



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Celebrated American Pianist Jeremy Denk to become The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's newest Artistic Partner**

Denk is the recipient of a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship, is *Musical America's* 2014 Instrumentalist of the Year, and the 2014 winner of the Avery Fisher Prize.

"Mr. Denk, clearly, is a pianist you want to hear no matter what he performs, in whatever combination – both for his penetrating intellectual engagement with the music and for the generosity of his playing." – *The New York Times*

SAINT PAUL, MN, March 18, 2014 – The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra announces today that internationally celebrated pianist Jeremy Denk has been named the orchestra's newest Artistic Partner. Denk's tenure will begin in the 2014-15 season.

SPCO President Bruce Coppock is thrilled to announce that this Artistic Partnership marks Denk's first appointed position with an orchestra. "Jeremy's star is clearly on the rise and we consider it a major coup for him to join us. I have had the pleasure of witnessing Jeremy's extraordinary gifts since serving on the jury that chose him as the 1999 winner of the Andrew Wolf Chamber Music prize, his first major public recognition. Jeremy's rapacious curiosity and rhapsodic imagination – and his prodigious pianistic skills – have combined to fuel his growth into an extraordinary – potentially iconic – artist. We know that Jeremy will bring every bit of his imagination to his work with the SPCO's musicians, with many of whom he enjoys longstanding personal and musical friendships. It will be a great partnership – most especially for our audiences, who will be taken on a great musical journey, juxtaposing music of every period from the Baroque to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in fascinating, stimulating ways."

During the past two years, Denk's distinctive artistry has been recognized in an extraordinary run of honors and prizes. In addition to being awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize on March 18, he was named a 2013 MacArthur Fellow for his "extraordinary originality, dedication in his creative pursuits, and a marked capacity for self-direction" and he was also named *Musical America's* 2014 Instrumentalist of the Year.

Denk is the music director of the 2014 Ojai Music Festival this summer for which he has written the libretto to a new comic opera, *The Classical Style*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky. Ojai's Artistic Director Thomas W. Morris congratulated the SPCO on Denk's appointment, saying, "Jeremy Denk was chosen Music Director of the 2014 Ojai Music Festival because of his fantastic piano artistry, his inquisitive mind, and his infectious imagination. The SPCO is lucky to benefit from these same stellar qualities in his new role as one of its Artistic Partners."

Denk is also known for his original and insightful writing on music, which has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic*, *The Guardian*, and on the front page of *The New York Times Book Review*. For his work as a writer and pianist, *Out* magazine included Denk on its "Out 100" list celebrating the most compelling people of 2013.

Denk's recording of music by Ligeti and Beethoven for Nonesuch Records was included on many "Best of 2012" lists, including those of *The New Yorker*, *Washington Post* and NPR Music; his second Nonesuch recording released in September 2013, is of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, a work with which Denk has had a long and close relationship throughout his career. The album reached number one on *Billboard's* Classical Chart and was featured in "Best of 2013" lists by *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. Following the success of those recordings, Denk and the SPCO will make a recording for Nonesuch during his partnership of an intriguing combination of works by Bach and Stravinsky.

Denk has performed with the SPCO many times in recent years, including performances this season of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25 and the Brahms' Piano Quintet. Denk's 2014-15 SPCO season performances will include Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 as well as a program featuring a pairing of works by Bach and Janáček. In addition to performances of chamber music and well-known piano concertos, his work with the SPCO over the next three years will include collaborations with vocal artists and an emphasis on commissioning new works by both rising and major American composers. During the 2016-17 season, Denk and the SPCO will make a North American tour under the auspices of Opus 3 Artists.

When asked about working with the SPCO, Denk said "Rehearsing Mozart with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra last fall was one of my happiest experiences; they have the kind of openness and freedom that I have always dreamed of in a relationship with an orchestra. I am

excited to pursue various musical curiosities and enthusiasms with them, to create interesting programming, and, most importantly, to have fun.”

Kyu-Young Kim, the SPCO’s senior director of artistic planning and principal second violinist, looks forward to working with Denk both as a musician and colleague. "The SPCO absolutely loves making music with Jeremy. He is a fabulous pianist with a probing intellect and the ability to express his ideas with utter conviction and clarity, both in rehearsal and in performance. Jeremy can make you hear a work that you've played and heard a million times in a completely new way, and not through gimmicks or artifice, but by making a deep personal connection with every note and gesture in the score. We are thrilled to welcome him to our stellar roster of Artistic Partners."

The SPCO is recognized for its innovative approach to artistic leadership. In 2004, the SPCO transferred broad artistic responsibilities from a music director to the SPCO musicians and an intentionally diverse group of Artistic Partners – which have included Italian conductor Roberto Abbado, French pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Scottish conductor Douglas Boyd, American violinist Joshua Bell, Dutch conductor Edo de Waart, British conductor Nicholas McGegan, American pianist and composer Stephen Prutsman, American soprano Dawn Upshaw, German pianist Christian Zacharias, and Austrian violinist Thomas Zehetmair. Moldovan Violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja will begin an Artistic Partnership in the 2014-15 season. In collaboration with a committee of SPCO musicians and management, the Artistic Partners develop distinctive multi-year programming plans focused on the particular musical interests they share with the SPCO.

### **JEREMY DENK**

One of America’s most thought-provoking, multi-faceted, and compelling artists, pianist Jeremy Denk is the recipient of a 2013 MacArthur Fellowship and was named *Musical America’s* 2014 Instrumentalist of the Year. He has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, and London, and regularly gives recitals in New York, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, and throughout the United States. Last season he returned to Carnegie Hall as part of a 13-city recital tour, in addition to performing at London’s Wigmore Hall. He also toured with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and played Bach’s set of six keyboard concertos in a single evening with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He will reprise Bach’s concertos on tour with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields next season.

To coincide with the release of his second Nonesuch Records album, *Bach: Goldberg Variations*, Denk launched the 2013-14 season with performances of the “Goldbergs” in Boston, Chicago, and Washington; the album reached number one of Billboard’s Classical Chart and was featured in “Best of 2013” lists by the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*. Other season

highlights include his return to Carnegie Hall to play Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25 on tour with the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas, and performances of the concerto with the symphony orchestras of Cincinnati and Baltimore, as well as with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, leading from the keyboard. Upcoming highlights include his debut with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Esa Pekka Salonen, and with the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Susanna Mälkki. He will also return to the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony. As Music Director of the 2014 Ojai Music Festival, Denk looks forward to performing and curating, and has written the libretto to a comic opera, *The Classical Style*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky. Inspired by Charles Rosen's eponymous seminal text, the opera—a co-commission of the Ojai Music Festival, Carnegie Hall, Cal Performances, and the Aspen Music Festival—features the characters of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Denk is known for his original and insightful writing on music, which Alex Ross praises for its “arresting sensitivity and wit.” The pianist's writing has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, *The Guardian*, and on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review*. One of his *New Yorker* contributions, “Every Good Boy Does Fine,” forms the basis of a memoir he is writing for future publication by Random House. Recounting his experiences of touring, performing, and practicing, his blog, [Think Denk](#), was recently selected for inclusion in the Library of Congress web archives. For his work as a writer and pianist, *Out* magazine included Denk on its “Out 100” list celebrating the most compelling people of 2013.

In 2012, Denk made his Nonesuch debut with a pairing of masterpieces old and new: Beethoven's final Piano Sonata No. 32, Op. 111, and György Ligeti's *Études*. The album was named one of the best of 2012 by *The New Yorker*, NPR, and the *Washington Post*, and Denk's account of the Beethoven sonata was selected by BBC Radio 3's *Building a Library* as the best available version recorded on modern piano. Denk has a long-standing attachment to the music of American visionary Charles Ives, and his recording of Ives's two piano sonatas featured in many “best of the year” lists. Last season, the pianist was invited by Michael Tilson Thomas to appear as soloist in the San Francisco Symphony's American Mavericks festival, and he recorded Henry Cowell's Piano Concerto with the orchestra. Having cultivated relationships with many living composers, he currently has several commissioning projects in progress.

Denk has toured frequently with violinist Joshua Bell, and their recently released Sony Classical album, *French Impressions*, won the 2012 Echo Klassik award. He also collaborates regularly with cellist Steven Isserlis, and has appeared at numerous festivals, including the Italian and American Spoleto Festivals, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music, Verbier, Ravinia, Tanglewood, Aspen Music, and Mostly Mozart Festivals.

Jeremy Denk has earned degrees from Oberlin College, Indiana University, and the Juilliard School. He lives in New York City, and his web site and blog are at [jeremydenk.net](http://jeremydenk.net).

### **ABOUT THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, now its 55<sup>th</sup> season, is widely regarded as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. In collaboration its artistic partners, the virtuoso musicians present more than 130 concerts and educational programs each year, and are regularly heard on public radio's *Performance Today* which reaches 1.2 million listeners each week on 256 stations, and *SymphonyCast* reaching 230,000 listeners each week on 126 stations nationwide. The SPCO has released 67 recordings, commissioned 133 new works, and performed the world premiere of 49 additional compositions. The SPCO has earned the distinction of 16 ASCAP awards for adventurous programming. Renowned for its artistic excellence and remarkable versatility of musical styles, the SPCO tours nationally and internationally, including performances in premier venues in Europe, Asia and South America. Launched in 1994, the SPCO's award-winning CONNECT education program reaches over 5,000 students and teachers annually in 12 Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools. For more information, visit [www.thespco.org](http://www.thespco.org).

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