

@THE FAC NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 15th, 2011

- WHAT:** St. Louis Symphony Orchestra
David Robertson, Music Director & Conductor
- WHEN:** Sunday, March 6 at 7:00 PM
- WHERE:** Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst
- TICKETS:** Call 800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or go online to
<http://www.umasstix.com/>
- IMAGES:** To download images relating to this press release please go online
to <http://www.fineartscenter.com/centerwide/pressRoom/>

(ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA TO PRESENT A PROGRAM OF ROMANTIC AND MODERN WORKS @THE FAC)

Founded in 1880, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO) is the second-oldest orchestra in the country and is widely considered one of the world's finest. In September 2005, internationally acclaimed conductor David Robertson became the 12th Music Director and second American-born conductor in the Orchestra's history. Now in its 131st season, the SLSO continues to strive for artistic excellence and community connection. In addition to its regular concert performances at Powell Hall, the SLSO is an integral part of the St. Louis community, presenting more than 250 free programs each year.

The St. Louis Symphony is one of only a handful of major American orchestras invited to perform annually at Carnegie Hall. Recordings by the Symphony have been honored with six Grammy Awards and 56 Grammy nominations over the years. The Symphony has embraced technological advances in music distribution by offering recordings over the Internet.

A consummate musician, masterful programmer, and dynamic presence, David Robertson has established himself as one of today's most sought-after American conductors. A passionate and compelling communicator with an extensive knowledge of

the orchestral and operatic repertoire, he has forged close relationships with major orchestras around the world.

On Sunday, March 6 at 7:00 PM in the FAC Concert Hall, the SLSO will present a program that ranges from Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, through John Adams' *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, to Tchaikovsky's final work, the "Pathétique" symphony.

The first half of the UMass program features music from England. Ralph Vaughan Williams' broad musical interests included folk songs and the work of older British composers. A particularly successful fusion of his historical and creative activities is the incomparably melodic *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*.

The centerpiece of the concert is Worcester-born composer John Adams' *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, an instrumental work drawn from his internationally-acclaimed 2005 opera. The score is dedicated to David Robertson, who gave the first American performances in Saint Louis and at Carnegie Hall in the spring of 2008.

The piece unfolds in a single movement, beginning forcefully with music taken from the opera's overture. The opening passage, Adams says, was suggested by Edgard Varèse's pioneering composition *Déserts*, and is meant to conjure a devastated post nuclear landscape. The frenzied music that follows evokes a fierce storm that lashed the Los Alamos test site the night before the first explosion of the bomb's prototype.

In the opera, two of the ensuing episodes derive from recitations by J. Robert Oppenheimer, the poetry-loving physicist and Sanskrit amateur who directed the scientific parts of the Manhattan Project. Much of the libretto was adapted from declassified U.S. government documents and communications among the scientists, government officials, and military personnel who were involved in the project. Other borrowed texts include poetry by Charles Baudelaire, John Donne, and Muriel Rukeyser, and passages from the *Bhagavad Gita*.

. In 2009, the Symphony's Nonesuch recording of *Doctor Atomic Symphony* reached number two on the *Billboard* rankings for classical music, and was named "Best CD of the Decade" by the *Times* of London.

The final work of the evening was first performed less than two weeks before its author's death. Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony's somber conclusion is preceded by a dramatic opening, an elegant and sophisticated dance movement, and a triumphal march.

The SLSO concert is a Global Gourmet event. Reservations for a pre-curtain dinner at the University Club may be made by calling the FAC Box Office.

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra performance is sponsored by Applewood of Amherst, a member of the Loomis Retirement Communities, and by WGBY TV-57. Tickets are \$40, \$30, and \$15; Five College/GCC/STCC students and youth 17 and under are \$10. Tickets are available from the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 545-2511 or 800-999-UMAS, or on the secure Fine Arts Center ticket website at <http://www.umasstix.com/>.

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PHOTOS

Hi-res photos available for download:

<http://www.umass.edu/fac/centerwide/pressRoom/>

PRESS PASSES

Limited press passes are available. Please contact Shawn Farley at 413-545-4159 or sfarley@admin.umass.edu

ABOUT THE FAC

The Fine Arts Center, located on the UMass Amherst campus, is a presenter of music, dance, theater, and the visual arts, bringing hundreds of outstanding and provocative artists to the Pioneer Valley for over 35 years.

CALENDAR LISTING

The UMass Fine Arts Center presents @ THE FAC

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra; David Robertson, Music Director & Conductor

Sunday, March 6 at 7:00 PM

Fine Arts Center Concert Hall

A Varied Program of Tchaikovsky, Vaughan Williams & John Adams

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