



MINNESOTA
ORCHESTRA

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS CONTACT:
Gwen Pappas, Director of Public Relations
612-371-5628
gpappas@mnorch.org

Date: March 20, 2014

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA PRESIDENT AND CEO MICHAEL HENSON TO STEP DOWN IN AUGUST

The Minnesota Orchestra today announced that President and CEO Michael Henson will lead the organization through a transition period over the next five months and, then by mutual agreement, will step down from his post on August 31, 2014.

Since being appointed President and CEO in September 2007, Michael Henson has led the Minnesota Orchestra's \$110 million comprehensive fundraising campaign; overseen the renovation of Orchestra Hall from its earliest plans to completion; established a new endowment governed by rigorous draw policies; maintained budget controls during the recession; delivered a new labor contract with musicians and launched an organizational start-up plan following the labor dispute. Also, during his tenure, the organization inaugurated the new "Common Chords" outreach initiative in Greater Minnesota and made two international tours, five performances at Carnegie Hall, eight recordings and an international BBC broadcast series with Music Director Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra.

"Michael has always supported the Orchestra's artistic mission, and when the Board asked him to address the serious financial challenges of the organization, he faced this issue directly, re-organizing administrative staff and helping to deliver a musicians' contract agreement that was difficult but necessary," said Board Chair Gordon M. Sprenger. "It is never easy to be an agent of change, but Michael leaves the Minnesota Orchestra secure, on more solid financial footing and established in a beautifully renovated venue that will meet the needs of our organization, audiences and community for decades to come."

Michael Henson said, "It has been my privilege to serve the Minnesota Orchestra for the past seven seasons, working with our talented musicians and artistic leaders, the dedicated Board of Directors, so many donors and concertgoers and, not least, our exceptional staff. It has always been my aim to do what is right for the organization, however great the challenges, and I'm proud of our accomplishments. The right thing now is for me to work to ensure continuity during this transition to the next phase in the life of the Minnesota Orchestra, which I believe will be very bright."

Henson, who previously led the Bournemouth Symphony in England and the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast, will continue to serve as an advisor to the Board of Directors beyond August, as needed. The Minnesota Orchestra Board of Directors is establishing a committee to identify a successor to Henson, and a search will be launched next month.

###