Honoring The Santa Rosa Symphony

Rep. Lynn Woolsey

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Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Santa Rosa Symphony on the occasion of its orchestral opening of the Green Music Center. The Green Music Center is a recently-completed music and art venue on the campus of Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California. Named after Donald and Maureen Green, it is comprised of the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Hall and the Schroeder Recital Hall as well as a multi-use education facility and an elegant hospitality center. The symphony made its debut performance as Resident Orchestra of the Green Music Center on September 30, 2012.

In 1998, the Board of Directors of the Santa Rosa Symphony marked a new era by joining Sonoma State University to raise funds for a new concert hall. Although this was no easy task, persistence paid off. Donald Green has been the spirit of the project; start-up financial support and leadership from Don and his wife Maureen, the vision of Sonoma State President Ruben Arminana, and the assistance of Sandy and Joan Weill plus hundreds of supporters of the Santa Rosa Symphony has made the Center a reality. With this project, the symphony enhances its dream of being one of the leading regional symphony orchestras in America.

Fourteen years later, the completion of the Green Music Center and Weill Hall is an impressive and important step towards fulfilling that vision. On September 30th, the Santa Rosa Symphony celebrated 85 years of music and stepped over the threshold of its new home at the Green Music Center. The symphony also recognized three talented individuals who helped develop and usher in this new era: Conductor Emeritus Corrick Brown, Conductor Laureate Jeffrey Kahane and current Music Director Bruno Ferrandis.

The first performance was mesmerizing as Maestro Brown conducted Beethoven's overture, Consecration of the House as an appropriate beginning in the acoustically-

superb Weill Hall, and Maestro Ferrandis took the podium for the remainder of the program. It included Ravel's Bolero, Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto performed by Kahane, Copland's great Canticle of Freedom, featuring the 100-voice Symphony Honor Choir, and ended with three encores.

To mark this long-awaited moment, the Symphony also commissioned an orchestral work. by Petaluma resident and critically-acclaimed contemporary composer Nolan Gasser. His Sonoma Overture evoked the natural beauty of Sonoma County and recognized the energy and dynamism of its cities, industries and people.

This was truly a transformative moment that seldom is afforded any American orchestra-- to call a world class concert hall its home, rivaling the Vienna Philharmonic's Musikverein concert hall and the Boston Symphony's Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood.

In addition to being a home for the symphony, the Center will serve as a venue to showcase excellent music from around the Bay Area and beyond. In fact, just a day before the symphony's opening performance, renowned Chinese pianist Lang Lang dazzled at the Green Music Center's grand opening with a one-night-only recital. And only a week later, on October 6th, Music Director Bruno Ferrandis partnered with the Kronos Quartet to perform Mozart's Overture to The Magic Flute, Mahler's Symphony No. I, Titan, and the world premiere of Concerto for String Quartet, Orchestra and Electronics, The Last Internal Combustion Engine by composerin-residence Edmund Campion.

Mr. Speaker, we congratulate the Santa Rosa Symphony for all its hard work. Truly a new dawn is breaking for this orchestra and for Sonoma County that will both invite and challenge them to new heights of artistic excellence and community engagement.

U.S. Congressional Representative Lynn Woolsey read this statement into the record.
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