

NEWS

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Santa Rosa Symphony Welcomes New Board Officers and Members

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) — The Santa Rosa Symphony (SRS), in its 96th season, announces new board officers: Keven Brown, Chairman of the Board; Garth Bixler, Vice-Chairman; Sean Pryden, Treasurer; Keith Hilten, Secretary; Corinne Byrd, Immediate Past Chairman. Also, three new appointments to its Board of Directors listed in alphabetical order, began their term on July 1, 2023: Susan Jette, a longstanding member of the Santa Rosa Symphony. Mark Stevens, who is committed to making a positive impact on the community through the power of music. Along with Paul Swensen, bringing his vast experience of a lifelong relationship with music.

“We are extremely pleased with the breadth and depth of knowledge our new board members bring to the Santa Rosa Symphony Board of Directors. Their collective experiences range from public broadcasting and arts management to music therapy and music performance. As we seek to expand our reach within the community and educational opportunities, these individuals help round out our board as we approach our 100th anniversary.”

Keven Brown, SRS Incoming Chairman of the Board

SUSAN JETTE

Susan Jette is a board-certified music therapist and certified professional drum circle facilitator. She retired from a 38-year career at Napa State Hospital in 2021 where she provided group therapies for patients, supervision and training for staff, and was the Internship Director for Music Therapy. She works for drummm.com providing rhythm activities and drum circles.

As a professional drummer and percussionist, Jette has performed in a broad array of styles. She played midi marimbas with D'Cuckoo, traveled on tour to Bali with Gamelan Sekar Jaya, performed at Burning Man and recorded with Gamelan X, was a former principal percussionist with the Women's Philharmonic, and played in Napa's Shodan Taiko. She has played with several bands in the Bay Area and participated in several studio and film recording projects. She's the drummer for PMS, a San Francisco band formed in the eighties. She is a longstanding member of the Santa Rosa Symphony; the gig she is most proud of.

Jette is an active certified yoga teacher and teaches 5 classes per week. She has a sound healing certificate and enjoys performing live music to promote relaxation and stress relief. She's particularly interested in the "brain gym" aspect of rhythm and movement, as well as the intersection of yoga, mindfulness, and drumming. She believes strongly in the value of using music & rhythm to heal people and strengthen communities.

In her free time, she enjoys gardening, wine, travel, and her cat Smo.

MARK STEVENS

Mark Stevens was born in San Francisco as a fifth-generation Californian. He grew up in Mill Valley, where he developed a deep appreciation for the arts, he has participated in men's choirs and even did some semi-professional dancing.

In addition to his passion for music and the arts, Stevens has also been heavily involved in the community. In 1981 he moved with his wife, Dr. Connie Ayers, so she could attend a family practice residency. They have since raised their two daughters and have become deeply embedded in the local community. He is a proud Rotarian since 1992 and an Analy High School Interact advisor for over thirty years, and currently serves on the board of the Sebastopol Center for the Arts.

Stevens educational background includes holding a degree in molecular and cellular biology, and he earned a broker's designation and specialized commercial and residential designations in real estate. However, his passion lies in the arts.

Stevens is excited about the opportunity to bring his skills and expertise to this role and help the Santa Rosa Symphony thrive. He is committed to making a positive impact on the community through the power of music, and he believes that being on the board of the Symphony is a great platform to do so.

PAUL SWENSEN

Paul Swensen was born in Santa Rosa the middle child of five. Encouraged at an early age by his parents, he began attending the San Francisco Opera at the age of eight and this began his lifelong relationship with music. He played the French horn and was a member of the Sonoma County Junior Symphony until high school where his focus shifted to singing and drama.

He attended Cal State Northridge where he studied music before moving to New York City where he managed the Roundabout Theatre off-Broadway. After four years in New York, Paul returned to Northern California to begin his work in Public Television. He is the founder of Paul Swensen Production which provides turnkey production services for National PBS travel and food programs such as *Made in Spain* with Jose Andres and *Jacque Pepin's Heart and Soul*.

Swensen is the Executive Producer for Video Content at Northern California Public Media where he coordinated the Bay Area broadcast of the Santa Rosa Symphony performances during the pandemic and also serves as an Executive Producer in Feature Film Production at New Regency in Los Angeles. He lives with his wife Ianthe, a writer and educator, in Santa Rosa.

After decades of enjoying and participating in local music, Swensen is excited to serve the Santa Rosa Symphony as a part of its board.

Photos are available upon request.

ABOUT SANTA ROSA SYMPHONY

Santa Rosa Symphony, the Resident Orchestra of the Green Music Center, is the third-oldest professional orchestra in California, and the largest regional symphony north of Los Angeles. Francesco Lecce-Chong, the Symphony's fifth music director in its 96 years, began his tenure in 2018. The Symphony is committed to the core values of artistic excellence, innovative programming, comprehensive music education and community service.

The Symphony's performance schedule includes 21 Classical Series concerts (seven sets), Seven Discovery Rehearsal concerts, a three-concert Family Series and a four-concert Pops Series, as well as special concerts.

Awards include an American Symphony Orchestra League MetLife Award for Community Engagement and a first-place award for adventurous programming in the 2012-2013 season from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP).

The Symphony is recognized for having one of the most comprehensive music education programs in California, serving nearly 20,000 youth annually. Collaborations with schools and organizations across Sonoma County have gained the Santa Rosa Symphony national attention and support.