



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CELEBRATES MILESTONE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
SEASON OF THE ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY CHORUS**

Anniversary showcases the Chorus in nine programs throughout 2026/27 season

Celebrations began with a Chorus performance at the orchestra's annual Forest Park concert reaching tens of thousands, and culminates in an anniversary celebration concert May 2 at Powell Hall

(October 26, 2026, St. Louis, MO) – Throughout its 2026/27 season, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra celebrates the milestone 50th anniversary of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, one of two choruses under the banner of the SLSO. The landmark season includes performances on nine different SLSO programs and culminates in an anniversary celebration concert on May 2.

The Symphony Chorus has performed with the SLSO to critical acclaim at Powell Hall, Carnegie Hall, and other venues locally and nationally since its founding in the 1976/77 season by then-Music Director Jerzy Semkow. Primarily a volunteer ensemble, singers of all ages and backgrounds from throughout the St. Louis region gather to rehearse together on Tuesday nights and perform with the orchestra several times each season in a variety of programs.

Marie-Hélène Bernard, President and CEO of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, said, "Celebrating 50 years of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus marks an important milestone carrying its extraordinary artistic legacy from its 1976 founding under inaugural Director Thomas Peck through its remarkable ascension under former Director Amy Kaiser, and currently embracing new horizons with Erin Freeman's leadership. Since its founding, the Symphony Chorus has flourished along with our orchestra, pushing the boundaries of the traditional repertoire while championing new works. Exceptional artistry, combined with each individual singer's commitment, has elevated our ensemble to new heights and stands as a testament to the Chorus' impact in the national arts landscape and the timeless power of vocal music. Bravo to Erin and this wonderful group of artists!"

Erin Freeman, Director of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, said, "For 50 years, the St. Louis Symphony Chorus has cultivated a reputation for remarkable performances that demonstrate both virtuosity and dexterity. I am proud to build upon this incredible legacy, developed by the leadership of Tom Peck and Amy Kaiser and the thousands of singers that have become part of the SLSO family. I'm excited to take the Chorus into the future as we raise our voices to build our artistic profile, collaborate with our marvelous SLSO, and strengthen our community."



The anniversary season began at the orchestra's annual concert in Forest Park on September 16, when a full Chorus made of members from the St. Louis Symphony Chorus and the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus joined the orchestra for the first time on Art Hill since SLSO concerts began there in 1968. Throughout the milestone season, the Chorus will perform a variety of pieces on classical programs, including Igor Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Francis Poulenc's *Gloria*, Joseph Haydn's *Missa in Angustiis*, and Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 3*, along with several works new to the Chorus' profile, including Felix Mendelssohn's *Psalm 114 (When Israel out of Egypt Came)*, Maurice Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and Gabriela Ortiz's *Revolución diamantina* (with soloists selected from the Chorus). Additionally, the Chorus will be featured in several non-classical performances, from the annual Mercy Holiday Celebration to *The Muppet Christmas Carol in Concert* and the Extra Credit Choral collaboration with local music educators. The season culminates in a 50th anniversary commemoration concert, held on May 2 at Powell Hall at the Jack C. Taylor Music Center. Tickets are available now for all concerts at slo.org.

Known for its nimbleness and virtuosity, the Chorus has performed well over 200 major pieces since its founding, representing more than three centuries of music, ranging from popular choral-orchestral showpieces like G.F. Handel's *Messiah*, Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, and Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, to world premieres including St. Louis composer Adam Maness' *Divides That Bind* and Kevin Puts' *House of Tomorrow*, which inaugurated the renovated Powell Hall and new Jack C. Taylor Music Center at the SLSO's Opening Weekend in September 2025. Its performances have included pieces sung in Latin, Russian, Hungarian, Italian, French, German, Hebrew, and other languages.

The Chorus has had three directors since its founding in 1976: founding Director Thomas Peck (1976–1994), Amy Kaiser (1995–2022), and Erin Freeman (2024–present). Each director has sharpened the group's reputation for exceptional artistry, with critical acclaim describing the ensemble as “impressive” (*The New York Times*) and “magnificent” (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*), and that it “sang with soul” (*Los Angeles Times*), and “decisiveness and élan” (*Musical America*).

The Chorus has had major roles in concert operas performed by the SLSO, including Ludwig van Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, Richard Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, W.A. Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, which was performed at Carnegie Hall on the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth, and more.

Acting as an ambassador not just for the SLSO but for all of St. Louis arts, the Chorus has also performed at the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica, the Fabulous Fox Theatre, Siteman Cancer Center, Queeny Park, and Busch Stadium, singing the National Anthem in the 1982 World Series. On tour, the Chorus has performed eleven programs at New York's Carnegie Hall. The SLSO's 1978 recording of Sergei Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, nominated for a Grammy Award, is one of 12 commercial recordings featuring the Chorus. The Chorus has been nominated for a Grammy Award four times.



The St. Louis Symphony Chorus is one of two resident SLSO choruses. The second chorus—the St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, founded in 1994—focuses on performance and preservation of music from the African diaspora and has been led by Kevin McBeth since 2011. For more information about the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, visit slo.org.

2026/27 season concerts with the St. Louis Symphony Chorus

SLSO Community Concert | Extra Credit Choral

Sunday, November 1, 7:30pm CST

Erin Freeman, conductor

Kevin McBeth, conductor

Members of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, St. Louis Symphony IN UNISON Chorus, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

J. Rosamond Johnson / arr. Carter “Lift Every Voice and Sing”

Marianna Martines Dixit Dominus **(First SLSO performance)**

W.A. Mozart / comp. Süßmayr Selections from Requiem

Giuseppe Verdi “Va, pensiero” from *Nabucco*

Eric Whitacre *Glow* **(First SLSO performance)**

Gwyneth Walker “How Can I Keep from Singing”

Traditional / arr. Powell “Keep Yo’ Lamps”

Brandon Williams “Fierce Love”

Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens / arr. Hayes “Make Them Hear You” from *Ragtime*

A pay-what-you-wish concert with music educators playing alongside SLSO musicians. RSVPs requested. Seating is first-come, first served.

Education Programs are presented by Steward Family Foundation and World Wide Technology. Sponsored by Dana Brown Charitable Trust, U.S. Bank, Trustee, and U.S. Bank.

Shostakovich Eighth | Beauty in Darkness

Saturday, November 14, 7:30pm CST

Sunday, November 15, 3:00pm CST

David Afkham, conductor

St. Louis Symphony Chorus | Erin Freeman, director

Felix Mendelssohn *Psalm 114 (When Israel out of Egypt Came)* **(First SLSO performances)**

Igor Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms*

Dmitri Shostakovich *Symphony No. 8*

The Muppet Christmas Carol in Concert

Saturday, December 12, 7:00pm CST



ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

STÉPHANE DENÈVE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

NEWS

Sunday, December 13, 2:00pm & 7:00pm CST

Evan Roider, conductor **(SLSO debut)**

Members of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus | Erin Freeman, director

Miles Goodman

The Muppet Christmas Carol

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Mercy Holiday Celebration

Thursday, December 17, 7:30pm CST

Friday, December 18, 10:30am CST

Friday, December 18, 7:30pm CST

Saturday, December 19, 2:00pm CST

Saturday, December 19, 7:30pm CST

Sunday, December 20, 2:00pm CST

Erin Freeman, conductor

Norm Lewis, vocals

St. Louis Symphony Chorus | Erin Freeman, director

Repertoire to be announced.

Presented by Mercy.

Ravel and Poulenc | Charm and Wonder

Friday, February 12, 7:30pm CST

Saturday, February 13, 7:30pm CST

Stéphane Denève, conductor

St. Louis Symphony Chorus | Erin Freeman, director

St. Louis Children's Choirs | Dr. Alyson Moore, artistic director

Francis Poulenc

Gloria

Maurice Ravel

L'enfant et les sortilèges (The Child and the Spells) **(First SLSO performances)**

Haydn and Ortiz | Resistance and Revolution

Saturday, March 20, 7:30pm CDT

Sunday, March 21, 3:00pm CDT

Carlos Miguel Prieto, conductor **(SLSO debut)**

St. Louis Symphony Chorus | Erin Freeman, director (Haydn)

8 soloists from the St. Louis Symphony Chorus (Ortiz)



Joseph Haydn

Missa in Angustiis (Mass for Troubled Times)

Gabriela Ortiz

Revolución diamantina (Glitter Revolution) (**First SLSO performances**)

St. Louis Symphony Chorus 50th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, May 2, 7:00pm CDT

Erin Freeman, conductor

St. Louis Symphony Chorus | Erin Freeman, director

Franz Biebl

Ave Maria

Lili Boulanger

Hymn to the Sun

G.F. Handel

Zadok the Priest

Ola Gjeilo

Serenity (O Magnum Mysterium)

Kevin Puts

Of Joy and Sorrow from *House of Tomorrow*

Benjamin Britten

“Old Joe Has Gone Fishing” from *Peter Grimes*

Giuseppe Verdi

Va, Pensiero

Johannes Brahms

Selig sind die Toten from *A German Requiem*

Alexander Borodin

Polovtsian Dances

Mahler’s Third | The World in Symphony

Friday, May 7, 7:30pm CDT

Sunday, May 9, 3:00pm CDT

Stéphane Denève, conductor

Sopranos and altos of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus | Erin Freeman, director

St. Louis Children’s Choirs | Dr. Alyson Moore, artistic director

Gustav Mahler

Symphony No. 3

About the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Celebrated as one of today’s most exciting, innovative, and enduring orchestras, the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra is the nation’s second oldest, marking its 147th year with the 2026/27 season. The visionary and heartfelt approach of Stéphane Denève, The Joseph and Emily Rauh Pulitzer Music Director, anchors more than 400 extraordinary artists across four ensembles.

A leading American orchestra, the Grammy Award–winning SLSO is dedicated to its mission of enriching lives through the power of music, fostering a vibrant and connected community. The SLSO is committed to making music more accessible to all, furthered by the September 2025 reopening of its expanded and renovated home, the Jack C. Taylor Music Center, with historic Powell Hall at its heart. A cornerstone of the St. Louis region, the SLSO partners with more than 150 community organizations to deepen music access.



ST. LOUIS
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

STÉPHANE DENÈVE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

NEWS

The SLSO shapes the orchestra of the future through its commitment to integrity, innovation, collaboration, inclusion, and responsiveness, elevating St. Louis as a global destination.

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