



For Immediate Release

Contact: Stephen Sokolouski 651.292.4318

ssokolouski@spcomail.org

British Baroque specialist Jonathan Cohen to become the SPCO's newest Artistic Partner

Cohen's tenure will begin in the 2016.17 season, and he will perform with SPCO over the next two weeks of Neighborhood Series concerts.

"...rising like a shooting star through the period performance sector..." – *Huffington Post*

"Jonathan Cohen's sensitive direction...effortlessly carried the day." – *The Evening Standard*

"What musical intelligence! ... Jonathan Cohen appears as one of the spokesmen of "Baroque 2.0." ...This is the exploration of a wider range of nuances and subtleties in many combinations and colorings." – *Le Devoir*

"From his vantage point at the harpsichord, Cohen didn't always need to do much conducting... His interpolations of instrumental works supplied contrasting textures and highlighted the breadth of expertise he had to showcase." – *The Times*, London

"Cohen, with his exceptional choral and instrumental forces, resists pursuing a single overall textural ideal and instead seeks an evolving, unrushed relationship between each movement according to the musical stage in the journey." – *Gramophone Magazine*

—more—

SAINT PAUL, MN, March 8, 2016 – The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) announces today that celebrated British conductor, keyboardist, and cellist Jonathan Cohen has been named the orchestra's newest Artistic Partner. Cohen will begin his tenure in the 2016.17 season where he will be joining current artistic partners Jeremy Denk, Martin Fröst, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Pekka Kuusisto and Thomas Zehetmair. The SPCO is the first major American orchestra to engage Cohen as an artistic leader.

Known for his passion and commitment to chamber music, Jonathan Cohen is well-versed in such diverse activities as Baroque opera and the Classical symphonic repertoire. He frequently directs ensembles from the keyboard, as he has in all of his previous performances with the SPCO. Already respected as an artistic leader, he is Artistic Director and Founder of Arcangelo (with whom he has made nine highly acclaimed recordings in the past five years) as well as Associate Conductor of Les Arts Florissants and Artistic Director of the Tetbury Festival in England. In addition to his reputation as a keyboardist and conductor, Cohen has developed a reputation as one of Britain's finest young cellists and has been in increasing demand for concerts and festivals throughout the UK, Europe and America.

Although his artistic partnership with the SPCO will not officially start until September 2016, Cohen will lead the orchestra in two weeks of Neighborhood Series performances March 12 through March 20 in a program that showcases his varied talents. In these performances, Cohen will conduct from the harpsichord on Rameau's Suite from *Les Boréades*, move to the podium for Mozart's Symphony No. 34, and will end the program on the cello along with SPCO musicians Ruggero Alliffranchini (violin), Kyu-Young Kim (violin), Maiya Papach (viola) and Julie Albers (cello) for Schubert's String Quintet. He will also join the same group of SPCO musicians for an already sold out performance of Schubert's String Quintet at Icehouse MPLS on Wednesday, March 16.

Kyu-Young Kim, the SPCO's Artistic Director and Principal Violinist, looks forward to the enrichment in the area of 17th and 18th century music that this partnership will bring to the SPCO. "Jonathan Cohen is uniquely gifted and ideally suited to be the SPCO's go-to collaborator for Baroque and early classical repertoire. He is part of a new wave of interpreters who are equally at home on period instruments as well as modern instruments, and his ability to direct from the keyboard is unmatched. His masterful interpretation of Handel's *Messiah* in 2013 blew all of the SPCO musicians away, and we have all been itching for the chance to work with him more regularly and to delve into the Baroque repertoire. His ability to lead in a collaborative way, whether from the keyboard or podium or the cello, and inspire musicians and audience with his interpretations make him a perfect fit for the SPCO, and I look forward to many exciting programs and projects with Jonny."

About becoming an artistic partner, Cohen said, "I'm thrilled to become an artistic partner of the SPCO. I really enjoy working with this fine chamber orchestra and I feel we share a mutual appreciation and commitment to the chamber music aesthetic which brings a great joy to our music making together. I'm looking forward to our future collaboration."

Cohen received great acclaim from audiences and critics alike during his Twin Cities performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the SPCO in December, 2013. Of the performances at The Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis, *Pioneer Press* critic Rob Hubbard said, "Under the direction of English conductor Jonathan Cohen, the orchestra and its SPCO Chorale proved spirited collaborators for the four vocal soloists, employing a gentle touch in unexpected places and embracing lushness to fine effect...Cohen decided to let the music sing, emphasizing maximum majesty and accepting the five-second ring-outs. And it worked."

About the appointment, SPCO Managing Director and President Jon Limbacher said, "Cohen's versatility and exceptional blend of talents will help us continue to elevate the SPCO's performances of the core chamber orchestra repertoire that the musicians and our audiences love so much. His flexibility and willingness to perform in non-traditional concert settings like the Icehouse is a powerful tool for sharing this music with a broader Twin Cities audience, making him an asset to not only to the orchestra, but to our community as a whole."

PHOTOS

[Link to hi-res photos \(via dropbox\)](#)

VIDEOS

Handel: [Messiah – O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion](#)

Handel: [Messiah – Glory to God](#)

Interview: [Clips of Schubert's String Quintet and interview with Jonathan Cohen](#)

ABOUT JONATHAN COHEN

Jonathan Cohen is one of Britain's finest young musicians. He has forged a remarkable career as a conductor, cellist and keyboardist. Well known for his passion and commitment to chamber music Jonathan is equally at home in such diverse activities as baroque opera and the classical symphonic repertoire. He is Artistic Director of Arcangelo, Associate Conductor of Les Arts Florissants and Artistic Director of Tetbury Festival.

Recent concert highlights include Les Violons du Roy, Budapest Festival Orchestra, NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, Zürcher Kammerorchester, South Jutland Symphony, Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden, Seattle Symphony and performances of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* with the Het Residentie Orkest and the Dutch National Opera Academy Chorus.

Projects in the 2015.16 season include Handel's *Agrippina* with Irish Youth Opera, a return visit to Les Violons du Roy, Orchestre National d'Ile de France, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Handel's *Messiah* in Hong Kong and Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* at Glyndebourne.

Jonathan Cohen founded the ensemble Arcangelo, with whom he performs high quality and specially created projects. He tours with them to exceptional halls and festivals such as Philharmonie Berlin, Vienna Musikverein, Köln Philharmonie, Ghent Cathedral, and Carnegie Hall New York. Recent highlights include Bach's *B Minor Mass* in Ghent, Handel's *Apollo e Dafne* at Zankel Hall New York and a German tour with Christiane Karg in June 2015.

Arcangelo is busy and much in demand in the recording studio, partnering with fine soloists such as Iestyn Davies (their disc 'Arias for Guadagni' won the Recital Category at the 2012 Gramophone Awards), Anna Prohaska, Christiane Karg, Christopher Purves and Vilde Frang. Forthcoming releases include Bach violin concertos with Alina Ibragimova and 'Arias for Benucci' with Matthew Rose.

ABOUT THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Renowned for its artistic excellence, remarkable versatility of musical styles and adventurous programming, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, now in its 57th season, is widely regarded as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. The SPCO has recently undergone transformational change, with the opening of their new home, the Ordway Concert Hall, the addition of a new generation of players, and significant changes in the scope of its artistic aspirations and profile. Committed to championing new music, the SPCO is primarily an unconduted ensemble that works in close collaboration with a diverse series of Artistic Partners. The orchestra's current Artistic Partners are Jeremy Denk, Martin Fröst, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Pekka Kuusisto, Christian Zacharias and Thomas Zehetmair. Past Artistic Partners include Roberto Abbado, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Douglas Boyd, Joshua Bell, Nicholas McGegan, Stephen Prutsman and Dawn Upshaw.

The virtuoso musicians of the SPCO present more than 130 concerts and educational programs each year, and are regularly heard on public radio programs which reach 1.2 million listeners each week on 289 stations. The SPCO has released 67 recordings, commissioned 146 new works, and tours nationally and internationally, including performances in premier venues in Europe, Asia and South America. Recent engagements in Berkeley, CA, New York's Carnegie Hall, the Ojai Festival, and tours to Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe were met with great critical acclaim.

The SPCO is nationally recognized for its commitment to broad community accessibility, its innovative audience outreach efforts, and its educational and family programming. Regular subscription series are performed in a variety of different venues across the Twin Cities metropolitan area each season, a unique commitment to geographic accessibility for a major orchestra. The SPCO offers the most affordable tickets of any major orchestra in the United States, with over 50 percent of tickets available for \$12 or less. The orchestra also recently launched an innovative new ticket membership model in which members pay \$5 per month to attend unlimited concerts. The SPCO's award-winning CONNECT education program reaches over 5,000 students and teachers annually in 12 Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools, and its Target® Free Family Music program provides engaging and educational experiences for thousands of Twin Cities children and families each year. The SPCO's Liquid Music Series (named "Best of Classical" by *The New York Times*) presents innovative projects and inspired collaborations by emerging and iconoclastic artists and invites adventurous audiences to discover the new and the fascinating within the flourishing landscape of contemporary classical music.

###