

# Kahane returns for Santa Rosa Symphony opener

**Former music director and current director Ferrandis to join for  
Rachmaninoff, all-Russian program**



Jeff Kahane, former music director of the Santa Rosa symphony, will take to the keyboard under Bruno Ferrandis' baton.

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When the Santa Rosa Symphony tunes up for its season-opening concert Saturday night, the audience is going to hear a harmonic convergence of old and new, as pianist Jeffrey Kahane and Music Director Bruno Ferrandis join forces for the very first time.

In its brochure, the symphony touts the 2009-2010 season as the season that will “bring you to your feet,” but Ferrandis also believes the first concert may bring down the house.

“If we are both on the same wavelength, and if the alchemy works ... My god, we will make the theater collapse,” Ferrandis said in a phone interview from his home in Paris.

During next weekend’s fiery, all-Russian program, Kahane will perform Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with the symphony that he conducted for 10 years.

Kahane said he started studying the “Rach 3” in the 1970s as a student in London and has performed the concerto many times over the years.

“For most pianists, the Third Concerto is a kind of pianistic ‘Everest,’ and there is nothing in the world like the feeling of finally arriving at its joyous and triumphant coda,” Kahane said in a press release. “I’m honored and moved to be coming back to Santa Rosa to play this with my beloved colleagues in the orchestra and with Maestro Ferrandis.”

In addition to his solo career as a pianist, Kahane serves as the music director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and is currently in his fifth and final season as music director of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra.

“He’s a passionate man about what he’s doing. There’s no pretense,” Ferrandis said. “I am not going to have many encounters with artists like that on my path.”

This year, Ferrandis will be commuting from a greater distance than last season.

## **NO REGRETS**

After living in San Francisco for almost a year and a half, Ferrandis, his wife and two daughters — Cassandre, 5, and Alma, 11 months — have returned to Paris in order to be closer to family.

“We left because we have young children, and we have the full support of the family here,” he said. “Nobody will ever regret the move. For me, I regret that we could not stay permanently.”

The conductor, who will be hopping on a plane every three weeks or so, expects to be able to spend more quality time with the symphony when he is in town.

“As my wife says, the plane is a safer way of traveling than the car,” he said. “And since I was commuting between Santa Rosa and San Francisco, it’s safer for me ... I’m not a great driver.”

The Santa Rosa Symphony’s season stretches from October through May with seven subscription concert sets — five led by Ferrandis and two by guest conductors; a three-

concert “Festival of Remembrance” chamber music series October through April; and a three-concert choral series in November featuring works from Mozart’s last year, 1791.

“It’s full of great masterpieces,” Ferrandis said of the upcoming season. “It is very varied and colorful, and at the same time, so deeply rooted in the strongest repertoire.”

In addition to the opening concerts, Ferrandis is looking forward to the final concert, a potent medley of opera and cabaret fare, highlighted by a guest appearance by German chanteuse Ute Lemper.

“The first concert and the last concert are two mountains for me,” Ferrandis said. “Ute Lemper is a star. She is a multi-faceted artist, singing cabaret and opera.”

Rounding out the first concert set next weekend will be Nikolai Miaskovsky’s “Salutary Overture” and Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 9, a masterpiece that mocks the high expectations of a ninth symphony.

During the season, Ferrandis will tackle two more ninth symphonies — Antonin Dvorak’s New World Symphony in November, as part of an all-Dvorak program; and Beethoven’s Ninth in December, for the symphony’s annual choral concert.

In the December program, Igor Stravinsky’s dark “Symphony of Psalms” will provide a stark contrast to the joy-filled sounds of the Beethoven work.

“The Stravinsky offers the most austere way of glorifying God. It’s dark and almost sad,” Ferrandis said. “The ‘Ode to Joy’ of Beethoven is luminous and joyul ... I like the clashes, not to battle, but for the purpose of making sparks, like an engine at work.”

## **NEW SEASON**

Here are some more highlights of the season to come:

<•> Jan. 23-25, 2010: Guest Conductor JoAnn Falletta of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra has invited her concertmaster, violin virtuoso Michael Ludwig, to perform John Corigliano’s “Red Violin Concerto,” an Academy Award-winning score originally performed by violinist Joshua Bell.

The all-American program also includes works by Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland and Elliott Carter, a composer who turned 100 last year and is still working.

<•> Feb. 13-15, 2010: Two works by Schumann — his “Manfred Overture” and Symphony No. 4 — anchor this ultra Romantic program. Frederic Chopin’s sparkling Piano Concerto No. 2 will be performed by Berenika, a Polish-born Canadian who graduated from Harvard.

<•> March 20-22, 2010: Guest Conductor George Cleve of the Bay Area's Midsummer Mozart Festival leads a program of two powerhouse symphonies — Beethoven's No. 4 and No. 5 — punctuated by Christopher Rouse's Percussion Concerto, performed by Allen Biggs of the Santa Rosa Symphony.

<•> May 8-10, 2010: Mozart's Overture to "Don Giovanni" and Kurt Weill's "Seven Deadly Sins" play off the theme of sin. Meanwhile, Ute Lemper and a male vocal quartet will play off one another in the rarely performed Weill work.

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