

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Announces 2026.27 Season A thrilling lineup of artists and programs spanning classical, jazz, folk and new music

- **Standout artists and collaborators** — including newest Artistic Partner Alina Ibragimova, violin, as well as Radu Ratoi, Avi Avital, the Aaron Diehl Trio and more
- **Bold, genre-spanning programs** — bringing together classical masterworks with jazz, folk and contemporary music in inventive combinations
- **Strong commitment to new music** — with multiple premieres and new concertos written for SPCO musicians through the ongoing Sandbox Composer Residency program
- **Distinctive musician-led model** — a fresh season shaped by the collaboration and creative leadership of orchestra members

SAINT PAUL, MN, MAY 7, 2026 — The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) today announced its 2026.27 season, featuring an exceptional lineup of internationally celebrated guest artists, innovative collaborations and a vibrant mix of musical styles from across traditions and eras.

Highlights include appearances by newest SPCO Artistic Partner violinist Alina Ibragimova, accordionist Radu Ratoi, mandolinist Avi Avital and the Aaron Diehl Trio, alongside a wide range of exciting, first-time collaborators and returning audience favorites. The season also features multiple world and regional premieres, including new concertos written for SPCO musicians through the orchestra's Sandbox Composer Residency program.

"This season is about energy, collaboration and discovery," said SPCO President and Managing Director Jessica Mallow Gulley. "It brings together extraordinary artists and a wide range of musical voices, highlighting the creativity of our musicians and the breadth of influences that shape the SPCO."

A SEASON OF CONNECTION

The 2026.27 season is built around music that brings people together — across styles, cultures and time. Programs pair beloved masterworks with contemporary voices, highlighting throughlines between classical, jazz, folk and new music.

The season opens and closes with one of the orchestra's five Artistic Partners, conductor Gábor Takács-Nagy, whose programs celebrate folk traditions from both Hungary and the United States. Throughout the season, audiences will hear foundational composers like Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven and Béla Bartók alongside contemporary voices like Philip Glass, Mary Lou Williams, and Louis Ballard, creating conversations between past and present.

From Baroque works to brand-new premieres, programs blend genres in unexpected ways, bringing together all kinds of music, often within a single concert.

"Each program offers something distinct, but together they create a season full of contrast, curiosity and momentum," said Artistic Planning Director Jonathan Posthuma. "There's a real sense of exploration — not just in the music we're performing, but in how these different traditions speak to one another."

"Next season brings a great balance of new pieces and fresh composers paired with plenty of perennial favorites," said Principal Bassoon Andrew Brady, who helped shape the season through the orchestra's Artistic Vision Committee. "I'm personally excited to perform Mozart's Bassoon Concerto! The SPCO is the perfect group to perform this piece with; my fellow musicians bring the music to life and make it sparkle!"

WORLD-CLASS ARTISTS, FRESH COLLABORATIONS

As a musician-led ensemble, the SPCO builds its seasons through deep artistic relationships. Central to this model is its roster of Artistic Partners — internationally acclaimed musicians who return regularly to collaborate closely with the orchestra and help shape the artistic direction of the ensemble.

The 2026.27 season features five Artistic Partners: pianist Richard Goode, cellist Abel Selaocoe, conductor Gábor Takács-Nagy, violist Tabea Zimmermann and violinist Alina Ibragimova, who returns for Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in her first performances since being named an Artistic Partner in 2026.

The season also features many SPCO debuts, including vocalist Eliza Bagg of Roomful of Teeth, the Aaron Diehl Trio with vocalist Mikaela Bennett, harpsichordist Justin Taylor, mandolinist Avi Avital, and accordionist Radu Ratoi.

Local partnerships remain a key part of the SPCO's work, with performances including a collaboration with Liquid Music and special concerts celebrating the Capri's 100th anniversary.

SPCO musicians will share their artistry across many solo performances this season. Highlights include Principal Clarinet Sang Yoon Kim in Aaron Copland's Clarinet Concerto and Principal Bassoon Andrew Brady in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Bassoon Concerto, as well as a double concerto featuring flutists Julia Bogorad-Kogan and Alicia McQuerrey and the first solo appearance by bassoonist Demetra Alikakos since she joined the orchestra in 2024.

CHAMPIONING NEW MUSIC

The SPCO continues its longstanding commitment to new music with a season rich in premieres and new commissions. At the heart of this work is the Sandbox Composer Residency program, which gives composers the opportunity to develop new pieces in close collaboration with SPCO musicians over the course of multiple seasons. The 2026.27 season features premieres by three Sandbox Composers-in-Residence: Gabriela Lena Frank, Chen Yi and Jon Deak.

Two major highlights are new concertos written specifically for SPCO musicians — oboist Cassie Pilgrim and bassist Zachary Cohen — developed through an extended workshop process.

In total, the 2026.27 season includes nine premieres and eight commissions, underscoring the SPCO's role in shaping the future of orchestral music.

TICKET INFORMATION

The SPCO is committed to making unforgettable, world-class performances accessible and affordable. As a national leader in the Concert Membership model, the orchestra offers audiences a flexible way to experience live performances throughout the season.

Subscription tickets for the 2026.27 season are now available for Ordway and Neighborhood Series, including free subscriptions for children and students. Single tickets, including Concert Member tickets, will go on sale in August.

For more information, visit thespco.org or contact Patron Services at tickets@spcomail.org or 651.291.1144.

ABOUT THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1959, the Grammy Award-winning Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) is internationally recognized for its artistic excellence, versatility and innovative programming. As a musician-led ensemble, SPCO performers shape the artistic direction of the organization, collaborating with a distinguished roster of Artistic Partners. The orchestra presents concerts throughout the Twin Cities, offering programs that range from Baroque masterworks to newly commissioned pieces, all designed to create meaningful and engaging musical experiences

PHOTOS

Access photos of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra [here](#). Click on each thumbnail to download images.

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