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Media Contact

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

January 20, 2026

Santa Rosa Symphony Presents Mahler's Third

February 21, 22 & 23, 2026, Weill Hall, Green Music Center

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) — The Santa Rosa Symphony presents Mahler's Third February 21, 22 & 23, 2026, at Weill Hall, Green Music Center. Led by Conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong, this monumental program brings together an orchestra of more than 100 musicians and singers for Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 3 in D minor. It includes the Santa Rosa Symphony Chorus conducted by Jenny Bent and singers from Santa Rosa High School, Maria Carrillo High School, and Montgomery High School. Also featured is mezzo-soprano Gabrielle Beteag in one of the most expansive and ambitious works in the orchestral repertoire. Tickets are available at srsymphony.org starting at \$34.

Mahler's Third Symphony explores nature, humanity, and the divine. As the composer's longest work, it spans six movements divided into two parts: a massive "awakening" of nature followed by a progression through the stages of life. Despite its vast scale—requiring a vocal soloist, two choruses, and an expanded orchestra—the symphony remains a marvel of structural balance, culminating in a movement of transcendent beauty.

Mezzo-soprano Gabrielle Beteag returns to the Symphony stage for the fourth movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 3. This movement, a setting of Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, navigates the depths of human experience and spiritual longing. After her standout performance of Mahler's Second last season, Beteag reunites with the Symphony to interpret this hauntingly beautiful text.

"Our multi-year cycle of the complete Mahler symphonies has been the journey of a lifetime for my colleagues and me, and the third symphony is often considered one of the grandest achievements in symphonic form. If Mahler's First is a study in one person's humanity and Mahler's Second is a celebration of our collective humanity, Mahler's Third is a meditation on the universe—from the nature around us to the angels above us."

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

Please note: There is no Discovery Rehearsal for this concert to let the singers rest their voices.

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.

Gabrielle Beteag, mezzo-soprano

American mezzo Gabrielle Beteag (*BEE-tag*) brings a fresh joy and commanding warmth to stages across the United States and beyond. Praised for her “precise, soaring voice” by San Francisco Classical Voice, Beteag’s recent performance in the San Francisco Adler Fellow Showcase was “a peak performance at the opera...a moment of transfiguration.”

Endlessly inspired by the challenges inherent in developing new works, Beteag counts her role creation of Iras in John Adams’ *Antony and Cleopatra* during San Francisco Opera’s Centennial Season as a career highlight. Other recent performances at SFO include Mother in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Teacher in *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, Stimme von oben in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and an Image of Frida Kahlo in *El último sueño de Frida y Diego*. Beteag was also recently seen as Mère Marie in *Dialogues des Carmélites* with Wolf Trap Opera, Gertrude Stein in Tom Cipullo’s *After Life with Music of Remembrance*, and Anna I in Kurt Weill’s *Seven Deadly Sins* with the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra.

A lover of concert work, Beteag has collaborated with ensembles including the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra,

the National Symphony Orchestra, the Santa Rosa Symphony, the San Francisco Ballet, and the National Orchestral Institute + Festival, where she sang Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* under Marin Alsop's baton.

An accomplished competitive singer, Beteag was named a Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (now the Laffont Competition) in 2020. Other industry accolades include prizes from the Gerda Lissner Foundation (Grant Winner, 2025), the Paris Opera Competition (Finalist, 2025), the Giulio Gari Foundation (Third Place, 2024), Operalia (Semifinalist, 2023), the Cooper-Bing Competition at Opera Columbus (First Place, 2023), and the Shreveport Opera Mary Jacobs Singer of the Year Competition (Second Place, 2020).

In 2026, Beteag will return to the Santa Rosa Symphony, and will make her debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

While offstage, Beteag enjoys spending time with her husband, Tim, and receiving the best vocal coaching around from their hound dogs, Hambone and Persephone.

Jenny Bent, director of the Santa Rosa Symphony Chorus

Dr. Jenny Bent is Professor of Music and Director of Choral and Vocal Activities at Sonoma State University. With degrees from Boston University and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Dr. Bent's expertise spans voice performance, choral conducting, and choral literature. Described by the *San Francisco Classical Voice* as "superb" with "excellent diction and well-controlled dynamics," Dr. Bent's choirs have earned unanimous superior ratings and command performances at festivals throughout California and have performed under her baton at such venues as Carnegie Hall in New York City and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Her ensemble SonoVoce was recently honored to perform at the California All-State Music Educators Conference (CASMEC).

Recognized for her achievements as a choral educator, Dr. Bent received the 2019 CMEA Bay Section Outstanding Choral Educator Award and the 2023 California Music Educators Association Pearson/Scott Foresman/Silver Burdett Choral Educator Award. She brings over a decade of high school teaching experience, notably at the Marin School of the Arts.

Beyond her academic work, Dr. Bent contributes to the choral music community as a guest conductor, adjudicator, and conference presenter for organizations including CMEA, ACDA, and Golden State. From 2016-2023, she served on the board of the California Choral Directors Association (CCDA), and she currently holds the positions of Repertoire & Resources Collegiate Choirs Coordinator for National ACDA and Western Region Representative for the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO). From 2007-2014, Dr. Bent shared her passion for choral music as a host of "The Choir Loft" on KRCB-FM. She is also a proud (and semi-obnoxious) baseball mom whose favorite moments are watching her two sons do what they love.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE:

GUSTAV MAHLER: Symphony No. 3 in D minor

High-res photos and interview opportunities available: Francesco Lecce-Chong

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 provides a 30-minute pre-concert talk one hour prior to the performances.

SPONSORS:

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AT A GLANCE / CALENDAR LISTINGS:

WHO: [Santa Rosa Symphony](#)

WHAT: [Mahler's Third](#)

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

WHEN:

Please note: There is no Discovery Rehearsal for this concert to let the singers rest their voices.

Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 7:30 pm (Doors at 6:00 pm, Pre-concert Talk 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm)

Sunday, February 22, 2026, at 3:00 pm (Doors at 1:30 pm, Pre-concert Talk 2:00 pm - 2:30 pm)

Monday, February 23, 2026, at 7:30 pm (Doors at 6:00 pm, Pre-concert Talk 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm)

TICKET PRICES:

\$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 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 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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