowed audiences with her stirring rendition of “Turn Back, O Man,” which can still be heard on the original cast recording. She returned to Broadway in *The Look of Love* and was critically acclaimed for her performances of the Bacharach/David hits. Jenkins then created the roles of “The Washing Machine” in *Caroline, Or Change* and “Frieda May” in *Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me* where she sang “Stop the Show,” and brought the house down every night.

In 2007 she went back to Off-Broadway and starred in *(mis)Understanding Mammy*—The Hattie McDaniel Story, for which she was nominated for a Drama Desk Award. She was also seen in Nora Ephron’s *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*.

An active concert artist, Jenkins has appeared with orchestras around the world including the Cleveland Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony (with Marvin Hamlisch), National Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Utah Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony, Memphis Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Toledo Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Edmonton Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic. She was a soloist with the Festival Český Krumlov in the Czech Republic. In 2011, Jenkins had the great honor of performing in the Broadway Ambassadors to Cuba concert as part of the Festival De Teatro De La Habana. Jenkins was a guest soloist with Peter Nero and the Philly Pops, and with the Cincinnati Pops.

Her television credits include *30 Rock*, *The Practice*, *Law & Order SVU*, and *The Sopranos*. She can be seen in the 2012 film *Musical Chairs*, directed by Susan Seidelman. She can be heard on the film soundtracks for *Nine*, *Chicago*, and *Legally Blonde 2*.



RYAN SHAW

Ryan Shaw is a three-time GRAMMY-nominated artist. He recently appeared as Judas at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in the U.S. premiere of the critically-acclaimed London/Regent's Park's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which won the Olivier for Best Musical Revival. He starred as the original Stevie Wonder in *Motown: The Musical* on Broadway, and on London's West End as the Soul of Michael Jackson in *Thriller Live*. As a recording artist, Shaw has released three solo GRAMMY-nominated projects: 2008's *This is Ryan Shaw* on Columbia Records, 2011's *It Gets Better*, and 2014's *Real Love* on Dynotone Records. He has toured the world and shared the stage with such artists as Van Halen, Bonnie Raitt, Joss Stone, John Legend, B.B. King, Bruce Hornsby, and Jill Scott, to name a few. On television, Ryan has been a guest artist on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Ellen's Really Big Show*, *Last Call with Carson Daly*, and *The Martha Stewart Show*. His music has been featured on Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance* and ABC's *Dancing with The Stars*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Lincoln Heights*. His music has also been featured in the films *My Blueberry Nights* and *Bride Wars*, as well as on the *Sex and the City* soundtrack.

As a concert soloist, Shaw made his Radio City Music Hall debut at the Dream Concert benefit to build the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington, D.C. His Carnegie Hall appearances include the Elton John and Bernie Taupin Tribute, A Celebration of The African American Cultural Legacy, curated by Jessye Norman, and a recent Nat King Cole centennial concert with the New York Pops. Shaw continues to be a special guest with the Houston Symphony, and his orchestral pops concert schedule also includes engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, Philly Pops, Colorado Symphony, Arkansas Symphony, Tucson Symphony, Utah Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic, Helena Symphony, Mississippi Symphony, Anchorage Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, and numerous others.

Shaw's current solo project, entitled *Imagining Marvin*, honors Marvin Gaye in his 80th birthday year by performing songs from the legendary artist with new original songs influenced by Marvin's imitable style. Premiered live to a sold-out crowd in New York City, the show features the song, "Strong Men Can," co-written by Shaw and iconic songwriter Valerie Simpson, who, with her late partner Nick Ashford, wrote numerous hit songs for Marvin Gaye.

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Kathleen Schroeder
Michael Engelhardt
Daniel McRath

Background Vocalists

Jennifer Kelley
Patricia Land
Montel Moore



Leonard Slatkin, Conductor
Jelena Dirks, Oboe

Saturday, October 12, 2019, at 8:00PM
Sunday, October 13, 2019, at 3:00PM

VARIOUS

Yet Another Set of Variations (on a Theme of Paganini) (2019)
(SLSO Co-commission)

Leonard Slatkin	Introduction, Theme, and Variant (with apologies to S.R.) ¹
Joseph Schwantner	Aftertones of Niccolò*
Leonard Slatkin	Transitional Interlude
Guillaume Connesson	Variation d'Anniversaire sur un thème de Paganini ²
Donald Erb	Ave Atque Vale L.S.*
Truman Harris	Sarabande ³
William Bolcom	Presto scherzando*
Joan Tower	Paganini Trills* ⁴
Daniel Slatkin	Paganini Goes to the Movies ⁵
Claude Baker	Il regalo di Fornai* ⁶
Cindy McTee	Paganini Stomp ⁶
John Corigliano	Apotheosis (:90) ⁷
Leonard Slatkin	Quodlibet and Finale*

* Denotes variation written for the occasion of Leonard Slatkin's final concert as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, May 19, 1996

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MOZART

(1756–1791)

Oboe Concerto in C major, K. 314 (285d) (1777)

Allegro aperto

Adagio non troppo

Rondo: Allegretto

Jelena Dirks, oboe

INTERMISSION

R. STRAUSS

(1864–1949)

***Ein Heldenleben*, op. 40 (A Hero's Life) (1897–1898)**

The Hero—

The Hero's Adversaries—

The Hero's Companion—

The Hero's Battlefield—

The Hero's Works of Peace—

The Hero's Retreat from the World and Fulfillment

David Halen, violin

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2019/2020 Classical Series is presented by **The Steward Family Foundation** and **World Wide Technology**.

Leonard Slatkin is the **Lee and Ann Liberman Guest Conductor**.

Jelena Dirks is the **Jean L. Rainwater Featured Soloist**.

The concerts of October 12 and 13 are underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Michael Bobroff and Wendy Olk**.

The concert of Saturday, October 12, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. and Mrs. Michael F. Neidorff**.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Yet Another Set of Variations (on a Theme of Paganini)

BY LEONARD SLATKIN

In 1996 I gave my final concert as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. For the occasion, we asked the four composers who were in residence during my tenure to write a variation on the famous theme from the 24th Caprice by Niccolò Paganini. Joseph Schwantner, Joan Tower, Donald Erb, and Claude Baker each offered a different take on the tune. In addition, William Bolcom and I contributed short interpretations of our own.

Although the idea for several composers to create a single variation intended to be performed alongside other arrangements was new, the original theme is probably the most popular classical music tune to be subjected to various treatments. Indeed, Brahms, Schumann, Lutosławski, Blacher, Rachmaninoff, and even Andrew Lloyd Webber have all turned to Paganini for inspiration.

As I approached my 75th birthday, it occurred to me that expanding on this idea from 23 years ago would be a nice way to celebrate. I invited five orchestras where I have held a position of artistic leadership to commission five composers with whom I have shared a close collaboration over the course of my career. Specifically, the SLSO invited John Corigliano to contribute a new variation, as it was with that orchestra that I first conducted and recorded John's music. Composer Truman Harris served as assistant principal bassoon in the National Symphony and assisted me in orchestrating several works I wrote for that ensemble. Guillaume Connesson was resident composer with the Orchestre National de Lyon during my tenure. Cindy McTee, aka Mrs. Slatkin, was closely associated with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Daniel Slatkin is my son and a composer for motion pictures and television. His variation was commissioned by the Nashville Symphony, one of the most active recording orchestras in the country.

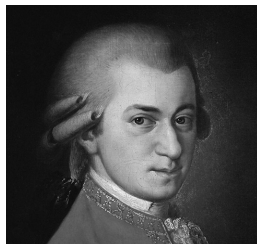
Putting all 11 variations together to form a single piece was not an easy task. I wound up writing an introduction as well as some connective material to cover setup changes in the percussion section. I determined the performance order with an eye toward balancing the serious pieces with the outrageously humorous ones. I am grateful to the various publishers for allowing their composers to sit next to each other in the same work, and to the commissioning orchestras for supporting the project.

A word about my own variation is in order. When I wrote it in 1996, I tried to take an element of each composer's style and incorporate it into a finale. With five new authors in the mix, I needed to create additional passages so that all 11 contributors would be represented. Most of this material is intended as a little tribute to my friends who so graciously participated in the celebration of this three-quarters-of-a-century milestone. If you keep in mind that my son writes for film and television, Connesson is French, and Harris is a bassoonist, I think you will catch on.

First performance: Original Variations: May 19, 1996, Leonard Slatkin conducting the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Scoring: 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (2 bass drums, chimes, crotales, gallon jug, glockenspiel, maracas, marimba, snare drum, tam tam, tambourine, temple blocks, timbales, 3-tom toms, triangle, vibraphone, water gong, xylophone), harp, piano, off-stage piano, celesta, strings, and tuned crystal glasses played by flutes and oboes

Performance time: Approximately 18 minutes



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria

Died December 5, 1791, Vienna, Austria

Oboe Concerto in C major, K. 314

BY DAVID GARRETT

The music of this concerto is more often heard, these days, played on the oboe than on the flute, so it is easy to forget that for years this piece was known only as the Flute Concerto in D. Scholars were aware that Mozart, in spring or summer 1777, had composed a concerto for the oboist Ferlendi (or Ferlendis), who had recently joined the Salzburg Court Orchestra. The following year, in Mannheim, Mozart described how his new friend Friedrich Ramm, the leading virtuoso oboist of the day, had played his “Oboe Concerto for Ferlendis” five times. Obviously Mozart had been pleased with his oboe concerto, particularly as Ramm played it. But the work was thought to be lost.

In 1920, the musicologist and conductor Bernhard Paumgartner discovered in the library of the Salzburg Mozarteum a set of orchestral parts for a concerto in C major for oboe by Mozart, which was obviously an oboe version of his D major flute concerto. The familiar flute version had been prepared in 1778 to fulfill the commission of a Dutch amateur, De Jean, for two flute concertos. Most probably Mozart had composed one (the Flute Concerto in G, K. 313) then, pressed for time, adapted the oboe concerto.

In 1948 Paumgartner edited a published edition of the oboe concerto, and supported it with an article in the Mozart Yearbook (1950). Closer examination confirmed that the Flute Concerto in D is the oboe concerto in disguise: it does not use the full range of notes available on the flutes of Mozart’s day, and the range of the violin part in the orchestra also points to the likelihood of transposition from a C major original.

Those who, observing the idiomatic mastery of the oboe in the quartet Mozart composed for Ramm (K. 370), regret that Mozart did not provide Ramm with a concerto as well, are forgetting that Ramm was probably perfectly satisfied with the concerto originally composed for Ferlendis: this one! The C major concerto is now central to the oboe repertoire.

In either form the concerto is a deft and refined essay in the classical style, with a *galant* manner. There are many ingenious and witty touches, such as the mock-serious cadence figure with repeated notes and a descending arpeggio which the soloist later extends. Donald Tovey finds *opera buffa* malice from the second violins, and *tuttis* crowded with contrapuntal and operatic life—typical Mozartian concerto writing, in other words, but never drawing attention to its skill.

The second movement, in F major, is mainly a lyrical *cantilena* for the soloist, framed by what Tovey calls quasi-heroic gestures from the orchestra. A character in a slightly later opera by Mozart gives the feeling of the *Rondo*: Blonde, the pert English servant girl in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, in whose aria “*Welche Wonne, welche Lust*” (“Oh what pleasure, oh what joy!”) Mozart returned to a variant of this rondo theme. In the second episode of the *Rondo*, first and second violins chase one another in a passage in three-part canonic counterpoint, worthy of the ingenuity of an improvising organist, and underpinned by a pedal note on the horns. That’s how it looks on the page—organ is the last thing the listener would think of. Entertainment and the opportunity for virtuoso display is the keynote here.

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SLSYO premiere: March 20, 1987, Monica Johnson as soloist, Leonard Slatkin conducting

SLSO premiere: October 12, 2019, Jelena Dirks as soloist, Leonard Slatkin conducting

Scoring: solo oboe, 2 horns, strings

Performance time: Approximately 21 minutes



RICHARD STRAUSS

Born June 11, 1864, Munich, Germany

Died September 8, 1949,

Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

Ein Heldenleben, op. 40 (*A Hero's Life*)

BY PAUL SCHIAVO

MUSIC'S HEROIC TRADITION

The concept of the artist as hero was one of the central tenets of the Romantic movement, and its expression runs through 19th-century music like a leitmotif. As mentioned above, Beethoven established a model followed by many other composers, using music to intimate dramas of struggle and eventual triumph in a number of his works, most notably his Third, Fifth, and Ninth Symphonies. These compositions exerted a tremendous influence on succeeding generations of musicians. Throughout the 19th century, the most ambitious composers sought in various ways to emulate Beethoven's example, adopting something of his heroic manner and writing orchestral works with thinly veiled autobiographical programs. Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony constitute particularly famous, but by no means isolated, examples of this practice.

Even apart from the music they created, musicians provided the Romantic era with its most vivid examples of the artist-hero. Beethoven, who overcame deafness and other hardships by dint of genius and perseverance, provided a model for this new archetype. Hardly less inspiring, at least to their admirers, were those composers who struggled to assert their progressive artistic ideals against a hostile, conservative public: crusaders like Berlioz, Bruckner, and Wagner. And the artist-hero found yet another manifestation in the careers of virtuoso performers such as Liszt and Paganini, whose feats on the concert stage conquered audiences to a degree matched only by the most popular rock stars of recent years.

As the Romantic movement reached its culmination, the notion of the artist-hero received ever more extravagant musical expression. Wagner's operatic alter-ego Siegfried and the "Titan" of Mahler's admittedly autobiographical First Symphony are notable in this regard. But the most unambiguous assertion of the concept came with Richard Strauss' epic orchestral piece *Ein Heldenleben* (*A Hero's Life*).

A SELF-PORTRAIT?

Written in 1898, this was the last of a remarkable series of tone poems Strauss composed during the final decade and a half of the 19th century. Several of those works, particularly *Don Juan* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, already had implied certain types of heroic figures and actions. But Strauss left nothing implicit about the heroic theme of *Ein Heldenleben*, nor about the identity of the hero whose story its music relates—or so it seemed to the work's earliest critics. They immediately condemned the composition as a blatant and immodest piece of

self-aggrandizement, even though the composer provided no written program other than the titles of the score's six sections. Faced with this criticism, Strauss attempted to give a more general interpretation of the piece. "It is enough to know there is a hero," he said, "fighting his enemies." The music, however, offered rather conclusive evidence that Strauss indeed fancied himself the title figure: musical quotations from his own earlier compositions presented as emblems of "the hero's works of peace" in the work's fifth section

From our present perspective, it seems hardly important whether or not the composer was waving his own flag. Strauss was a controversial artist, a radical composer in his day, and he had suffered numerous critical slings and arrows. If *Ein Heldenleben* is a fantasy of self-vindication, it is hardly more offensive than Wagner's conquest of his critics in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, in which the humble but true musician trumps his pedantic rival in a climactic singing contest and wins the girl each desires. Moreover, it is a sentiment easy to identify with. Who, after all, has not indulged in heroic fantasies?

Ein Heldenleben unfolds in six broad sections, played without pause. The first introduces the hero of the work's title in a soaring romantic melody. In the second part, Strauss depicts the hero's enemies through carping woodwind figures and malevolent harmonies in the low strings. But the hero also has a soul-mate, a Beloved, or Companion, represented in radiant passages for solo violin in the third section. The fourth portion of the tone poem finds the hero confronted by his enemies in some of the most colorful battle music ever composed. Emerging victorious, he now devotes himself to peaceful works for the benefit of humanity. Quotations from *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Death and Transfiguration*, and several other Strauss compositions sound in this fifth section. Finally, his life's work accomplished, the hero withdraws from the world, serene in the knowledge of his virtues and accomplishments.

First performance: March 3, 1899, in Frankfurt; the composer conducting the Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester.

SLSO premiere: February 27, 1925, Rudolf Ganz conducting

Most recent SLSO performance: September 28, 2013, Stéphane Denève conducting

Scoring: 3 flutes, piccolo, 4 oboes (4th doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, E-flat clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 8 horns, 5 trumpets, 3 trombones, tenor tuba, bass tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tam tam, tenor drum, triangle), 2 harps, strings

Performance time: Approximately 40 minutes



NICO RODAMEL

LEONARD SLATKIN

SLSO Conductor Laureate

Lee and Ann Liberman Guest Conductor

Internationally acclaimed conductor Leonard Slatkin is Conductor Laureate of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Music Director Laureate of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), and Directeur Musical Honoraire of the Orchestre National de Lyon (ONL). He maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting throughout the world and is active as a composer, author, and educator.

In the 2019/20 season, he will celebrate his 75th birthday year with several of the orchestras he has led over the course of his 50-year career, including the St. Louis, National, Nashville, and Detroit Symphony Orchestras, as well as the Orchestre National de Lyon. Other highlights include return engagements with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ National Symphony in Dublin, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo; debuts with the KBS Symphony Orchestra in Seoul, NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hannover, and Würth Philharmonic in Künzelsau, Germany; and three weeks in Spain conducting orchestras in Castile-León, Bilbao, and the Balearic Islands.

Slatkin has received 6 Grammy awards and 33 nominations. His recent Naxos recordings include works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz (with the ONL) and music by Copland, Rachmaninoff, Borzova, McTee, and John Williams (with the DSO). In addition, he has recorded the complete Brahms, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky symphonies with the DSO.

A recipient of the prestigious National Medal of Arts, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor. He has received Austria's Decoration of Honor in Silver, the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton Award, and the 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his debut book, *Conducting Business*. His second book, *Leading Tones: Reflections on Music, Musicians, and the Music Industry*, was published by Amadeus Press in 2017.

Slatkin has conducted virtually all the leading orchestras in the world. As Music Director, he has held posts in New Orleans, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., London (with the BBC Symphony Orchestra), Detroit, and Lyon, France. He has also served as Principal Guest Conductor in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Cleveland.



JELENA DIRKS

Jean L. Rainwater Featured Soloist

Appointed Principal Oboe of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in December 2013, Jelena Dirks is the third generation of professional, female musicians in her family. A San Diego native, she grew up in a profoundly musical household. Her mother, retired Chicago Symphony Violist Karen Dirks, as well as her father and maternal grandmother (who were both cellists and stand partners in the San Diego Symphony) made sure music was a part of her life from the beginning. As a youth, Dirks spent many hours dancing ballet and playing the piano, until at age eleven, she ceaselessly begged her parents for an oboe when her soon-to-be first oboe teacher told her “she would make a perfect oboist.”

Dirks was on the faculty of DePaul University from 2005-2014 where she taught both piano and oboe and was the woodwind coordinator. Known for her “luminous solos” (*Chicago Classical Review*), she is highly sought after as both a teacher and performer, having performed with virtually every major musical group in Chicago, including the Lyric Opera, Chicago Philharmonic, Chroma Chamber Orchestra, and five years of regular performances, tours, and recordings with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She plays chamber music whenever possible and was the oboist for the critically acclaimed Prairie Winds Quintet from 2003-2016. She was also a frequent guest artist on the CSO Chamber Music Series, the Chicago Chamber Musicians, and is a frequent guest artist on the Missouri Chamber Music Festival in St. Louis.

Having graduated *summa cum laude* with dual Bachelor’s degrees in both oboe and piano from St. Olaf College in Minnesota, Dirks went on to receive dual Master’s degrees in Piano and Oboe Performance from the University of Michigan. She studied with Logan Skelton, A. DeWayne Wee, Doris Koppelman, Alex Klein, Harry Sargous, Merilee Klemp, Peggy Michel, and David McGill among others. While oboe is now the heart and soul of her musical life in St. Louis, the piano still holds a special place as her first love (she can very occasionally be heard practicing when she thinks no one can hear).

Dirks lives in the Central West End neighborhood of St. Louis with her husband, Aaron, a wine professional (they met in the University of Michigan Symphonic Band) and their rescue dog, Bear, who thinks that the possums and squirrels of St. Louis are great fun to chase. All three of them enjoy gardening and restoring their 1895 home together.

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The SLSO will not perform on the program with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis.

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