

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra announces the appointment of violinist Maureen Nelson to the new role of Assistant Director for Programming and Projects

- The new Assistant Director position is responsible for researching and exploring repertoire by underrepresented composers and facilitating the SPCO's ongoing efforts to diversify its programming

SAINT PAUL, MN, AUGUST 2, 2022 — The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) announces today the creation of the role of Assistant Director for Programming and Projects and the appointment of violinist Maureen Nelson to this new staff position.

Under the direction of the Artistic Director, the Assistant Director for Programming and Projects is responsible for researching and exploring repertoire by composers who have been historically underrepresented in orchestral programming, particularly composers of color, women and non-binary composers. The Assistant Director will identify works by underrepresented composers, share them with colleagues on the musician Artistic Vision Committee (AVC), and advocate for inclusion of these works as the AVC makes programming decisions for each SPCO concert season. The Assistant Director for Programming and Projects will work closely with the Artistic Director in developing programmatic themes for each season and will build on the SPCO's Creative Lead program, liaising with other orchestra members to solicit and develop more programs curated by individual SPCO musicians.

With the appointment of violinist Kyu-Young Kim to the role of Artistic Director in 2016, the SPCO was the first professional orchestra in the United States to hire an active member of the orchestra to serve as its Artistic Director. This new Assistant Director position builds on the orchestra's unique model of musician leadership and creates additional opportunities for close collaboration between orchestra members and administrative staff. The Assistant Director for Programming and Projects is a two-year, part-time staff position open to tenured members of the orchestra and selected through an open application and interview process. Having first joined the orchestra in 2016 following nearly two decades of leading the Grammy-nominated Enso String Quartet, violinist Maureen Nelson will serve as the SPCO's first Assistant Director for Programming and Projects.

"The SPCO is committed to exploring the abundance of music written by underrepresented composers and sharing these works with our audiences," said Nelson. "The creation of this position ensures that more time and resources are dedicated to this important endeavor, and I'm looking forward to leading the effort and working with my orchestra colleagues to continue to diversify the SPCO's repertoire."

“Maureen Nelson is not only an extraordinary violinist, but an intensely curious musician and a naturally collaborative team player,” said SPCO Artistic Director and Principal Violin Kyu-Young Kim. “She has a deep understanding of the SPCO's unique artistic model and how to lead from within the ensemble and I look forward to working with her in her new role.”

ABOUT MAUREEN NELSON

Maureen Nelson, violin, became a full-time member of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra in 2016. Since joining the SPCO, she has been featured regularly as a soloist, leader and chamber musician, many examples of which can be found in the [SPCO Concert Library](#). Nelson has curated a program for the 2022.23 season featuring her own work as a composer and arranger and the music of Gabriela Lena Frank. As former founding member and first violinist, she led the Grammy-nominated Enso String Quartet for nearly two decades, captivating audiences from major concert stages of the world, regularly concertizing throughout North America and abroad. Founded at Yale University in 1999, the quartet has been described by *The Strad* as "thrilling" and praised by the *Washington Post* for its "glorious sonorities...half honey, half molten lava." The quartet quickly went on to win top prizes at the Concert Artists Guild competition and the Banff International String Quartet Competition. *Classical Voice* praised the ensemble as "one of the eminent string quartets of our era." Along with a busy touring and teaching schedule, Nelson made numerous critically acclaimed recordings on the Naxos label with the Enso String Quartet.

A native of Pennsylvania, Maureen enrolled in Temple University's Center for Gifted Young Musicians at the age of 12, and she began attending the Curtis Institute of Music shortly thereafter. As a winner of the Greenfield Competition, Nelson appeared as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra when she was 16. While studying in Germany, she was concertmaster of the Detmolder Kammerorchester and has been a member of the Houston-based River Oaks Chamber Orchestra since 2010. During summers, Nelson spends her time away from the SPCO visiting family, performing at chamber music festivals and is a member of Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra. She is married to percussionist Matthew McClung and together they enjoy a daily coffee and crosswords ritual.

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. Entering its 64th season in September, the SPCO is primarily an unconduted 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 current roster of Artistic Partners consists of British Baroque specialists Jonathan Cohen and Richard Egarr, American composer and musical commentator Rob Kapilow, South African cellist Abel Selacoe and German violist Tabea Zimmermann.

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](#) offers both live and on-demand videos of concerts that can be viewed anytime, anywhere, completely free of charge. Through its partnership with YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio and American Public Media,

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 former 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.

In addition to its programs in the Twin Cities, the orchestra also tours nationally and internationally, including recent engagements in Europe and New York City, and prestigious residencies at the 2021 and 2022 Bravo! Vail Music Festival with violinists Joshua Bell and Stefan Jackiw.

The SPCO is deeply committed to expanding the orchestral repertoire, commissioning more than 160 new works throughout its 63-year history and receiving 17 ASCAP awards for adventurous programming. In a divergence from the industry standard of commissioning individual works from composers, the SPCO's new [Sandbox Composer Residency program](#) invites composers to experiment freely across a variety of new works created in collaboration with the musicians of the SPCO. This alternative residency model will allow composers to workshop new pieces, experiment and revise, take risks, develop relationships with SPCO musicians and engage with SPCO audiences.

The SPCO is nationally recognized for its commitment to broad community accessibility and inclusion, along with 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, with a \$5 per month concert membership option for members of [club2030](#), the orchestra's free program for audience members in their 20s and 30s. The SPCO's award-winning [CONNECT education program](#) reaches over 3,000 students and teachers annually in 10 Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools, and its [Free Family Music program](#) provides engaging musical experiences designed for children and their families in various locations throughout the Twin Cities.

The SPCO is a proud member of the Arts Partnership, a 501(c)(3) 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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