

# THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

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## **SPCO President and Managing Director Announces Retirement; Jon Limbacher to Step Down at End of 2025**

**SAINT PAUL, MN, November 7, 2024** — The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) announced today that President and Managing Director Jon Limbacher will retire from the SPCO at the end of his current five-year contract on December 31, 2025. To ensure a thoughtful and effective transition in leadership, a national search led by the SPCO's Board of Directors for the organization's new administrative leader will begin immediately. Once a successor is in place, Limbacher will remain an adviser to the organization through 2025.

"For any organization, it is important to strike a balance between leadership stability and leadership change," Limbacher said. "I think nine to ten years of the same leader represents something close to the sweet spot in achieving this critical balance. I know in my heart and gut that it is time for new leadership as the SPCO enters the next chapters of its journey."

"On behalf of the Board of Directors of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, I thank Jon Limbacher for his dedicated service to the well-being of the SPCO and the individuals working and volunteering there," said Deborah Palmer, Chair of the SPCO Board of Directors. "It was Jon's hard work and planning that brought the SPCO through the pandemic in better financial shape than most orchestras in the country and has put us in a strong position to deal with the hard issues now facing the arts community. Jon's effective leadership and championing of our vision for a great orchestra for everyone in the community has contributed to the orchestra's exceptionally high artistic quality. He has been a steady hand at the helm of the organization for nine years and will continue to be so as we select a new president to lead us."

Limbacher was with the SPCO from 2000 to 2012, finishing as the Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and returned in 2016 as the President and Managing Director. His steadfast commitment to the SPCO's vision has resulted in significant advancements toward the [SPCO's mission](#) and organizational stability. Highlights of this work include:

- Codifying an unwavering commitment to accessibility and inclusion in the SPCO's mission statement and strategic imperatives.
- Maintaining a commitment to affordable ticket prices and expanding access by making tickets for children and students of any age free of charge.
- Launching a free online Concert Library offering over 100 streaming performances.
- Making meaningful progress on the orchestra's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, especially concerning representation on SPCO stages.
- Eliminating the SPCO's accumulated financial debt and consistently balancing its budget.
- Caring for and supporting the growth of the endowment by lowering the SPCO's endowment draw from 5.7 percent to 4.2 percent.
- Creating a Rainy Day Fund in the 2017.18 season, allowing the SPCO to maintain full compensation for staff and musicians throughout the entire pandemic period.

- Investing in the artistic quality of the orchestra through meaningful increases to the musicians' total annual compensation.
- Fully embracing and growing the innovative [Concert Membership model](#), adapting to the changing audience landscape.

“Jon has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the orchestra’s mission of sustaining a world-class chamber orchestra while at the same time emphasizing accessibility and inclusion for all people in our community,” Ann Huntrods, Chair-Elect of the SPCO Board of Directors, said. “He is giving this organization the gift of time, ensuring a smooth transition and we are grateful for his continued leadership.”

Four of the last nine years, Limbacher also served as the President of the [Arts Partnership](#), the unique collaboration between the Ordway Center, Minnesota Opera, Schubert Club and The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Chris Harrington, President and CEO of the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts and current President of the Arts Partnership, said, "I'm beyond grateful for Jon's friendship, kindness, and the impactful leadership he brought this community and the Art Partnership throughout his tenure. Jon has been a thought leader and vocal champion of the Partnership, our collective fundraising efforts and our shared commitment to increase access to the arts through our special presentations, such as the new outdoor digital programming series, Ordway Inside Out."

Limbacher added, “The SPCO is a special and amazing organization with so many assets including a fantastic and committed orchestra, a hard-working and talented staff, and an extremely generous and devoted Board. We are also supported by passionate and wonderful volunteers through the Governing Members and The Friends of the SPCO. We are all stewards of this organization, and we must never forget that this entire endeavor of providing our community with a world-class chamber orchestra is only possible because of the extraordinary generosity of so many donors who give year in and year out so that we can fulfill our mission.”

## **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 one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. Now in its 66th season, the SPCO is primarily an unconduted ensemble that performs a broad range of repertoire, from Baroque works to new music, in close collaboration with a dynamic roster of [Artistic Partners](#). The current roster of Artistic Partners consists of British Baroque specialist Richard Egarr, South African cellist Abel Selaocoe, Hungarian conductor Gábor Takács-Nagy and German violist Tabea Zimmermann.

In its commitment to making music accessible to everyone, the virtuoso musicians of the SPCO present over 80 concerts each season, sharing live music with over 70,000 people throughout the Twin Cities from September through June. 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 \$16 or less and with free tickets for children and students as a part of its [New Generation Initiative](#). The orchestra also offers an innovative ticket membership model in which members pay a monthly fee to attend unlimited concerts, with a \$5 per month concert membership option for first-time Concert Members and members of [Club2030](#), the orchestra’s discount program for audience members in their 20s and 30s.

The SPCO’s free, online [Concert Library](#) offers audio and video concert recordings — both live and on-demand — that can be accessed anytime, completely free of charge thanks to donors. Through its partnership with YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio and American Public Media, the SPCO is regularly played 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 prestigious residencies at the 2021 and 2022 [Bravo! Vail Music Festival](#) with violinists Joshua Bell and Stefan Jackiw, bassist Xavier Foley, and pianist and Bravo! Vail Artistic Director Anne-Marie McDermott.

The SPCO is deeply committed to expanding orchestral repertoire, [commissioning more than 160 new works](#) throughout its 65-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 [Sandbox Residency program](#) invites composers to experiment freely across a variety of new works created in collaboration with the orchestra. This groundbreaking residency model allows composers to workshop new pieces, experiment and revise, take risks, develop relationships with SPCO musicians and engage with SPCO audiences.

The SPCO is a proud member of the [Arts Partnership](#), a strategic alliance of four performing arts organizations — Minnesota Opera, the Ordway, the SPCO and Schubert Club — that ensures equitable sharing and effective care of the Ordway Center as a vital cultural asset in the Twin Cities.

### **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.

### **PHOTOS OF THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

Access photos of The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra [here](#). Click on the thumbnails to view images. Then, right click and select "Save image as..." to download.

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