



**St. Louis Symphony  
Orchestra**

stéphane denève : music director

## **Marie-Hélène Bernard** **President and CEO, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra**



**Marie-Hélène Bernard** joined the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO) as President and CEO on July 1, 2015. Under her leadership, the SLSO has sharpened its commitment to artistic excellence, educational impact, community connections, and access to music—all in service to its mission of enriching lives through the power of music. Bernard has fostered SLSO's strengths as a responsive and nimble organization while invigorating partnerships locally and elevating its presence globally.

Her tenure marked with artistic growth, Bernard led the appointment and contract extension of the SLSO's visionary music director, Stéphane Denève; two European tours since 2017 that resulted in critical acclaim; and rejuvenated community connections across the St. Louis region. The SLSO's educational activities, a cornerstone of Bernard's philosophy, have grown to engage more than 300,000 students and teachers worldwide each year, while emphasizing concerts and engagement activities at American universities have positioned the SLSO as a go-to higher education partner. Digital concerts and online programs have grown to reach 9.2 million people worldwide, while expanded partnerships with regional organizations have transformed and modernized concert experiences, family programming, and free events—making music more accessible to all.

Bernard guided the design and development of a \$128 million renovation and 65,000-square-foot expansion of the orchestra's historic home, Powell Hall. With construction begun in March 2023 and an expected completion in 2025, the project will transform the SLSO experience for audiences and artists while preserving the civic treasure and creating a community-oriented music center.

As the orchestra's artistic portfolio and impact continues to grow, Bernard has shepherded the institution through implementation of long-term strategic planning, which has centered on equity, diversity, inclusion, access, engagement, and innovation and has ensured financial stability through balanced budgets and immense donor generosity.

A firm believer in nurturing the next generation of leaders, Bernard is an inaugural mentor of the Anne Parsons Leadership Program of the League of American Orchestras and a two-time mentor of the Widener Global Leaders Program at Wichita State University. An advocate for all the arts, she serves on the board of Grand Center, Inc., and is an honorary board member of Classic 107.3. She also serves on the Artist Presentation Society Advisory Committee and is a member of the Symphony, Opera & Ballet Employers' Electronic Media Association. Recent honors include receiving the A-List Award for "Arts Leader" (2016) from *St. Louis Magazine* and as one of the "Most Influential Businesswomen" (2016), by the *St. Louis Business Journal*.

A Québec native of Belgian descent, she studied communications, media, and literature at Jean-de-Brébeuf College, law at the University of Montréal, and holds a Master's degree in arts management from Concordia University (Montréal). Prior to her appointment at the SLSO, she served as the Executive Director and CEO of the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, and in leadership positions at other orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, and Canton (Ohio) Symphony Orchestra. Before joining the orchestra industry, Bernard practiced corporate and tax law in Canada and remains a member of the Québec Bar Association.

She lives in Kirkwood with her husband, attorney Douglas Copeland, and their Shih Tzu Riki.