

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra announces Valerie Coleman as newest Sandbox composer-in-residence

- [Valerie Coleman](#) will begin her Sandbox Composer Residency in the 2024.25 season
- Former Sandbox composer-in-residence [Viet Cuong](#) concluded his inaugural residency in November 2022 with a world premiere of his composition *Now and Then*
- Current Sandbox composer-in-residence [Clarice Assad](#) continues her work with the SPCO, including upcoming concerts in March and workshops with the orchestra in June and September 2023
- [Gabriela Lena Frank](#) will begin her Sandbox Composer Residency in the 2024.25 season with workshops in April 2024 and a premiere planned for January 2025

SAINT PAUL, MN, FEBRUARY 28, 2023 — In its continued commitment to fostering a supportive and collaborative environment for composers and new music, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) is pleased to announce its newest Sandbox composer-in-residence, Valerie Coleman, who will begin her residency in the 2024.25 season. Coleman will join a roster of renowned composers including Viet Cuong, Clarice Assad and Gabriela Lena Frank. As a composer, entrepreneur and GRAMMY®-nominated flutist, Coleman is widely regarded as an iconic artist who continues to pave her own unique path, garnering awards such as the MAPFund, ASCAP Honors Award, Chamber Music America's Classical Commissioning Program, Herb Alpert Ragdale Residency Award, and nominations from The American Academy of Arts and Letters and United States Artists.

"A collaboration with SPCO is more than a concert or commission," said Coleman. "It is an invitation into their world, through music, ideas, memories and new inside jokes that build a lasting connection. This residency for me represents being welcomed into a family in which we create and laugh together, building an exciting chapter within SPCO's legacy."

"I'm so excited to be meeting in person and working with Valerie Coleman!" said SPCO Principal Flute Julia Bogorad-Kogan. "As a fellow (and wonderful) flutist, she is not only my Facebook friend, but I have already performed a number of her works, including a piece for solo flute, one for flute and piano, and a couple of wind quintets. Her writing is always ebullient, exciting, and evocative of a variety of styles and cultures. Of course, being a flutist, she really knows how to write virtuosic riffs for the flute which sound brilliant but nevertheless lie really well on the instrument! Flute players are always on the lookout for well-written pieces which are accessible to the audience and sound great on the flute — so I was not surprised that, as I was preparing her piece for solo flute, *Danza de la Mariposa*, I found several dozen different performances of it on YouTube! What a gift that she will be with us!"

"We are thrilled to announce Valerie Coleman as the newest Sandbox composer for the SPCO," said SPCO Artistic Director and Principal Violin Kyu-Young Kim. "Valerie is one of the most important American composers working today, and her background as a world-class flutist and chamber musician makes her an ideal collaborator for the SPCO musicians. The chance to bring Valerie to Saint Paul multiple times and work with her so closely on a piece written specifically for our players and our community is a dream come true. This announcement gives us incredible momentum as we build upon the successful launch of our Sandbox Composer residency with Viet Cuong in 2022 and the exciting plans for Clarice Assad and Gabriela Lena Frank in 2023 and 2024."

Since its inception with the launch of the orchestra's 2022.23 season, the Sandbox Composer Residency program has continued to develop, with composers working alongside SPCO musicians to write and workshop new music in a highly collaborative setting inspired by Franz Joseph Haydn's experience serving the Austrian noble Esterházy family as Kapellmeister, or music director. Haydn famously said about the circumstances of his role: "As head of an orchestra I could try things out, observe what creates a [good] effect and what weakens it, and thus revise, make additions or cuts, take risks. I was cut off from the world, nobody in my vicinity could upset my self-confidence...so I had no choice but to become original." The Esterházy court orchestra, therefore, was the "sandbox" that inspired nearly thirty years of compositions. Now, some 250 years later, the SPCO Sandbox Residencies, as inspired by Haydn's own Esterházy residency, afford a diverse group of composers the opportunity to unleash their creativity and bring forth a body of exciting new music.

In the fall of 2022, Viet Cuong premiered two new works (*Doubling Back*, which was an expanded version of his original SPCO commission [Circling Back for Oboe and Cello](#), and *Now and Then*) in two weekends of concerts at the Ordway and in Neighborhood Series venues, marking a successful launch of the Sandbox Composer Residency program before finishing his tenure in November 2022. Since Cuong's departure, Sandbox composer Clarice Assad, has begun her tenure with frequent visits to work with SPCO musicians in preparation for [concerts on March 4](#), where she will be featured as both composer and performer in her composition *É Go!* In addition to her work leading up to March, Assad will premiere a new work composed during her Sandbox residency in January 2024, with orchestral workshops occurring in both June and September 2023. Coleman will be joined by fellow Sandbox composer-in-residence Gabriela Lena Frank in the 2024.25 season, with Frank's workshops beginning in 2024 in preparation of a premiere in January 2025.

The SPCO has performed chamber works by Coleman in recent seasons, and recordings of the performances are available in the free, digital [Concert Library](#).

ABOUT THE SANDBOX COMPOSER RESIDENCY PROGRAM

The 2022.23 season brought the launch of the SPCO's Sandbox Composer Residency program — a new initiative for engaging composers and community in the creation of new music. Over the next several seasons, three composers will participate in innovative and intensive multi-week residencies with the SPCO, in a program designed to foster a spirit of shared discovery and the creation of a significant body of new music. [Viet Cuong](#), [Clarice Assad](#) and [Gabriela Lena Frank](#) have been selected to work with SPCO musicians as the inaugural Sandbox composers, and [Valerie Coleman](#) will join the roster of Sandbox composers in the 2024.25 season.

In a divergence from the industry standard of commissioning individual works, the Sandbox Composer Residencies will provide support for composers to experiment freely across a variety of new works created in collaboration with the musicians of the SPCO. This alternative residency model will focus on building lasting relationships between the SPCO and resident composers by allowing composers to workshop new pieces, experiment and revise, take risks, develop relationships with SPCO musicians and engage with SPCO audiences.

The guiding principle of Sandbox is to grant composers the creative license to write and rehearse new music in a collaborative setting. The central belief behind Sandbox is that when composers are given this creative license to share compositions with audiences through workshops, post-concert sessions and, ultimately, subscription concerts, the resulting spirit of play, creativity and discovery can lead to a paradigm shift for orchestral music and ground the art form in the present rather than the past.

Sandbox composers will write at least one work for the full SPCO ensemble. Through various Sandbox Sessions and workshops, resident composers will engage performers and audiences in the compositional process. Post-concert talk-backs from the stage will allow the composer and performers to share music and context with the audience in a more informal setting. In lieu of the standard commission-based model by which an orchestra hires a composer to write one piece of music for a specific performance, the Sandbox model will allow for the orchestra and the composer to be more flexible, working with and inspired by each other to create a body of music reflective

of our times while allowing for deeper, long-lasting connections between audience, performers and composers in a shared experience of collaborative music-making.

Learn more about the inspiration for the program at thespco.org/sandbox.

ABOUT VALERIE COLEMAN

Valerie Coleman is regarded by many as an iconic artist who continues to pave her own unique path as a composer, entrepreneur and GRAMMY®-nominated flutist. Highlighted as one of the “Top 35 Women Composers” by *The Washington Post*, she was named *Performance Today’s* 2020 Classical Woman of the Year, an honor bestowed to an individual who has made a significant contribution to classical music as a performer, composer or educator. Her works have garnered awards such as the MAPFund, ASCAP Honors Award, Chamber Music America’s Classical Commissioning Program, Herb Alpert Ragdale Residency Award, and nominations from The American Academy of Arts and Letters and United States Artists. *Umoja, Anthem for Unity* was chosen by Chamber Music America as one of the “Top 101 Great American Ensemble Works” and is now a staple of woodwind literature.

Coleman commenced her 2021.22 season with the world premiere of her latest work, *Fanfare for Uncommon Times*, at the Caramoor Festival with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s. In October 2021, Carnegie Hall presents her work *Seven O’Clock Shout*, commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra, in their Opening Night Gala concert featuring The Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin. This follows on the success of the world premiere of Coleman’s orchestral arrangement of her work *Umoja*, commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra and performed in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall in 2019, marking the first time the orchestra performed a classical work by a living female African American composer. In February 2022, The Philadelphia Orchestra and soprano Angel Blue, led by Nézet-Séguin, will give the world premiere of a new song cycle written by Coleman, commissioned by the orchestra for performances in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall.

Coleman has been named to the Metropolitan Opera/Lincoln Center Theater New Works dual commissioning program in 2021.22. This season sees performances of her works by orchestras around the United States including the Minnesota Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Sarasota Orchestra, New Haven Symphony Orchestra, Yale Symphony Orchestra, Vermont Symphony and The Louisville Orchestra. Recent commissions include works for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, The Library of Congress, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, American Composers Orchestra, The National Flute Association, University of Chicago and University of Michigan. Previous performances of her works have been with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony and significant chamber ensembles and collegiate bands across the country.

Former flutist of the Imani Winds, Coleman is the creator and founder of this acclaimed ensemble whose 24-year legacy is documented and featured in a dedicated exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Along with composer-harpist Hannah Lash, and composer-violist Nokuthula Ngwenyama, she co-founded and currently performs as flutist of the performer-composer trio Umama Womama.

As a performer, Coleman has appeared at Carnegie Hall and The Kennedy Center and with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Hartford Symphony, New Haven Symphony, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Banff, Spoleto USA and Bravo! Vail. As a guest flutist, she has participated in the Mid-Atlantic Flute Fair, New Jersey Flute Fair, South Carolina Flute Society Festival, Colorado Flute Fair, Mid-South Flute Fair and the National Women’s Music Festival. In 2021.22, Coleman will appear at a host of festival and collegiate multi-disciplinary residencies, including Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Chamber Music Northwest, Phoenix Chamber Music Society, University of Michigan and Coastal Carolina University. Coleman will be the featured guest artist at the Long Island Flute Club, Raleigh Area Flute Association, Greater Portland Flute Society, Seattle Flute Society, University of Wisconsin-Madison Flute Day, Bethune-Cookman University Flute Day and the Florida Flute Society Festival.

As a chamber musician, Coleman has performed throughout North America and Europe alongside Dover Quartet, Orion String Quartet, Miami String Quartet, Harlem String Quartet, Quarteto Latinoamericano, Yo-Yo Ma, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Anne-Marie McDermott, Wu Han, David Shifrin, Gil Kalish, members of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and jazz legends Paquito D’Rivera, Stefon Harris, Jason Moran and René Marie. A laureate of Concert Artists Guild, she is a former member of Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center CMS Two.

Coleman’s work as a recording artist includes an extensive discography. With Imani Winds, she has appeared on Sony Classical, Deutsche Grammophon, Sony Classical, Naxos, Cedille Records and eOne, and as a guest flutist

on albums with Wayne Shorter Quartet, Steve Coleman and the Council of Balance, Chick Corea, Brubeck Brothers, Edward Simon, Bruce Adolphe, and Mohammed Fairouz. Her compositions and performances are regularly broadcast on NPR, WNYC, WQXR, Minnesota Public Radio, Sirius XM, Radio France, Australian Broadcast Company and Radio New Zealand.

Committed to arts education, entrepreneurship and chamber music advocacy, Coleman created the Imani Winds Chamber Music Festival in 2011, a summer mentorship program in New York City welcoming young leaders from over 100 international institutions. She has held flute and chamber music masterclasses at institutions in 49 states and over five continents, including The Juilliard School, Curtis Institute, Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College of Music, New England Conservatory, Oberlin College, Eastman School of Music, Yale University, Carnegie Mellon, Interlochen Arts Academy, Beijing Conservatory, Brazil's Campo do Jordão Festival and Australia's Musica Viva. As a part of Imani Winds, she has been artist-in-residence at Mannes College of Music, Banff Chamber Music Intensive and Visiting Faculty at the University of Chicago.

Coleman recently joined the Mannes School of Music Flute and Composition faculty in Fall 2021 as the Clara Mannes Fellow for Music Leadership. Prior to that she served on the faculty at The Frost School of Music at the University of Miami as Assistant Professor of Performance, Chamber Music and Entrepreneurship. In 2021.22, she leads a year-long residency at The Juilliard School in their Music Advancement Program through American Composers Forum.

She adjudicates for the National Flute Association's High School Artist Competition, Concert Artist Guild, APAP's Young Performing Concert Artists Program, ASCAP's Morton Gould Award, MapFund Award and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and has served on the Board of Advisors for Composers Now, Sphinx LEAD, APAP's Classical Connections Committee and the National Flute Association's New Music Advisory Committee and Board Nomination Committee.

Coleman's compositions are published by Theodore Presser and her own company, VColeman Music. She studied composition with Martin Amlin and Randy Wolfe and flute with Julius Baker, Judith Mendenhall, Doriot Dwyer, Leone Buyse and Alan Weiss. She and her family are based in New York City.

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 64th season, 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 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 Selaoe 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 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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