



**Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra**  
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(May 8, 2024, Minneapolis, MN) – The Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (MSO) is pleased to announce the appointment of Steven Amundson as its next Music Director beginning with the 2024-2025 season. Amundson, who will become the fifth Music Director of the MSO, was also its first and founding Music Director from 1982-1987. The orchestra was then known as the Central Chamber Orchestra.

Amundson has a long legacy of touching hearts and minds as a conductor, composer, and arranger. Amundson completed an illustrious 41-year career as Professor of Music and Conductor of the St. Olaf Orchestra in 2022. Under Amundson’s skillful guidance, the St. Olaf Orchestra twice won the prestigious American Prize in Orchestral Performance among colleges and universities. In addition to his previous role with MSO, he also served as Music Director and Conductor of the Bloomington (MN) Symphony for 13 years, and he has led performances in 37 states and 15 countries. Amundson’s orchestral compositions have received over 1,000 performances.

"I'm thrilled to return to the MSO family as the next Music Director," says Amundson. "I look forward to furthering the legacy established by previous Music Directors, especially long-time Music Director William Schrickel. The MSO is an exceptional ensemble loaded with gifted musicians who bring both strong commitment and abundant joy to each rehearsal and performance. Unquestionably, the MSO is among the very best of its kind. I'm honored to join this amazing orchestral community once again, and I will endeavor to inspire beauty and excellence as we create memorable performances for audiences throughout the Greater Twin Cities area."

Executive Director Ron Lattin adds, "I am excited to partner with Steve in expanding the impact of the MSO, aligned with our core values: inviting new and diverse audiences to share the power and energy of live symphony concerts, encouraging artistic growth in our volunteer players, and partnering with host organizations to present and promote symphonic performances in their communities."

The MSO Board of Directors recognizes with gratitude the thorough and intentional work of the 17-member search committee, which included musicians, board, and staff of the orchestra. Sarah Wright and Bryanne Kleinert co-chaired the search committee. "We had a thoughtful committee who carefully considered many strong candidates. There was consensus that Steve is the right choice to lead the MSO into the future."

"Welcoming Steve back to the MSO is both a homecoming and the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the MSO," states Board Chair Kristine Oberg. "When Steve joined us as a guest conductor this spring, you could feel the magic. We are enormously excited to bring the passion and dedication of our musicians together with Steve’s inspiring leadership and vision."

### **About Steven Amundson**

Award-winning conductor and composer Steven Amundson spent 41 years building the St. Olaf Orchestra at St. Olaf College into one of the premiere college/university orchestras in the United States. Known for his inspiring and passionate presence on the podium and ability to generate compelling performances, Amundson is a highly sought-after conductor, educator, and clinician.

Under Amundson’s direction, the St. Olaf Orchestra won the American Prize in Orchestral Performance among colleges and universities in both 2013 and 2019. The St. Olaf Orchestra has often been featured on PBS Television and National Public Radio, including the popular Prairie Home Companion and Performance Today programs.

In addition to his tenure at St. Olaf College, Amundson held conducting posts at the University of Virginia and as Music Director of the Tacoma Youth Symphony. He is the founding conductor of the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (originally called the Central Chamber Orchestra) and returns as their Music Director in the fall of 2024. He served as Music Director and Conductor of the Bloomington Symphony (MN) for 13 years and has led All-State Orchestras in 26 states. Amundson has guest conducted professional ensembles in Minnesota, including the Duluth-Superior Symphony, Fargo-Moorhead Symphony, Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, Minnesota Dance Theater Orchestra, Rochester Symphony, and the renowned Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

A commissioned composer and arranger, Amundson is published by the Lauren Keiser Music Company, Neil A. Kjos Music Company and Boosey and Hawkes. Tempo Music Resource distributes his self-published works. Amundson was a finalist for the 2014 American Prize in Orchestral Compositions for his *Handprints*, which was commissioned by the Bloomington Symphony in 2012 for their 50th anniversary celebration.

At the age of 24, Amundson competed in the 1980 International Conducting Competition hosted by the Mozarteum and Austrian National Radio in Salzburg and placed first, earning the *Hans Häring* Prize. In 1992, the Minnesota Music Education Association named him "Minnesota Orchestra Educator of the Year." In the fall of 1995, Amundson received the Carlo A. Sperati Award from Luther College in recognition of meritorious achievement in the field of music.

Amundson is married to Jane Amundson, a math educator and cellist. They have two children: Their daughter Beret is a doctor in Boston and son Karl is a musical theater performer, voice teacher and composer in New York.

### **About the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra**

It was in the fall of 1982 that a group of young St. Olaf College alumni reached out to Steven Amundson, then a young music professor, to help them form a new orchestra that would model the high-quality orchestral experiences they had had while students at St. Olaf. During his five years as their conductor, the orchestra, which began as the Central Chamber Orchestra, grew from 30 to 60 members. The orchestra has since then become a full symphony orchestra.

For over forty years, the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (MSO) has been recognized as the premier volunteer orchestra in the Upper Midwest, presenting world-class symphonic performances free of charge to audiences throughout the Twin Cities in Minnesota, United States. Core values of the MSO are to invite new and diverse audiences to share the power and energy of live symphony concerts in convenient neighborhood venues, to perform the full spectrum of symphonic music and encourage artistic growth in our volunteer players, and to work with host organizations to present and promote symphonic performances in their communities.

In addition to Amundson, Music Directors that have shaped the ensemble include Manny Laureano, William Intriligator, and William Schrickel. Minnesota's Pulitzer Prize winning composer Dominick Argento was the orchestra's Composer Laureate, and the MSO has premiered his works as well as those of others, including Polina Nazaykinskaya, Jocelyn Hagen, Michael Daugherty, Victor Zupanc, Carol Barnett, Osmo Vänskä, and William Bolcom. In addition to new music, the MSO also gives inspiring performances of some of the most difficult works from the traditional canon including Mahler, Bruckner, and Shostakovich. The Star Tribune lauded the orchestra's performance of Mahler's Second Symphony as "resounding and transformative."

The MSO's collaborative partners include The Minnesota Chorale, VocalEssence, Clara Osowski, Kevin Kling, Maria Jette, and many other Twin Cities-based soloists. In addition, each year the Orchestra engages at least one of its own members as a concerto soloist. The MSO is also committed to engaging new participants in the orchestral experience and has collaborated with Chadwick ("Niles") Philips, North Community High School in Minneapolis, and Border CrossSing.