



For Immediate Release

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Julie Albers to become new Principal Cellist of the SPCO

Albers, the unanimous choice of the cello audition committee, has played regularly with the SPCO, including an acclaimed solo performance in spring 2014

SPCO also announces seven guest musician appointments for the 2014-15 season

“Julie Albers is a fantastically eloquent player, with an elegant sound that is full of emotion but without exaggeration or overstatement.” – *The New York Times*

“Albers' performance of Dvořák's Cello Concerto at Severance Hall with the Cleveland Orchestra and resident conductor Jahja Ling suggested she will have a fantastic career. Her playing is mature in every sense of the word, from the vibrant sound she produces at all dynamic levels and technical ease with which she traverses treacherous lines to the interpretive poise that enables her to seize the ear.” – *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

“Julie Albers, an utterly assured soloist, made the transition easier with her flawless playing that included a virtuosic cadenza to the first movement, and a glimpse of heaven in the second movement's inspired area.” – *New Zealand Herald*

SAINT PAUL, MN, September 9, 2014 – The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra announces today that internationally celebrated American cellist Julie Albers has been named the orchestra's new Principal Cellist. Holding the Bill and Hella Mears Hueg chair, Albers will officially begin her full-time tenure as principal in the 2015-16 season, but will be able to join the SPCO on stage during eight weeks of the 2014-15 season. Her first performances with the orchestra this season

will be during Opening Weekend (September 13-14), in a program featuring Beethoven's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies along with the world premiere of Nicola Campogrande's *Urban Gardens*, a work commissioned by the SPCO. She will also be featured as soloist with the SPCO in the Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto No.1 on May 15-16, 2015 at the new Ordway Concert Hall.

Albers was the unanimous choice of the musician-comprised cello audition committee, and of the appointment, SPCO Principal Second Violinist and Senior Director of Artistic Planning Kyu-Young Kim, said, "We feel extremely fortunate to have Julie Albers become our new Principal Cellist. She is an extraordinary artist and a seasoned professional who will be able to hit the ground running as one of the key musical leaders of the SPCO. In addition to being a fantastic cellist, she has great interpersonal skills and exhibits grace under pressure at every turn. She has played many weeks as guest principal cellist for the past few seasons, and as we conducted our search, it became increasingly clear to all of us at the SPCO that Julie was the perfect person for the job."

Albers has performed with the orchestra many times as guest Principal Cellist in recent seasons, most notably this past spring when SPCO Artistic Partner Thomas Zehetmair was forced to cancel his engagement with the orchestra due to illness and Albers stepped in as soloist with a thrilling performance of the Haydn D Major Cello Concerto. Critic Rob Hubbard of the *Pioneer Press* wrote, "Albers offered a quite impressive interpretation of Joseph Haydn's Second Cello Concerto before joining four other musicians for an involving take on a Johannes Brahms String Quintet... The highlight was Albers' lively, lyrical performance of the Haydn concerto. Albers made every movement sing, employing a rich, full sound, dexterous digits and a delicate touch. She brought a surprisingly tumultuous and troubled tone to the first-movement cadenza, summoning up an anxious mood that suited the work well."

Regarding her appointment with the orchestra, Albers said, "It is a great honor to have accepted the Principal Cello position with the SPCO. This is such a unique and inspiring ensemble for which I have always had the greatest admiration! What a pleasure to get the opportunity to make music with this group on a regular basis!"

The SPCO's Principal Cello position has been vacant since June of 2012 after the resignation of former principal Ronald Thomas.

Seven Guest Musicians for the 2014-15 season

The SPCO is also excited to announce the appointments of seven guest musicians who will join the orchestra for the 2014-15 season. These musicians include: **Zachary Cohen**, guest Principal Bass for the season, on leave from the Milwaukee Symphony and a member of the Knights Chamber Orchestra; **Barbara Bishop** on second oboe and English horn, on leave from

the Kansas City Symphony; violist **Shuangshuang Liu** and violinist **Luosha Fang**, both graduates of the Curtis Institute and participants this past summer at the Marlboro Music Festival; violinist **Kayla Moffett** from the New World Symphony and graduate of the Yale School of Music; clarinetist **Jonathan Cohen**, graduate of the Juilliard School; and **Sycil Mathai**, trumpet player for the Knights Chamber Orchestra and graduate of the Juilliard School.

For more information on these guest musicians, visit thespco.org/musicians.

PHOTOS

[Link to Hi-Res photos \(via dropbox\)](#)

ABOUT JULIE ALBERS

American cellist Julie Albers is recognized for her superlative artistry, her charismatic and radiant performing style, and her intense musicianship. She was born into a musical family in Longmont, Colorado and began violin studies at the age of two with her mother, switching to cello at four. She moved to Cleveland during her junior year of high school to pursue studies through the Young Artist Program at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied with Richard Aaron. Miss Albers soon was awarded the Grand Prize at the XIII International Competition for Young Musicians in Douai, France, and as a result toured France as soloist with Orchestre Symphonique de Douai.

Ms. Albers made her major orchestral debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1998, and thereafter has performed in recital and with orchestras throughout North America, Europe, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and New Zealand. In 2001, she won Second Prize in Munich's Internationalen Musikwettbewerb der ARD, and was also awarded the Wilhelm-Weichsler-Musikpreis der Stadt Osnabruch. While in Germany, she recorded solo and chamber music of Kodaly for the Bavarian Radio, performances that have been heard throughout Europe. In 2003, Miss Albers was named the first Gold Medal Laureate of South Korea's Gyeongnam International Music Competition, winning the \$25,000 Grand Prize.

In North America, Miss Albers has performed with many important orchestras and ensembles. Recent performances have included exciting debuts on the San Francisco Performances series and with the Grant Park Music Festival where she performed Penderecki's Concerto Grosso for 3 cellos with Mr. Penderecki conducting. Past seasons have included concerto appearances with the Orchestras of Colorado, Indianapolis, San Diego, Seattle, Vancouver, and Munchener Kammerorchester among others.

In addition to solo performances, Miss Albers regularly participates in chamber music festivals around the world. 2009 marked the end of a three year residency with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two. She is currently active with the Albers String Trio and the

Cortona Trio. Teaching is also a very important part of Miss Albers' musical life. She currently is Assistant Professor and holds the Mary Jean and Charles Yates Cello Chair at the McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.

Miss Albers' debut album with Orion Weiss includes works by Rachmaninoff, Beethoven, Schumann, Massenet, and Piatagorsky and is available on the Artek Label. Julie Albers performs on a N.F. Vuillaume cello made in 1872 and makes her home in Atlanta with her husband, Bourbon, and their dog, Dozer.

ABOUT THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, now in its 56th season, is widely regarded as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. In collaboration with five artistic partners – Roberto Abbado, Jeremy Denk, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Christian Zacharias and Thomas Zehetmair – 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 1.3 million listeners each week on 289 stations, and SymphonyCast reaching 250,000 listeners each week on 143 stations nationwide. The SPCO has released 67 recordings, commissioned 139 new works, and performed the world premiere of 49 additional compositions. The SPCO has earned the distinction of 17 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.

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