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September 17, 2025

**Santa Rosa Symphony Presents
Magical Melodies
as part of the Snoopy Family Concert Series
Francesco Lecce-Chong, Conductor
Sunday, October 26, 2025, Weill Hall, Green Music Center**

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) – The Santa Rosa Symphony (SRS) will open its 2025-2026 Snoopy Family Concert Series with *Magical Melodies*, led by Music Director Francesco Lecce-Chong, on Sunday, October 26, 2025, at 3:00 pm in Weill Hall, Green Music Center. Families can join the fun with budget-friendly single tickets (\$20/adult, \$10/youth) or get the best value with a 3-concert subscription (\$54/adult, \$24/youth). Tickets available at srsymphony.org.

Magical Melodies is a program where music, movement, and storytelling come together to spark wonder for audiences of all ages. Families are invited to dress up in their favorite costumes and experience an afternoon where timeless tales and symphonic soundscapes intertwine.

The program opens with members of the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra, led by conductor Jaco Wong, performing alongside Santa Rosa Symphony musicians in John Williams' *Harry's Wondrous World* from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Longtime Symphony violinist William "Bob" R. Williams steps into the role of narrator for Paul Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Dancers from North Coast Ballet California join Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong and the Symphony in a dance-along to Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. The program closes with John Williams' *Flight to Neverland* from *Hook*.

But *Magical Melodies* is more than a concert—it's an interactive family tradition. Kids of all ages can try out instruments at the free pre-concert Instrument Petting Zoo, watch Snoopy live on stage, and cap the afternoon with a post-concert meet & greet with Maestro Francesco, Snoopy, and the musicians.

"Snoopy and I are excited to bring you a program that celebrates the wonder and magic of orchestral music. Several classic works from the movies are featured in John Williams' music from *Harry Potter* and *Hook*, as well as *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, made iconic by Mickey Mouse in Disney's *Fantasia*. I am also thrilled that we will all experience and learn about the art of ballet through Tchaikovsky's beautiful music from *Swan Lake* with North Coast Ballet California."

- **Francesco Lecce-Chong**, Music Director and Conductor

Magical Melodies

Sunday, October 26, 2025, at 3:00 pm

Weill Hall, Green Music Center

Francesco Lecce-Chong, conductor

Jaco Wong, SRS Youth Orchestra conductor

William R. Williams, narrator

North Coast Ballet California

JOHN WILLIAMS: Harry's Wondrous World from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY: *Swan Lake: Ballet Suite*, Opus 20a

PAUL DUKAS: *L'Apprenti sorcier [The Sorcerer's Apprentice]* for Orchestra

JOHN WILLIAMS: Flight to Neverland from *Hook*

The 2025-2026 Snoopy Family Concert Series features two additional concerts:

Sunday, January 25, 2026: Detective Snoopy

Sunday, April 12, 2026: Celebrate America!

CONCERT EXTRAS:

Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra (SRSYO) Side-by-side

The Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra, led by their conductor Jaco Wong, will join the Symphony for the *first* piece on the program of each concert.

FREE Instrument Petting Zoo

These concerts are designed to be fun and educational for all ages. This affordable concert series includes a complimentary Instrument Petting Zoo one hour before each performance at 2:00 pm, which provides an opportunity for youngsters (and curious adults) to handle and play orchestral instruments.

Snoopy on Stage

Snoopy accompanies Maestro Francesco onstage at all three concerts!

Meet & Greet

Immediately following each performance, Maestro Lecce-Chong, Snoopy, and an orchestra member will be in Weill Hall, Green Music Center lobby for a **Meet & Greet**.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Francesco Lecce-Chong, Music Director and Conductor

American conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong has established himself as a respected leader in the orchestral world through his acclaimed performances, innovative projects, and passionate advocacy for the arts. He was appointed Music Director of two U.S. orchestras, the Eugene Symphony and the Santa Rosa Symphony, before turning 30. With those symphonies, he successfully launched several groundbreaking projects, commissioning over a dozen major orchestral works and building innovative community partnerships. Now, in his eighth season leading the Santa Rosa Symphony, he has grown the orchestra's reputation as one of the most exciting and important regional orchestras in the US with performances at the renowned concert hall, Weill Hall at the Green Music Center.

Lecce-Chong regularly appears with major orchestras around the country from the San Francisco Symphony to the New York Philharmonic, collaborating with top soloists such as Renée Fleming and Itzhak Perlman. His subscription debut with the San Francisco Symphony was described by *The San Francisco Chronicle* as "first rate" and pointed out the "vitality and brilliance of the music-making he drew from members of the San Francisco Symphony." Other recent subscription debuts include the Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Utah Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Detroit Symphony, and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. In 2023, Lecce-Chong made his European debut at the prestigious George Enescu Festival with the Romanian National Radio Orchestra, and in 2025, he will make his debut with the Janáček Philharmonic in the Czech Republic.

Through his leadership, Lecce-Chong has fostered an unparalleled dedication to the future of the orchestral art form through commissions, community initiatives, and arts education. One of his first large-scale endeavors was the "First Symphony Project," which consisted of major commissions from the next generation of renowned composers across four seasons, complete with multiple residencies in the communities. In less than a decade, he has introduced over a dozen major new orchestral works to the repertoire from composers such as Pulitzer Prize winner Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Grammy winner Michael Daugherty, Conrad Tao, Clarice Assad, and Gabriella Smith. During the pandemic, the Santa Rosa Symphony reached over two million households in the Bay Area through its "Santa Rosa Symphony

Presents” TV broadcasts through local PBS. The programming included over 20 works by living composers and a partnership with Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, culminating in a recording of her music conducted by Lecce-Chong released in 2022 on the Delos label, the first CD release in the orchestra’s history. To mark the conclusion of his eight-year tenure with the Eugene Symphony, the Delos label has released the Eugene Symphony’s first commercial recording in its history, featuring a newly commissioned piece by David Schiff commemorating the legendary Olympic runner, Steve Prefontaine.

Lecce-Chong is equally committed to the opera repertoire, having first conducted performances of Strauss’ *Ariadne auf Naxos* at age 24 in New York City. He continued to build his opera credentials as staff conductor with the Santa Fe Opera and leading performances with the Florentine Opera in Milwaukee. More recently, he led the Eugene Symphony through the most ambitious project in its history: a semi-staged presentation of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. In Santa Rosa, Lecce-Chong conducted and directed Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, complete with his own original dialogue, and partnered with a local arts high school to create a multidisciplinary experience of the opera.

Trained also as a pianist and composer, Lecce-Chong studied at the Curtis Institute of Music, Mannes College of Music, and Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Italy before winning positions as Associate Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony and Milwaukee Symphony. Lecce-Chong is the recipient of several distinctions, including the prestigious Solti Foundation Award. He has had the privilege of being mentored and supported by renowned conductors, including Bernard Haitink, David Zinman, Edo de Waart, Manfred Honeck, Donald Runnicles, and Michael Tilson Thomas.

Jaco Wong, Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra conductor

San Francisco-based conductor and composer, Jaco Wong embraces his American education while being deeply rooted in his Hong Kong upbringing. In addition to his diverse interest in repertoire ranging from symphonic, operatic, choral to contemporary music, jazz and pop, Wong pushes boundaries of the traditional concert music setting with multidisciplinary projects and innovative ways of exploring topics of science, philosophy, and culture.

Wong serves as Conductor of the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra and Assistant Conductor at San Francisco Symphony, where he has assisted Elim Chan, Dalia Stasevska, and Kazuki Yamada. Previously, Wong served as Assistant Conductor for the Oakland Symphony for more than 3 years, where he assisted Mei-Ann Chen, Leonard Slatkin, Joseph Young, among others, and conducted the orchestra for the Michael Morgan Memorial Concert and *A Family Concert: Peter and the Wolf*. Wong made his Canada debut conducting the Orchestre symphonique de Québec at Domaine Forget de Charlevoix under the guidance of Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Kensho Watanabe, and Japan debut conducting the Toyama Sinfonia. Wong has conducted San Jose Chamber Orchestra’s collaboration with San Jose Dance Company, Mercury Soul, a DJ/classical music event by Mason Bates, Teddy Abrams at Louisville Orchestra and Edwin Outwater at the Dr. Phillips Center Steinmetz Hall Opening Celebration, with notable artists including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Jennifer Hudson. Wong is also the Interim Artistic Director of Mill Valley Philharmonic.

Wong serves as associate conductor with Opera Parallèle premiering Kenji Oh’s *The Emissary*, chorus master for *Harvey Milk: Reimagined*, and beyond. Previous engagements include serving as assistant conductor for Festival Opera and Prague Summer Nights Music Festival. During Wong’s six-year tenure as the music director of Pacific Palisades Presbyterian Church, he directed Handel’s *Messiah*, Caroline Shaw’s *To the Hands*, and many other works. Other career highlights include conducting the Taipei Philharmonic, a recording session for Emmy Award-winning composer Jeremy Zuckerman, and participating in the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music as a conducting associate and the Monteux Music Festival in New York City.

Featured on San Francisco Classical Voice and performed by New World Symphony’s “By Ear: A Journey into Musical Perception,” Wong’s composition *Inkling* is a multimedia orchestra work with fixed electronics in collaboration with animation artist Evan Tedlock, University of Maryland Baltimore County, and neuroscientist Enrique Vargas, UCSF Sound & Music Perception Lab, premiered at Fort Mason Center for

Arts & Culture. Most recently, Wong's arrangement of David Bowie's *Heroes* was performed by San Francisco Symphony, Jessica Vosk, and Edwin Outwater. Commissioned for an interactive installation, *Psithaura* is a finalist of the American Prize in composition, which has been performed in more than four countries and seven cities, including under the baton of Donald Nally at the Northwestern University New-Music Conference. Wong has previously composed for San Jose Chamber Orchestra, LA Choral Lab's GPS-enabled Soundwalk, Iris Contemporary Dance Company, Bill T. Jones, Hocket piano duo, Lang Lang, and the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra. Wong's music is published by See-A-Dot Music Inc.

As an active educator, Wong serves as the Orchestra Director of the Harker School, leading its Orchestra to perform in Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, Green Music Center and Jazz Band to the Essentially Ellington Festival organized by Jazz at Lincoln Center. Wong also served on the conducting faculty for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Pre-College and was the Resident Conductor of the Great Wall Youth Chinese Orchestra. Wong is the former Choral Director and Musical Vocal Director of Palisades Charter High School and has prepared the Esperanza Azteca Youth Chorus to perform with Placido Domingo. Wong holds a Professional Studies Certificate in Orchestral Conducting from San Francisco Conservatory of Music and a double master's degree in music composition and Choral Conducting from University of Southern California. He also attended a Summer Study Abroad in Paris at Eastman School of Music and Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music.

William R. Williams, violin

Bob Williams attended the University of San Francisco as a Music Major taking classes at the SF Conservatory of Music. He studied Viola with David Schneider and composition with Kirke Mechem. In 1973 Williams moved to Fresno State University and studied viola with Werner Lywen and composition with David Bates, Wilson Coker, and Steven Gilbert. Conducting studies were with Dr. Jack Fortner, Dr. Arthur Huff, and Fresno Philharmonic Music Director Guy Taylor. He graduated with his B.A. in Performance and Composition in 1974.

Williams played his first concert in 1969 and became a tenured member of the Santa Rosa Symphony in 1974. Williams also plays regularly with numerous West Coast orchestras.

As well as performing with these groups, Williams has often performed with show orchestras for such notable performers as Johnny Mathis, Natalie Cole, Smokey Robinson, the Eagles, Jefferson Airplane, Nuns Canyon Road, Mannheim Steamroller and many others.

From 1979 to 2012, Williams served as the conductor of the Santa Rosa Symphony's Preparatory Orchestra, a training orchestra for young musicians (now known as the Debut Orchestra). In 1995, he founded the Discovery Orchestra (now known as Aspirante), an intermediate training orchestra in which he served as Music Director/Conductor until 2012. Williams also conducted the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra as Interim Director.

In the summer of 2015, Williams had the opportunity to join the International Lyric Academy as a faculty member in the orchestral study program. Along with some conducting, he plays violin and/or viola in the academy orchestra. Usually headquartered in Vicenza, the ILA has performed in Rome, Naples, Venice, Florence, Verona, Viterbo, Soriano, Assisi, and many other locations. Along with Italy, Williams has performed in Paris, Nice, Vienna, and Berlin.

North Coast Ballet California (Dancers train at Petaluma School of Ballet)

North Coast Ballet California (formerly Petaluma City Ballet) was incorporated in 1981 by Mary Paula, owner of the Petaluma School of Ballet, to provide performance opportunities for Petaluma's young dancers who trained at the Petaluma School of Ballet. Ann Derby became Artistic Director in 1985 and Zoura O'Neill Co-Artistic Director in 1987. NCBC has produced quality dance productions for 44 years as well as 39 years of an annual full-length *Nutcracker* in collaboration with Petaluma School of Ballet.

North Coast Ballet California is a non-profit organization that provides dancers and choreographers with an opportunity to express their talents and cultivate ballet excellence within the Sonoma County community.

North Coast Ballet California has been a member of The Ballet Alliance, a national organization of ballet companies, for 39 years and has performed in 38 of the annual The Ballet Alliance (TBA) Festivals throughout the United States and Canada.

Many NCBC dancers have received scholarships through TBA to Ballet West, The School of American Ballet, The Rock School, San Francisco, Houston, Colorado, Boston, Milwaukee, and Pacific Northwest ballet schools, and CPYB. Several alumni have gone on to dance professionally with notable companies, including the Mark Morris Dance Group, Ballet Met, Peninsula Dance Theatre, and San Diego City Ballet, as well as Nevada Ballet Theatre, Central West Ballet, and the national touring company of *Dear Evan Hansen*.

The company's repertoire includes the ballets *Coppelia*, *Peter & The Wolf*, *Snow White*, *Graduation Ball*, *Tales of Beatrix Potter*, *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *Hansel and Gretel*, a narrated *Alice in Wonderland* and *Ballet de Seuss*. Prior to COVID-19, the *Once Upon a Ballet Series* reached 2,000 school children annually. In 2025, NCBC's *Once Upon a Ballet Series* was able to return to our county's schools with a new ballet – *Ballet de Seuss* and the *Nutcracker*.

High-res photos and interview opportunities available: Francesco Lecce-Chong, Jaco Wong, and North Coast Ballet California.

SPONSORS:

Snoopy Family Concert Series is underwritten by Victor & Karen Trione, and Irene Sohm. Francesco Lecce-Chong is sponsored by an Anonymous Donor.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates, Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center, and Snoopy's Home Ice.

AT A GLANCE / CALENDAR LISTING:

WHAT: [Magical Melodies](#)

WHO: [Santa Rosa Symphony](#)

Francesco Lecce-Chong, conductor

Jaco Wong, SRS Youth Orchestra conductor

William R. Williams, narrator

North Coast Ballet California

PAUL DUKAS: *L'Apprenti sorcier [The Sorcerer's Apprentice]* for Orchestra

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JOHN WILLIAMS: *Flight to Neverland* from *Hook*

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WHEN: October 26, 2025, at 3:00 pm

Complimentary **Instrument Petting Zoo** one hour prior to the concert at 2:00 pm.

Meet & Greet with Francesco Lecce-Chong and a symphony musician immediately following the concert.

WHERE: Weill Hall, Green Music Center, Sonoma State University

SINGLE TICKET PRICES:

\$20/adult, \$10/youth (12 and under)

3-CONCERT SUBSCRIPTION PRICES:

\$54/adult, \$24/youth (12 and under)

TICKETS: srsymphony.org or (707) 546-8742 (Weekdays 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, 10:30 am – 5:00 pm on Wednesday, closed Saturday & Sunday.)

ABOUT SANTA ROSA SYMPHONY

Santa Rosa Symphony (SRS), the Resident Orchestra at Green Music Center, is the third-oldest professional orchestra in California and the largest regional symphony north of Los Angeles. Francesco Lecce-Chong began his tenure in 2018 as the Symphony's fifth music director in its 98 years. J. Andrew Bradford joined SRS as President and CEO in 2023.

SRS performances include 21 Classical Series concerts presented over seven concert weekends, six Discovery Rehearsals, a three-concert Family Series, a four-concert Symphony Pops Series, and special events.

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

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). In 2022, SRS, in conjunction with Delos Productions, released its first commercial label recording, *Cello Concerto & Other Works*, featuring works by composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

The Santa Rosa Symphony is committed to the core values of artistic excellence, innovative programming, comprehensive music education, and community service.

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