

Marie-Hélène Bernard

President & CEO, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra



Marie-Hélène Bernard joined the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO) as President and CEO on July 1, 2015. Previously, she served as Executive Director and CEO of the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston; Chief of Staff, Project Manager, and Orchestra Manager for the Philadelphia Orchestra; Orchestra Manager for the Cleveland Orchestra; and President and CEO of the Canton (Ohio) Symphony Orchestra.

She began her career in orchestra management in 1996, having won a prestigious fellowship with the League of American Orchestras with residencies at the New York Philharmonic and Minnesota Orchestra. Prior to joining the orchestra world, Ms. Bernard practiced corporate and tax law in Canada and remains a member of the Québec Bar Association.

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). Since she began her tenure, the SLSO completed a five-year strategic plan and a new framework for equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. The SLSO also has experienced significant increases in both attendance and ticket revenue, as well as with earned and contributed revenue, leading to balanced budgets for several consecutive seasons. Under her leadership, the SLSO is experiencing great momentum on all fronts, with ground-breaking artistic initiatives with Music Director Stéphane Denève, the production of new digital concerts and online educational programs, the expansion of important partnerships, and a continued focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion—all designed to make music accessible to all.

During her tenure at the Handel and Haydn Society, Bernard led the organization through an important artistic and financial revival towards the celebration of its 200th anniversary in 2015. Under her leadership, H+H established itself as an essential educational provider and partner to youth and music educators in Massachusetts, and as a leader in early music in the nation. She doubled its operational budgets and endowment and oversaw the most ambitious capital campaign in the organization's history.

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