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Joseph Edelberg to Step Down as Concertmaster After Nearly 30 Years with Santa Rosa Symphony

Leaves a legacy of artistry, leadership, and mentorship

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) – The Santa Rosa Symphony announces that Concertmaster Joseph Edelberg will step down from his role at the close of the 2025-2026 season, concluding nearly 30 years of distinguished service. Edelberg, who has served as Concertmaster since 1997, has been a musical cornerstone and steadfast anchor of the orchestra for nearly three decades—a stoic, grounded force beloved by musicians and patrons alike. He will be deeply missed in this role.

“Joe truly embodies the spirit of this orchestra with his kindness, passion, and collaborative spirit. He has brought immense joy to the orchestra, the community, and me over the years, and it's a privilege to be both his colleague and friend. I look forward to an amazing season together, celebrating his exceptional artistry and leadership.”

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

A Legacy of Musicianship and Leadership

Edelberg's artistry has shaped the orchestra's sound and spirit since his appointment in 1997. He has performed as soloist in works ranging from Mozart and Barber to Szymanowski, Zwilich, and John Williams. Memorable collaborations include performances with pianists Lang Lang, Alexander Toradze, and Orion Weiss, as well as numerous guest artists across three music director eras.

Reflecting on his career, Edelberg shared:

“It's been a huge gift to me to be concertmaster of this orchestra. Having a leadership position in SRS has given me the opportunity to develop my musical values beyond my own playing, working with a whole violin section. I feel like I've learned a lot. It has been a culmination for me of the work I've done, blending together what I've learned from wildly different musical forms of expression.”

Edelberg's tenure included pivotal moments in the Symphony's history, such as the 2012 opening of Weill Hall at the Green Music Center, which he calls “a work of art ... itself like a musical instrument, beautiful, clear, and resonant.”

Colleagues Remember His Impact

“Joe would not let me go until the message was clearly passed to everyone in the orchestra,” recalled **Bruno Ferrandis, Conductor Laureate**. “That insistent way gave a considerable force and structure to our music making, and I owe that to Joe Edelberg.”

“It is impossible to overestimate the enormous contribution that Joe Edelberg has made to the Santa Rosa Symphony and to the musical life of Santa Rosa,” said **Jeffrey Kahane, Conductor Emeritus**. “His steadfast and calm leadership, his exemplary musicianship and beautiful playing, and his

kindness and generosity as a human being have been a constant source of warmth and goodness at the heart of the orchestra.”

Personal Milestones and Musical Adventures

Beyond the concert stage, Edelberg’s personal journey has been deeply intertwined with the Symphony. In 2024, he married Stacey Pelinka, the orchestra’s second flutist and piccolo player, whom he met through SRS. His musical explorations have ranged from African and Latin music to jazz, period-instrument performance, and free improvisation—perspectives he brought into orchestral performance.

Among the many highlights of his career, Edelberg recalls with fondness:

- Szymanowski’s Violin Concerto No. 1 (2004)
- Bach’s E Major Violin Concerto No.2 (2008)
- Ellen Taaffe Zwilich’s Romance during the Symphony’s innovative pandemic season in 2021
- John Williams’ Schindler’s List (2024), which held profound personal meaning for Edelberg

He is especially proud of the Symphony’s 2022 Zwilich recording on Delos Records, produced under challenging pandemic circumstances.

Looking Ahead

As he prepares for life after stepping down as concertmaster, Edelberg plans to continue performing while enjoying more time for family, travel, teaching, and personal projects.

“I don’t take my tools away with me when I step down; they will always be in the orchestra’s hands,” he said. “What makes me happiest about how our orchestra plays is the deep personal commitment that we all have to bringing the music to vibrant life. I am very enthusiastic about the orchestra’s future.”

Joseph Edelberg – Career Timeline

Early Career & Ensemble Work

- Performed widely with Bay Area ensembles, including the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, New Century Chamber Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, and the new music ensemble Earplay.

Concertmaster Roles (Pre-SRS)

- Served as concertmaster for multiple symphony and chamber orchestras:
 - Berkeley Symphony
 - Bay Chamber Symphony Orchestra
 - Classical Philharmonic
 - Rohnert Park Chamber Orchestra
 - Magnificat Baroque Orchestra
 - San Francisco Concert Opera
 - San Francisco Chamber Orchestra

Solo Performances & Premieres

- Appeared as a concerto soloist with the Berkeley Symphony and Oakland Symphony.
- Built a reputation for championing new works, with numerous premieres by both established and emerging composers.

Recordings (Pre-SRS)

- Two recordings with the Berkeley Symphony (New Albion label).
- A recording with Earplay (*new American chamber works*, Centaur label).
- Recordings on the Harmonia Mundi label with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists.

Festival Appearances

- Featured at major festivals including:

- Grand Teton Music Festival
- San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival
- Newport Music Festival
- San Francisco's Chamber Music West

Appointment to Concertmaster of the Santa Rosa Symphony

- Appointed Concertmaster of the Santa Rosa Symphony in 1997, a role he would hold for nearly three decades.

Performance Highlights with the Santa Rosa Symphony

- **1999** – Mozart: *Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat major, K. 364* with Linda Ghidossi-DeLuca (cond. Jeffrey Kahane)
- **2000** – Barber: *Violin Concerto, Op. 14* (cond. Kahane)
- **2001** – Haydn: *Sinfonia Concertante in B-flat major* with Wanda Warkentin, Barbara Midney, and Karla Ekholm (cond. Kahane)
- **2002** – Bach: *Concerto in D minor for Two Violins, BWV 1043* with Karen Shinozaki (cond. Kahane)
- **2004** – Szymanowski: *Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35* (cond. Kahane)
- **2008** – Bach: *Concerto No. 2 in E major, BWV 1042* (cond. Bruno Ferrandis)
- **2017** – Mozart: *Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat major, K. 364* with Elizabeth Prior (cond. Ferrandis)
- **2021** – Zwilich: *Romance for Violin and Chamber Orchestra* (cond. Francesco Lecce-Chong)
- **2024** – Williams: *Three Pieces from Schindler's List* (cond. Lecce-Chong)

High-res photos and interview opportunities available upon request.

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 youth annually. Collaborations with schools and organizations across Sonoma County have gained the Santa Rosa Symphony national attention and support.

Awards include a League of American Orchestras' 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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