

## **The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra achieves budget surplus for 2020.21 and fulfills its core objectives for navigating the pandemic**

- SPCO continued to share music with the community, reaching the largest audience in its history through its online Concert Library
- Organization maintained employment and full compensation for staff and musicians while preserving its financial health and sustainability
- SPCO musicians and management ratified a two-year contract extension
- Orchestra streamed nine concerts live from the Ordway Concert Hall and presented nine encore broadcasts of previously recorded performances
- SPCO performed three free outdoor performances in the Twin Cities in June
- Orchestra joined violinist and former SPCO Artistic Partner Joshua Bell in a three-concert residency at the Bravo! Vail Music Festival
- SPCO commissioned and premiered eight new compositions by composers of color and women
- Organization balanced FY21 budget with an operating surplus of \$37,958 and continued to build its Rainy Day Fund
- FY21 financial results will help protect SPCO amid ongoing challenges of the pandemic and multi-year recovery

**Saint Paul, MN, December 8, 2021** — At its Annual Meeting of Members today, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) announced a balanced budget with an operating surplus of \$37,958 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2021 (FY21). This balanced budget — the 26th in the past 28 years — continues a long history of financial discipline for the SPCO. The organization entered the pandemic in a position of financial health, and the strong results from FY21 allowed the orchestra to expand its Rainy Day Fund to \$4.1M, providing resources that will be critical to ensuring the organization can thrive as it navigates the challenges of the pandemic and recovery years.

“Despite the profound challenges stemming from the pandemic, we were able to complete a successful year and achieve the core objectives we established from the onset of the COVID crisis,” said SPCO Managing Director and President Jon Limbacher. “We were able to continue

serving the community at a high level through our online Concert Library; maintain the compensation of our staff and orchestra; and achieve a balanced budget while also adding to our Rainy Day Fund. Additionally, we were able to reach an agreement for a contract extension with our musicians, which will allow us to completely focus on our recovery. We know that the coming years will continue to be challenging, but we are confident in our ability to navigate through them while serving the community at a very high level.”

Operating costs declined by approximately 17% from the previous year due to significant reductions in concert production activity, as well as careful expense control, with total operating expenses of \$8,026,416 for the period. The total amount contributed to the Annual Fund in FY21 decreased by 3% from the previous year to \$3,358,000. In total, the SPCO received \$6,634,489 in contributed operating support from individuals, foundations, corporations and institutions, exceeding the average amount of contributed operating support received annually for the five years preceding the pandemic. The orchestra also received an additional \$2,315,523 in government relief primarily aimed at protecting employment, compensation and employee retention during the pandemic.

As of the end of FY21, the SPCO’s donor base was made up of 5,010 unique households, with 746 donors making recurring monthly gifts as sustainers. In addition to making direct charitable contributions, SPCO patrons supported the organization by continuing their monthly Concert Membership payments and converting the value of tickets from canceled concerts into donations.

“We are so thankful for the generous support from our community that has allowed us to continue fulfilling our mission and to maintain the health of the organization during this time,” said Limbacher. “Even though we were not able to welcome audiences to our performances in-person, our community stepped up in an incredible way and supported the SPCO at pre-pandemic levels, and we are truly grateful.”

## **SHARING MUSIC AND SERVING THE COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID CRISIS**

In a season where the orchestra was not able to perform for in-person audiences due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the organization delivered on its mission to share music with the community by streaming nine live performances from the Ordway Concert Hall and producing nine encore broadcasts, along with other digital content, all available free of charge in the SPCO’s online Concert Library. The Concert Library audience reached a record high, with 351,365 visits during the fiscal year – an increase of nearly 133,000 over the previous season’s record of 218,419 visits.

To support families and educators using the Concert Library as a virtual learning and enrichment tool during the pandemic, the SPCO created an online collection of [engagement resources](#) to accompany digital concerts. The organization also created a virtual concert

specifically for school partners from its CONNECT education program and worked with schools to provide additional materials and respond to the evolving needs of classroom teachers.

The SPCO has received numerous notes from viewers expressing their appreciation for free access to the Concert Library and sharing the impact it has had in their lives during this challenging time, including these notes from thankful viewers:

*“In this terrible time we are so grateful for this great gift you are giving to our community.”*

*“Thank you ever so much for this oasis of beauty in a time of anxiety and distress.”*

*“Thank you so much for streaming these live performances. I support your goal of making the music available to all regardless of financial means.”*

*“During these hard days, you’ve given me a gift of peace and a calmer soul through this music. Thank you.”*

*“Thanks for making music this year when the need has been greater than ever.”*

In addition to serving the community by sharing music and educational resources, the SPCO also responded to the needs of the community by organizing three supply drives in August and September to support two local emergency food and supply shelves. At the time, the Minneapolis and Saint Paul communities faced heightened needs in light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and the loss of access to some community resources destroyed in events following the murder of George Floyd. SPCO audience members, donors, staff, musicians and volunteers responded generously to the drives and were able to enjoy moments together as SPCO musicians performed at the outdoor collection events.

## **CONTRACT EXTENSION**

### **Two-Year Contract Extension**

In March 2021, the musicians of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the board of the American Federation of Musicians Local 30-73, and the SPCO Board of Directors voted unanimously to ratify a two-year contract extension, 15 months before the current collective bargaining agreement was set to expire on June 30, 2022. The two-year agreement extends the terms and conditions of the current contract for another two years, including maintaining musician base compensation at FY22 levels through June 30, 2024.

“With this extension agreement in place, we’ve emerged from the first year and a half of the pandemic as a strong, unified organization with a clear vision for the future and concrete objectives for navigating the challenges we know will come our way,” said Limbacher.

## **ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Solo and Chamber Music Programming**

To create the safest possible environment for its musicians, the orchestra focused programming throughout the 2020.21 season on chamber music works for small ensembles that allowed musicians to be distanced on stage. Ten SPCO musicians were featured as soloists throughout the season and orchestra members also served as concert hosts, welcoming audiences to livestreams and encore broadcasts and sharing remarks about the programs with viewers.

### **Premieres and Commissions**

The SPCO commissioned eight new pieces last season and gave their world premieres via live performances streamed from the Ordway Concert Hall. With a commitment to commissioning and programming works by composers who have been historically underrepresented in orchestra repertoire, all eight pieces premiered in the 2020.21 season were commissioned from composers of color and women. Trumpeter Lynn Erickson gave the world premiere performance of Tyson Davis' *Tableau No. X for Solo Trumpet* on October 3 and flutist Alicia McQuerry premiered Adolphus Hailstork's *St. Paul's Blues for Solo Flute* on October 17. On October 31, Principal Bass Zachary Cohen gave the world premiere of *the river has its destination* by Ambrose Akinmusire, whose acclaimed studio album *Origami Harvest* was born out of an SPCO Liquid Music commission in 2017. Principal Oboe Cassie Pilgrim performed the world premiere of Chen Yi's *Elegy for Solo Oboe* on April 10 and then joined cellist Sarah Lewis to give the world premiere performance of Viet Cuong's *Circling Back* for Oboe and Cello on May 8. Principal Flute Julia Bogorad-Kogan premiered Brent Michael Davids' *Taptonahana* for Solo Flute on May 22, and the final livestream of the season featured two world premieres of works commissioned by the SPCO: Michi Wiancko's *Island in the Sky* for Solo Clarinet with Principal Clarinet Sang Yoon Kim as soloist, and Clarice Assad's *Jazz Montmartre* for Clarinet and Bass featuring Kim on clarinet and Zachary Cohen on bass. The commissions by Cuong and Assad were later performed for live audiences in a series of free outdoor performances in Minneapolis and Saint Paul in June.

### **Bravo! Vail Music Festival**

The orchestra joined violinist and former SPCO Artistic Partner Joshua Bell for a three-concert residency at the Bravo! Vail Music Festival June 24-27. These concerts featured uncondacted performances of music for orchestra and soloist by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Antonio Vivaldi and Astor Piazzolla, as well as intimate chamber music works by Franz Schubert and Johannes Brahms.

### **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 63<sup>rd</sup> concert 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 uncondacted 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.

The virtuoso musicians of the SPCO present more than 100 concerts and educational programs in the Twin Cities each year. The orchestra's free online Concert Library receives more than 350,000 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 850,000 listeners each week on over 250 stations. Additionally, the SPCO has released 68 recordings, including its recent critically-acclaimed album of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Piano Concertos with Artistic Partner Jeremy Denk and the 2018 Grammy Award-winning recording of Franz Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* with violinist and former Artistic Partner Patricia Kopatchinskaja. The SPCO has commissioned 162 new works and tours nationally and internationally, including recent engagements in Europe and New York City, and a prestigious residency with violinist Joshua Bell at the 2021 Bravo! Vail Music Festival.

The SPCO is nationally recognized for its commitment to broad community accessibility and its innovative audience engagement efforts. 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 ticket prices of any professional 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 3,000 students and teachers annually in 10 Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools.

The SPCO is a proud member of the Arts Partnership, a 501c3 organization composed of the four organizations that perform regularly at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts – Minnesota Opera, the Ordway, the SPCO and Schubert Club. The Partnership's mission is to strengthen its organizations in service to the community through growing collaboration and stewardship of its shared assets. The Partnership works together to maintain the Ordway venue, to expand access for other community arts organizations to perform in the Concert Hall and to engage in collaborative artistic programming.

### **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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