

# THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

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## The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra releases virtual reality *Messiah*

**SAINT PAUL, MN, December 23, 2015** — The SPCO has been performing Handel's *Messiah* at the holidays for Twin Cities audiences since 1984. This year, the SPCO will share its *Messiah* experience with a virtual audience, as well, announcing today the release of a virtual reality video recording of *Messiah*'s finale, recorded live on Saturday, December 19 at the Ordway Concert Hall.

Also known as 360 degree video, virtual reality (VR) video technology allows viewers to turn their heads and look in any direction as a video plays. For classical music fans, it offers a chance to watch a performance from within the orchestra itself.

The SPCO's VR video was created by [Visual](#), a Minneapolis virtual reality production company. To capture the recording, a device made up of several GoPro cameras was placed on a stand between the orchestra and chorus. Visual used special software to connect all the feeds into a panoramic image, then paired it with the Classical MPR audio recording of the performance.

"Virtual reality is a great way for classical music fans to feel immersed in a performance," said Visual's co-founder and CEO Chuck Olsen. "For Handel's *Messiah*, you have a better seat than anyone because we placed the 360 degree camera between the choir and orchestra. Now you're onstage with the SPCO's world-class talent, where you can choose to take in the grandeur of the choir, peek over the harpsichordist's shoulder, or catch the conductor's expressions. It's truly a privilege for Visual to bring the SPCO experience to music patrons in virtual reality."

"Virtual reality video was one of 2015's most interesting tech trends and we are excited to share our concert experience with viewers in this format," said Matt Thueson, Executive Producer of Digital Media for the SPCO. "In addition to the our free online Listening Library, video is one more way audiences can experience the power of great music and the artistry of the SPCO anytime, anywhere."

### TO WATCH:

At the moment, the best way to experience VR videos is by using viewer goggles that attach to a smartphone. A good option for Samsung owners is the Oculus Gear VR for Samsung phones (approximately \$99). Folding viewers like Google Cardboard provide a more affordable option, and all subscribers to the Sunday *New York Times* received one of these with their newspaper last month.

### Android:

- Update your phone's YouTube app to the most current version.
- If you're using a VR headset or Google Cardboard, attach it to your phone.
- Using your phone, [watch the video on YouTube](#).

### **Apple iPhone and iPod Touch:**

- To use a VR headset or Google Cardboard, download the Vrideo app from the app store. Once you have installed the Vrideo app, watch the video at <vrideo://watch/kbVDM5Y>
- Another option is the iOS YouTube app. It doesn't yet support headsets or Google Cardboard, but you can still use your iPhone to watch a slightly less immersive version of the video on [the SPCO's YouTube channel](#). (Be sure you're using the latest version of the YouTube app.)

### **On a Computer:**

- While the computer viewing experience isn't quite as enjoyable as smartphone viewing, you can [watch the video in your web browser](#). As the video plays, click and drag the image on your screen to look in different directions.

## **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 unconducted 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 142 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.

## **ABOUT VISUAL**

Visual creates inspiring 360° experiences for VR and mobile. Connect anywhere you can imagine.

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