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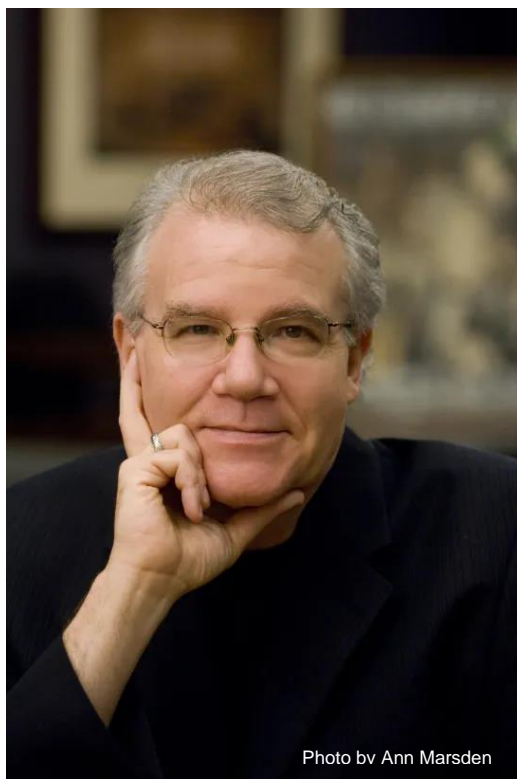


Photo by Ann Marsden

### **BRUCE COPPOCK, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, DIES AT AGE 71**

**SAINT PAUL, MN, NOVEMBER 21, 2022** — Bruce Coppock, former President and Managing Director of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, died today at age 71, after a long battle with cancer. Coppock is the longest serving executive in the 63-year history of the SPCO, serving as CEO from 1999 to 2008 and again from 2013 to 2016.

Under Coppock's leadership, and because of his vision and tenacity, the SPCO moved away from the traditional orchestra artistic leadership model, centered around a music director, to a musician-led model complemented by artistic partners. Coppock believed that by empowering the orchestra members to make the important artistic decisions, including selecting repertoire, that concerts would be even more compelling and dynamic for the community.

"It is no exaggeration to say that no single person had a greater role in the SPCO's artistic trajectory over the last 20 years than Bruce Coppock," said SPCO Artistic Director and Principal Violin Kyu-Young Kim. "His fervent belief that the SPCO's ultimate success as a chamber orchestra was dependent on the SPCO musicians themselves rather than a single conductor led to a complete transformation of the ensemble. Without the force of his intellect, musical knowledge and expertise, managerial acumen, and innate leadership skills, this kind of transformation could have led to a steep decline in artistic quality and distinctiveness. Instead, the SPCO today is playing at its highest level ever with fantastic artistic partners and a clear artistic profile, and we owe so much of this to Bruce's vision and leadership."

Coppock was also a key leader in the development and completion of the Concert Hall at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. From the very beginning of his time at the SPCO he advocated for a new concert hall that would accentuate the intimate nature of a chamber orchestra and provide audiences with an enhanced sonic experience. The opening of the Concert Hall in 2015 was one of the most triumphant moments of his career.

Coppock's most impactful and enduring contribution was to the SPCO's culture. "He instilled in the organization a willingness to challenge the orthodoxy of the orchestra field and created a strong propensity for innovation," said SPCO Managing Director and President Jon Limbacher. "His leadership philosophy was clear and simple: Be bold and be not afraid, and this philosophy is deeply ingrained in the SPCO's DNA."

"Bruce's impact on the SPCO was profound and enduring," said Lowell Noteboom, former board chair for both the SPCO and the League of American Orchestras. "His creative energy was a force to be reckoned with. His standards were so high; his expectations for himself and for the rest of us were daunting. It required us to stretch and change. And we did. He was a gift, and we are so fortunate to have had him in our midst."

Bruce was a thought leader in the broader orchestra field, serving as an instructor and speaker with the League of American Orchestras and as a consultant to many orchestras in the United States. He was a font of original thinking for leaders in the field and a sought-after source for advice about leading change.

“Bruce’s innovations reframed the essential work of orchestras; centering the dynamism and interplay of musician empowerment, authentic community engagement and the culture of collaboration,” said Jesse Rosen, former longtime President and CEO of the League of American Orchestras. “His bold outlook was instrumental in helping the entire field discover new pathways and strategies for achieving vibrancy in the 21st century. We will all miss him, though his legacy is played out every day in orchestras across America and in the many colleagues he taught and mentored.”

Early in his career, Coppock was a cellist, co-founder and executive director of the Boston Chamber Music Society, cellist of the Handel & Haydn Society and Musica Viva, and frequent cellist with the Boston Symphony. He taught and held top administrative positions at nearly every major music school in Boston, including the Boston Conservatory and New England Conservatory. Following a severe injury to his left hand in 1989, Coppock changed direction to pursue a career in orchestra management. He was executive director of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra from 1992-1998. Following that, during his tenure as the president of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, he served both as the artistic and the executive leader of the organization. Over his 25 years in orchestra management, he also held senior executive positions at Carnegie Hall, the League of American Orchestras, and the Cleveland Orchestra.

He retired from orchestra management in 2016 to return to Boston and to his first love, which was teaching young musicians and playing chamber music. He specialized in in-depth chamber music study with high school and conservatory students. For the last several years he led an intensive chamber music course for serious music students, ChamberMusicLab, at The Rivers School Conservatory in Weston, MA.

In addition to his contributions within the classical music realm, Coppock was also dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by cholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer) from which he suffered, serving as vice chair of the Board of Directors of the Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation.

Coppock is survived by his wife Lucia P. May, his children Elizabeth Edwards Coppock, Alexander Edwards Coppock (Penelope Van Grinsven), Chelsea May Tischler (Todd Tischler), and Ellery Gwendolyn Davis (Michael Perez), his grandchildren Karson and Felix Tischler, Escher and Isabella Perez, and Silas Coppock, his brothers David McKenzie Coppock (Gail Coppock) and Donald Leslie Coppock (Helen Barbas), and his sister Jane Coppock.

“Bruce possessed a giant intellect, a great passion for music and an exceedingly big heart, and his incredible impact on the SPCO, on the classical music field, and in the lives of so many will endure for years to come,” said Limbacher. “We look forward to formally honoring Bruce with our Twin Cities community in the coming months.”

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