



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact
Brenda Fox | Director of Marketing and Patron Services
(707) 546-7097 x 218 | bfox@srsymphony.org
srsymphony.org

August 19, 2025

Santa Rosa Symphony's 98th Season Opens with Beethoven & Bernstein

Featuring Julian Rhee, David Finckel, and Wu Han
October 11, 12 & 13, 2025, Weill Hall, Green Music Center

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) – Santa Rosa Symphony opens its 98th season with Beethoven & Bernstein, conducted by Music Director Francesco Lecce-Chong and featuring Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* and Leonard Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*. The concerts spotlight internationally acclaimed violinist Julian Rhee, cellist David Finckel, and pianist Wu Han. Performances are October 11, 12, and 13, 2025, at Weill Hall, Green Music Center.

Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* in C major is a singular masterpiece that spotlights the violin, cello, and piano as equal partners in a vibrant orchestral dialogue. Unique in the standard repertoire for its trio of soloists, this rarely performed work challenges the musicians to blend soaring lyricism with sparkling virtuosity. With Rhee's refined tone, Finckel's profound musical insight, and Han's commanding presence, this collaboration under Lecce-Chong's direction promises to be an unforgettable performance.

Adding a touch of Italian operatic drama is the *Intermezzo* from Umberto Giordano's *Fedora*. This evocative orchestral piece, steeped in the verismo tradition, captures a moment of tender reflection within the opera's passionate narrative. Giordano's *Intermezzo* sets a poignant tone with lush melodies and rich textures.

Highlighting the Symphony's commitment to innovative programming, Julia Perry's *A Short Piece for Large Orchestra* brings a fresh and compelling voice to the concert. Perry, a pioneering African American composer, combines bold harmonies with rhythmic vitality to create a work that challenges and energizes the orchestra. Her modernist textures and vivid orchestral colors offer audiences a powerful listening experience that bridges tradition and experimentation.

The program culminates with Leonard Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*, an orchestral suite drawn from the iconic Broadway musical. Bernstein's score masterfully blends jazz, Latin rhythms, and classical elements to portray the intense emotions and conflicts of urban life and youthful passion. This dynamic suite encompasses everything from tender romance to fierce rivalry, culminating in a thrilling finale that celebrates the fusion of classical music with American cultural storytelling.

"It is a true privilege to welcome two of the most renowned chamber musicians of our time, David Finckel and Wu Han, to perform with the Santa Rosa Symphony. They have been instrumental in shaping the chamber music scene across the U.S., from Lincoln Center to Music@Menlo. The duo's exceptional artistry will be on full display in Beethoven's *Triple Concerto*, performed with rising star, Julian Rhee."

-Francesco Lecce-Chong, Music Director and Conductor

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 one of the most renowned concert halls in the world, 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. 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.

Julian Rhee, Violin

Winner of the prestigious 2024 Avery Fisher Career Grant, Korean American violinist Julian Rhee has enthralled listeners internationally, praised for his refinement and beauty of sound, and "the kind of poise and showmanship that thrills audiences." (*The Strad*) His passion for all forms of collaboration has taken him around the world, producing a thoroughly sensitive and informed artist.

Rhee came to international prominence following his prize-winning performances at the 2024 Queen Elisabeth International Violin Competition and Silver Medal finish at the 11th Quadrennial International

Violin Competition of Indianapolis. Also the first prize winner of the 2020 Elmar Oliveira International Competition and Astral Artists' National Auditions, Rhee is the recipient of numerous awards such as the Aspen Festival's Dorothy DeLay Fellowship, Arkady Fomin Scholarship Fund, Theodore Presser Scholar Award, and the Manfred Grommek Prize from the Kronberg Academy. He is a Young Strings of America Ambassador sponsored by SHAR Music.

Since his Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra debut at age 8, Rhee has gone on to perform with orchestras all across the world, such as the Belgian National Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony, Antwerp Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Aspen Philharmonic, Württemberg Chamber Orchestra of Heilbronn, East Coast Chamber, Eugene Symphony, and San Diego Symphony, and with acclaimed conductors such as Francesco Lecce-Chong, Nicolas McGegan, Rune Bergmann, Valentina Peleggi, Hugh Wolff, Antony Hermus, and Leonard Slatkin, among others. He has performed in an array of venues including Staatsoper Hamburg, Kronberg Academy's Casals Forum, Alice Tully Hall, Ravinia's Bennett Gordon Hall, Center for Fine Arts in Brussels, Heinz Hall, the Overture Center for the Arts, Teatro El Círculo in Rosario, Argentina, The Musikverein in Vienna, Bartók Hall in Hungary, New World Center, and the John F. Kennedy Center as a US Presidential Scholar, receiving his medal at the White House. Recent and upcoming engagements include appearances with the Calgary Philharmonic, Oregon Symphony, Madison Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Orchestra Royal de Chamber de Wallonie, European Orchestra Academy, Stuttgarter Kammerorchester, as well as a production of Lera Auerbach's complete *24 Preludes for Violin and Piano* with the Hamburg Ballet and John Neumeier.

Equally invested in chamber music and collaboration, Rhee is the newest member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center CMS's Bowers Program. Rhee has also performed at and attended festivals including the Ravinia Steans Institute, Marlboro Festival, Rockport Music, and North Shore Chamber Music Festivals, performing alongside esteemed musicians such as Vadim Gluzman, Jonathan Biss, Mitsuko Uchida, Kim Kashkashian, and Peter Wiley. He has appeared alongside Time For Three on NPR's "From the Top," Jupiter Chamber Players, Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts, and WQXR's Young Artists Showcase.

Rhee studied with Hye-Sun Lee and Almita Vamos and received his bachelor's and master's degrees as teaching assistant of Miriam Fried at the New England Conservatory. He currently studies with Christian Tetzlaff at the Kronberg Academy.

Rhee is the recipient of the outstanding 1699 "Lady Tennant" Antonio Stradivari violin and Jean Pierre Marie Persoit bow on extended loan through the generosity of the Mary B. Galvin Foundation and the efforts of the Stradivari Society, a division of Bein & Fushi, Inc. The Mary B. Galvin Foundation, Inc. and the Stradivari Society support the very highest level of string playing by loaning precious antique Italian instruments to artists of exceptional talent and ability.

David Finckel (cello) and Wu Han (piano)

Cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han, honored as *Musical America's* Musicians of the Year, stand among today's most distinguished figures in classical music. Their multifaceted musical lives encompass world-class performances, acclaimed recordings, and visionary artistic direction. From the stages of New York to premier concert halls across the United States, Europe, and Asia, they have captivated audiences globally. Their repertoire spans the cello and piano canon, includes new commissions, and covers the chamber music literature for their instruments. As artistic directors for prominent organizations, they curate over 300 concerts annually.

In 1997, Finckel and Wu Han founded ArtistLed, the first internet-based, artist-controlled classical label. With over 20 releases, ArtistLed showcases both standard and newly commissioned works by George Tsontakis, Gabriela Lena Frank, Bruce Adolphe, Lera Auerbach, Edwin Finckel, Augusta Read Thomas, and Pierre Jalbert.

Since 2004, they have served as Artistic Directors of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS), the world's largest chamber music producer. As its longest-serving artistic leaders, they have expanded its national and international reach through performances, education programs, and media initiatives,

engaging a wider audience than any other chamber music organization. They are also the Founding Artistic Directors of Music@Menlo, Silicon Valley's innovative chamber music festival established in 2002. Under their leadership, the festival's exclusive label, Music@Menlo LIVE, has released more than 130 live recordings. In addition, Wu Han currently serves as Artistic Advisor for the Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach, FL and as Artistic Director of La Musica in Sarasota, FL.

Passionately dedicated to education, the duo transformed CMS's Two Program into today's Bowers Program, which supports emerging artists for three seasons. At Music@Menlo's Chamber Music Institute, they mentor 40 young musicians each summer. They have also taught at the late Isaac Stern Chamber Music Encounters and offer extensive free resources at davidfinckelandwuhan.com/resource.

A recipient of the prestigious Andrew Wolf Award, Wu Han was mentored by some of the greatest pianists of our time including Lilian Kallir, Menahem Pressler, and Rudolph Serkin. Finckel, raised in New Jersey, was the first American student of Rostropovich. As Emerson String Quartet's cellist for 34 seasons, he won nine Grammy Awards and the Avery Fisher Prize. He teaches at the Juilliard School and Stony Brook University.

Married in 1985, they divide their time between concert touring and residences in New York City and Westchester County.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE:

UMBERTO GIORDANO: Intermezzo from *Fedora*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: Concerto in C major for Violin, Cello, Piano and Orchestra, Opus 56, *Triple Concerto*

JULIA PERRY: *A Short Piece for Large Orchestra*

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

High-res photos and interview opportunities available: Francesco Lecce-Chong, David Finckel, Wu Han, and Julian Rhee.

CONCERT ENHANCEMENTS:

Concert Program books: Available at all Classical Series concerts.

Concert Program notes: These can be read on the [Digital Program Books & Notes](#) page.

Pre-concert talk: Conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong, David Finckel, Wu Han, and Julian Rhee provide a 30-minute pre-concert talk one hour prior to the performances.

SPONSORS:

Classical Concert Series underwritten by **Anderman Family Foundation**

Sponsored by **Marcia Wagner, in memory of Hap Wagner**

Conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong sponsored by **David & Corinne Byrd**

Julian Rhee sponsored by **Sig Anderman, in memory of Susan Anderman**

Wu Han & David Finckel sponsored by **Nancy and Rob Novak**

Discovery Rehearsal Series sponsored by **The Stare Foundation and David Stare of Dry Creek Vineyard**

Pre-concert talk sponsored by **Jamei Haswell & Mack Schwing**

Season Media Sponsor: ***The Press Democrat***

AT A GLANCE / CALENDAR LISTINGS:

WHO: [Santa Rosa Symphony](#), [Francesco Lecce-Chong, conductor](#)

WHAT: [Beethoven & Bernstein](#)

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

WHEN:

Saturday, October 11, 2025, at 2:00 pm – Discovery Open Rehearsal (no Pre-concert talk)

Saturday, October 11, 2025, at 7:30 pm (Doors at 6:00 pm, Pre-concert Talk 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm)

Sunday, October 12, 2025, at 3:00 pm (Doors at 1:30 pm, Pre-concert Talk 2:00 pm - 2:30 pm)

Monday, October 13, 2025, at 7:30 pm (Doors at 6:00 pm, Pre-concert Talk 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm)

TICKET PRICES:

\$20 / adult; \$10 / youth (7-17) for Discovery Open Rehearsal

\$34-\$110 for Classical Series performances

Youths 7-17 may receive one complimentary ticket with every paid adult. Request tickets through Patron Services at (707) 546-8742. Classical Series concerts only

\$10 student rush tickets for students with a valid student ID. Available at the door only

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS:

[srsymphony.org](https://www.srsymphony.org) or (707) 546-8742 or in person: 50 Santa Rosa Ave, 1st Floor, Santa Rosa CA. (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.

###