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The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra achieves budget surplus for 2018.19, celebrates its 60th anniversary, launches Tapestry Festival and serves record high audience

- The SPCO celebrated its 60th anniversary season
- Organization served a record high number of unique households
- SPCO provided live video streams of six concerts, bringing performances to thousands in Minnesota and worldwide through its free online Concert Library
- Contributions from individuals to the Annual Fund reached an all-time high
- The SPCO traveled to Puerto Rico to perform in the 2019 Casals Festival
- The SPCO presented Tapestry19, the first installment of a new biennial festival that uses the language of music to explore issues faced by our community
- Five new permanent members were appointed to the orchestra — three in principal positions
- Organization balanced FY19 budget with a surplus of \$143,337 and continued to build Rainy Day Fund
- SPCO made proactive expense reductions to ensure budget surpluses in face of major shifts in corporate funding

Saint Paul, MN, December 11, 2019 — At its Annual Meeting of Members today, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) announced a balanced budget with an operating surplus of \$143,337 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019 (FY19). This balanced budget — the 24th in the past 26 years — continues a long history of financial discipline for the SPCO. Total operating expenses for the period were \$10,821,336.

As part of its most recent strategic plan, adopted in 2016, the SPCO is building a Rainy Day Fund to protect the organization and allow it to continue to serve the community through future economic downturns. The fund is specifically intended to provide funds to maintain salary and benefit levels for musicians and staff in the event of a recession or other economic shock that reduces the SPCO's ability to generate revenues. The surplus from FY19 was added to the Rainy Day Fund, bringing the fund total to \$615,887, over halfway to the total fund goal of 10% of the organization's budget, or approximately \$1 million.

The SPCO once again served a record high number of unique attendees throughout the 2018.19 season, surpassing the all-time high achieved the previous season. While institutional giving to the organization continued to decline in FY19, continuing a long-term trend taking place across the arts, individual giving to the Annual Fund reached an all-time high for the fourth consecutive year, and the total amount contributed to the Annual Fund increased by one percent from the previous year. In total, \$6,887,643 was contributed as operating support to the SPCO by individuals, foundations, corporations and institutions. As of the end of FY19, the SPCO's donor base had grown to 5,898 unique households, with 960 donors making recurring monthly gifts as sustainers.

"We are pleased and proud of where we are today," said SPCO Managing Director and President Jon Limbacher. "The Orchestra is vibrant artistically; we are serving more people than ever before; and we are strong and healthy financially. This would not possible without amazing musicians, talented staff, dedicated volunteers and a very generous community."

SERVING AN EXPANDING AUDIENCE

Continued Audience Growth

The SPCO continued to build upon its long history of audience growth in the 2018.19 season, serving a record high number of unique attendees (13,424 unique households) and surpassing the all-time high achieved the previous season. 108,696 people attended its 147 concerts in 28 different venues throughout the metro area, and more than 13,000 of these attendees were children, students or young adults. Thousands more experienced the SPCO through its free online Concert Library, which received over 81,000 visits in the 2018.19 season. The orchestra also shared music with several thousand people through its additional community engagement and education programs. The SPCO engaged nearly 5,600 students through its CONNECT music education program in 13 Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools. In addition, the SPCO provided 11 free concerts for families and children through its Free Family Music Series, generously supported, in part, by Target. The SPCO also presented 11 performances of its celebrated Liquid Music Series.

The strong attendance in the 2018.19 season represents another year of continued audience expansion for the SPCO and progress toward two audience goals established in its most recent strategic plan: to expand the number of people who experience SPCO performances, both in-person and digitally, and to increase the number of young audience members. The chamber

orchestra's audience has grown by more than 50 percent in the last 15 years, during which time the SPCO has maintained its commitment to broad community accessibility, offering the most affordable ticket prices of any professional orchestra in the United States.

The New Generation Initiative

The 2018.19 season marked the third year of the SPCO's New Generation Initiative, a series of programs designed to expand access to classical music for young people in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metro area. Through generous funding from donors, the SPCO is making it easier than ever for young people to experience SPCO concerts with free tickets for children and students at nearly every concert throughout the season, as well as special concerts geared toward young people. Special performances for young audiences in the 2018.19 season included a 3-concert series at Icehouse in Minneapolis, a series of happy hour concerts at the Ordway and a 3-concert series at Turf Club in Saint Paul. Attendance among children and students has quadrupled since the launch of the New Generation Initiative in 2016. In addition to providing free tickets for children and students, the SPCO expanded the New Generation Initiative in the 2018.19 season to offer free tickets for parents and adults from socioeconomically disadvantaged families through partnerships with community organizations that serve socioeconomically disadvantaged populations in the Twin Cities.

Free Online Concert Library

In addition to those who experienced the SPCO in person by attending performances, the SPCO also shared its music via its free online Concert Library (www.thespco.org/music), which received over 47,000 visits from Minnesotans (a 65% increase over FY18) and over 81,000 visits from listeners worldwide in 2018.19. In a recent step in the organization's history of bold moves toward greater accessibility for the community, the orchestra announced this video initiative in June 2017, adding full-length concert videos to the Concert Library and presenting its first ever live video stream of a performance in the season's closing weekend. In the 2018.19 season, the SPCO offered free live video streams of six concerts, later adding each to the Concert Library for free unlimited on-demand viewing. SPCO concerts are offered as full HD video, with the accompanying audio mix provided by the SPCO's long-time broadcast partner Classical Minnesota Public Radio. In the current season, the SPCO has presented live streams of two concerts, with several more planned for the remainder of the season.

(www.thespco.org/live)

The Concert Library allows The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra to share transformational performances with more and more people in our community and beyond and allows those who cannot attend live concerts, such as those in assisted living facilities or homebound for health reasons, the opportunity to experience the SPCO's music. The SPCO has received numerous notes from viewers expressing their appreciation for the Concert Library and sharing the impact it has had in their lives, including this note from a thankful viewer:

"Thank you so much for doing this!!! This is a wonderful way for those in poor health, who are away, or cannot afford to come see the concert live to still experience it."

“Our Concert Library has unlimited potential in terms of sharing the orchestra and the music with our community,” said Limbacher. “It is an important part of our vision to provide a great orchestra for everyone in the community.”

ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

SPCO Musician-led Performances

Firmly established as a primarily uncondacted ensemble led by its own musicians, the SPCO presented 82 uncondacted, musician-led performances in the 2018.19 season. Eleven SPCO musicians were featured as soloists with the orchestra, some soloing on multiple programs throughout the season. Several SPCO musicians also performed in small ensembles for SPCO at Icehouse, SPCO at Turf Club, and the Chamber Music Series.

Inaugural Tapestry Festival

In the 2018.19 season, the SPCO launched Tapestry — a new biennial festival that uses the language of music to explore issues faced by our community and invites members of our community to lend their voices and viewpoints to the exploration. In the inaugural 2019 festival, Tapestry19: Musical Reflections on Home, the SPCO explored the central question: “How do I recognize my home?” SPCO Music Alive Composer-in-Residence Lembit Beecher and musicians of the SPCO curated Tapestry19 to include many musical responses to that question from a diverse set of composers and artists and engaged with a wide range of collaborators to explore home from their unique perspectives.

Voices from the SPCO’s home, the Twin Cities community, were central to this festival. Tapestry19 featured the world premiere of Twin Cities interdisciplinary artist, vocalist and composer PaviElle French’s *A Requiem for Zula*, a tribute to her mother and her upbringing in Saint Paul’s Rondo neighborhood, which was French’s first-ever work written for orchestra. In addition, a new work by Beecher featured poetry by Twin Cities writer and University of Saint Thomas professor Chris Santiago, along with stories about home recorded by Twin Cities community members in the year leading up to the festival. Tapestry19 also featured the world premiere of a new work by Syrian composer Kinan Azmeh about the collective memories of growing up in Syria in the 1980s, and a newly commissioned work by 17-year-old American composer Maya Miro Johnson.

Tapestry19 spanned several SPCO concert series, including the Liquid Music Series, which presented a work-in-progress event with Twin Cities Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer Ashwini Ramaswamy, hosted by TU Dance artistic director Toni Pierce-Sands.

In partnership with the East Side Freedom Library, the SPCO posed the central question of Tapestry19 — how do you recognize home? — to a talented group of artists from around the Twin Cities, who responded to this question from their own perspectives, utilizing a wide range of media, including instrumental music, spoken word, and song-form.

“The diversity of artists, voices and stories included in the Tapestry Festival allowed us to connect more deeply with our community and make meaningful progress toward our goal of presenting programming that reflects the rich diversity of the Twin Cities,” said SPCO Artistic Director and Principal Violin Kyu-Young Kim. “We look forward to continuing to engage our community through future iterations of Tapestry in the seasons to come.”

Premieres and Commissions

The SPCO commissioned five new pieces and performed premieres of seven new works. In addition to works commissioned and premiered as part of the Tapestry19 Festival, other premieres included *Watermark*, a new piano concerto by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw as the fourth installment in its five-year *Beethoven/5* Project with pianist Jonathan Biss, which pairs newly commissioned piano concertos with one of Beethoven’s five piano concertos that inspired it. Vijay Iyer’s *Asunder* and Tyshawn Sorey’s *Autoschediasms* were also premiered in a program with SPCO Artistic Partner Pekka Kuusisto.

The SPCO’s Liquid Music Series commissioned and presented world premieres of five projects during the 2018.19 season: Hanna Benn & Deantoni Park’s *Procession*; Third Coast Percussion’s *Perpetulum* with Philip Glass; world premieres by Ben Frost and Angélica Negrón in ModernMedieval’s *The Living Word* (co-commissioned and co-presented with the Walker Art Center); New Music and Dance Duos from composer/dancer duos Dustin O’Halloran/Fukiko Takase and Mike Lewis/Eva Mohn; and the season finale of James McVinnie and Darkstar’s *Collapse*. Other highlights of the 2018.19 Liquid Music Season included two sold out evenings of improvised music and movement at the American Swedish Institute with Kim Gordon and Dimitri Chamblas.

Casals Festival of Puerto Rico

The SPCO traveled to Puerto Rico in March 2019 to participate in the 2019 Casals Festival. Since its founding in 1957 by Spanish composer, cellist and conductor Pablo Casals, the festival has brought some of the world’s leading artists to San Juan every year. For the 2019 festival, the SPCO joined artists such as renowned Spanish early music master Jordi Savall, French pianist Rémi Geniet, Israeli cellist Amit Peled, American pianist Noreen Polera, the Díaz Trio and the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. On March 5, pianist and former SPCO Artistic Partner Christian Zacharias joined the orchestra to perform Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 27 and to conduct Beethoven’s Second Symphony. SPCO musicians Ruggero Alliffranchini (violin) and Hyobi Sim (viola) were featured as soloists on Jörg Widmann’s *Aria for String Orchestra*.

To support continued recovery efforts in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017, the SPCO invited members of its organization and its audiences to contribute to El Fondo Boricua, a donor advised fund of the Saint Paul Foundation dedicated to hurricane recovery and enhancing sustainability of life on the island in the aftermath of the catastrophic natural disaster. To learn more about the fund and the work it is doing, visit www.elfondoboricua.org.

***Mozart in Motion* with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre for Northrop’s 2018.19 Dance Season**

The SPCO partnered with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre as part of Northrop’s 2018.19 Dance Season. *Mozart in Motion*, with dance works by George Balanchine and Jiří Kylián, presented a tantalizing mix of classical, contemporary and comic ballets danced by one of America’s most exciting regional ballet companies. Dance works were paired with Mozart’s Divertimento in B-flat, Six German Dances and *Haffner* Symphony, performed live by the SPCO. This collaboration marked the orchestra’s first return to Northrop since its grand reopening in 2014.

SPCO CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Thanks to the generosity of the Twin Cities community, the SPCO has been sharing music for six decades. The 2018.19 season marked the 60th concert season for the SPCO. The organization thanked the community for its generous support and celebrated this anniversary throughout the season with special events, media projects and a “Celebrate 60” fundraising campaign designed to advance the goals of the SPCO’s strategic plan and ensure the organization can continue to enrich the community for decades to come.

“As the SPCO celebrates its 60th anniversary, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the support from our community,” said Limbacher. “We are proud to provide our community with a truly great orchestra and the growing support of our donors over the last six decades has made it possible for the SPCO share music with more people than ever before. The ongoing generosity of our community will be crucial in helping us further expand access to transformational performances for the broadest possible audience in the Twin Cities.”

NEWLY APPOINTED SPCO MUSICIANS

At the beginning of the 2018.19 season, two new permanent members started with the orchestra — both in principal positions. James Ferree was appointed as Principal Horn and throughout the 2018.19 season, music arranged and composed by Ferree was performed by the orchestra. Sang Yoon Kim was announced as the new Principal Clarinet and was featured as a soloist in the 2018.19 season on Weber’s Rondo for Clarinet and Strings.

At the end of the 2018.19 season, three additional appointments to the orchestra were announced: Cassie Pilgrim as Principal Oboe, Richard Belcher as a new member of the orchestra’s cello section and Eunae Koh as a new violinist with the orchestra. These musicians saw their first official performances in their new positions at the start of the 2019.20 season.

PROACTIVE MEASURES TO ADDRESS SHIFTS IN CORPORATE FUNDING

In the spring of 2019, the SPCO was informed of significant shifts in corporate funding affecting many arts organizations in the Twin Cities, resulting in a loss of \$230,000–\$300,000 in annual operating support for the SPCO in FY20 and beyond.

In order to continue its commitment to financial responsibility and balanced budgets in light of these funding shifts, the SPCO took proactive measures to refocus resources and significantly reduce expenses. In making these decisions, the organization sought to maintain the activity that is most critical to its mission. As a result, the SPCO announced it would no longer sponsor the Liquid Music Series beyond three projects completed this fall. The SPCO also announced it would no longer offer Fanfare pre-concert discussions starting in the 2019.20 season. Adjusting activity in these areas made it possible for the SPCO to reduce staff by three positions, which was a key component of the expense reduction plan.

Refocusing resources in this way will allow the SPCO to continue to deliver on its core mission to share world-class chamber orchestra performances with this community while maintaining its commitment to financial responsibility and sustainability.

“The SPCO is financially healthy and addressing this funding shift proactively with thoughtful reductions in structural costs will help us maintain our financial strength and stability in the coming years,” said Limbacher. “These decisions allowed us to reduce our expenses in FY20 and beyond so we can continue to generate annual surpluses and build our Rainy Day Fund to protect the organization when the next recession hits.”

ARTS PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION

In October 2018, the SPCO joined fellow members of the Arts Partnership (the Ordway, Minnesota Opera and Schubert Club) in presenting Sphinx Virtuosi, a chamber ensemble comprised of the nation’s top Black and Latinx string soloists, at the Ordway Concert Hall. The Sphinx Organization is dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts, and the Arts Partnership was pleased to collaborate with Sphinx for the third consecutive year in its work to address the underrepresentation of people of color in classical music. The SPCO teamed up again with its fellow Arts Partnership organizations in April 2019 to launch the second annual Family Arts Blast, a free family event that welcomed hundreds of families to the Ordway Center to participate in a plethora of arts activities and performances. Children and their families had the opportunity to explore music, dance, theater and more with creative hands-on activities happening throughout the building. The partnership worked to make the event as inclusive as possible, presenting artists of color, providing event materials in multiple languages, and providing translators to interpret the performances and activities for non-English speaking attendees.

In addition to collaborating on programming, the members of the Arts Partnership also worked together to raise more than \$600,000 for the Arts Partnership Fund, which on an annual basis provides resources to reduce rent costs for each organization, invest in the upkeep of the Ordway facility, and support co-presentations like the Sphinx Virtuosi and the Family Arts Blast.

The mission of the Arts Partnership is to strengthen its member organizations in service to the community through growing collaboration and stewardship of its shared assets. The partners seek to expand access to the Ordway, to deepen the community’s engagement with the art that

is created and performed there, and to develop the resources to sustain this beloved community asset for generations to come.

ABOUT THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Renowned for its artistic excellence, remarkable versatility of musical styles and adventurous programming, [The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra](#) is widely regarded as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. Now in its 61st season, the SPCO has recently undergone transformational change with the opening of its new home, the Ordway Concert Hall, the addition of a new generation of players, and significant changes in its artistic vision. The SPCO is primarily an uncondensed ensemble that performs a broad range of repertoire from Baroque to new music and works in close collaboration with a dynamic roster of [Artistic Partners](#), currently including British Baroque specialists Jonathan Cohen and Richard Egarr, American pianist Jeremy Denk, American composer and musical commentator Rob Kapilow, and Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto. Past Artistic Partners include Roberto Abbado, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Joshua Bell, Douglas Boyd, Martin Fröst, Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Nicholas McGegan, Stephen Prutsman, Dawn Upshaw, Christian Zacharias and Thomas Zehetmair.

The virtuoso musicians of the SPCO present more than [130 concerts](#) and [educational programs](#) in the Twin Cities each year. The orchestra's free online [Concert Library](#) receives more than 80,000 visits annually and offers both live and on-demand videos of concerts that can be viewed anytime, anywhere, completely free of charge. Through its partnership with Classical Minnesota Public Radio, the SPCO is regularly heard on public radio programs that reach nearly 1 million listeners each week on over 250 stations. Additionally, the SPCO has released [67 recordings](#), including the 2018 Grammy Award-winning recording of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* with violinist and Artistic Partner Patricia Kopatchinskaja. The SPCO has commissioned [150 new works](#) and tours nationally and internationally, including recent engagements in Europe and New York City, and a prestigious residency with Cal Performances at the University of California, Berkeley.

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 \$15 or less, and has expanded accessibility even further by offering free tickets for children and students starting in the 2016.17 season as a part of the [New Generation Initiative](#). The orchestra also offers an [innovative ticket membership model](#) in which members pay \$9 per month to attend unlimited concerts. The SPCO's award-winning [CONNECT education program](#) reaches over 5,000 students and teachers annually in 13 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*) develops innovative new projects with iconoclastic artists in unique presentation

formats and invites adventurous audiences to discover the new and the fascinating within the flourishing landscape of contemporary chamber music.

MISSION OF THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Our mission is to sustain a world-class chamber orchestra at the highest standards of artistic excellence that enriches the Twin Cities community by sharing dynamic, distinctive and engaging performances. We are actively committed to accessibility and intentional inclusivity in all aspects of our work and continually strive to provide all people in our community with opportunities to connect with the music we perform.

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