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THE SHELDON CELEBRATES 250 YEARS OF ST. LOUIS MUSIC WITH ALL-STAR CONCERT EXTRAVAGANZA

ST. LOUIS – The Sheldon presents **250 Years of St. Louis Music: American Music at Its Best**, Friday, October 17, 2014 at the Sheldon Concert Hall and Art Galleries. Doors open and music begins at 6:30 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. Top St. Louis musicians including **Peter Martin, Denise Thimes, Kim Massie, Billy Peek**, and more, along with cutting edge chamber ensemble, **Alarm Will Sound**, will perform throughout the Sheldon Concert Hall, Art Galleries, Ballroom and Louis Spiering Room to celebrate the city's influence on all genres of American music, from ragtime, blues and jazz to R&B, rock, classical music and beyond. This event is part of the American Arts Experience – St. Louis, a 17-day festival taking place October 3 – 19 at arts organizations throughout St. Louis. Visit americanartsstl.org for more information.

Pre-concert festivities begin in the lower level lobby at 6:30 p.m. with the sounds of blues and jazz saxophonist, **Willie Akins** and guitarist **Eric Slaughter**. Simultaneously, the **St. Louis Ragtimers** will perform in the Atrium lobby, and string wizards **Gary Hunt and Dade Farrar** will perform alt-country in the Sheldon Art Galleries. The **Webster University Chamber Singers** will wander the concert hall and lobbies, performing songs inspired by St. Louis' French heritage.

At 8 p.m., **Alarm Will Sound** will take the concert hall stage, joined by **Peter Martin, Denise Thimes** and **Kim Massie**. Together, they'll present a program including world premiere performances of two new commissioned works, by Martin and AWS founding member and cellist Stefan Freund, weaving together the musical threads of classical, jazz, blues, rock, hip-hop, and more. Martin's piece draws inspiration in part from the music of Miles Davis, while Freund's "con/influences" evokes the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers as well as the blending of musical influences that takes place in St. Louis.

Then, around 9 p.m., music will continue in The Sheldon Ballroom with St. Louis' own blues/rock and roll legend **Billy Peek**, followed by hip-hop fusion group, the **Illphonics**. The Louis Spiering Room will feature more jazz and blues, including an old-fashioned "piano cutting contest" where piano virtuosos will try to out-do each other in a musical showdown.

The entire evening will be filmed by The Nine Network and form the basis of a documentary on St. Louis' important contributions to American music.

Tickets for 250 Years of St. Louis Music are \$30 (including general admission performances in the Concert Hall, Ballroom, lobbies and Spiering Room) and are on sale now through MetroTix at 314-534-1111 or at TheSheldon.org.

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