FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 15, 2026

Santa Rosa Symphony Presents *Boo! Let's Dance* as part of the Snoopy Family Concert Series

Sunday, October 25, 2026, Weill Hall, Green Music Center

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) — Music, movement, and a little magical fun take center stage as the Santa Rosa Symphony (SRS) launches its 2026–2027 Snoopy Family Concert Series with *Boo! Let's Dance* on Sunday, October 25, 2026, at 3:00 pm in Weill Hall, Green Music Center. Led by Artistic & Music Director Francesco Lecce-Chong, the lively program invites families to explore musical traditions from around the world through dance, imagination, and interactive fun. It features Maurice Ravel's enchanting *Mother Goose*, performed with dancers from North Coast Ballet California. The experience also includes a free Instrument Petting Zoo before the concert, Snoopy onstage throughout the performance, and a post-concert Meet & Greet with Maestro Lecce-Chong and Snoopy.

The program travels across cultures through a lively mix of orchestral music and dance, from the spirited rhythms of Brahms's *Hungarian Dance No. 5* to the vibrant Latin American sounds of Arturo Márquez's *Danzón No. 2*. *Boo! Let's Dance* also features Maurice Ravel's enchanting *Mother Goose*, performed with dancers from North Coast Ballet California, alongside Florence Price's energetic *Nimble Feet*, Johann Strauss Jr.'s beloved *Blue Danube*, and Alberto Ginastera's exuberant *Dances from Estancia*. Members of the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra, led by Conductor Jaco Wong, also join the Symphony for the first piece on the program, Johannes Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G minor for Orchestra.

Designed with young listeners in mind, the concert offers an engaging introduction to the orchestra and the many ways composers use music to inspire movement and tell stories. From familiar melodies to spirited dances, each work brings a different sound and tradition to the stage.

"I look forward to welcoming back North Coast Ballet Company for a fun and interactive program propelled by dance rhythms from around the world. My sidekick Snoopy and I look forward to taking that journey with the audience and making new friends along the way."

- **Francesco Lecce-Chong**, Artistic & Music Director

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, Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G minor.

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 the 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!

Meet & Greet
Patrons and audience members are invited to join Maestro and Snoopy immediately following the performance for a **Meet & Greet**.

The 2026-2027 Snoopy Family Concert Series features two additional concerts:
Sunday, January 24, 2027: *Back to Beethoven*
Sunday, April 25, 2027: *Music in the Wild*

BIOGRAPHIES:
Francesco Lecce-Chong, Artistic & Music Director
American conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong is recognized for his imaginative programming, dynamic performances, and visionary artistic leadership. Appointed Music Director of the Santa Rosa Symphony (SRS) before the age of 30, he has transformed the organization through bold artistic initiatives, innovative community partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to expanding access to orchestral music. In 2026, SRS reaffirmed that shared vision by signing Lecce-Chong to a landmark evergreen agreement and naming him Artistic & Music Director, reflecting his leadership across the organization's artistic, educational, and community engagement programs.

Since joining SRS in 2018, Lecce-Chong has led more than 100 performances across the Classical Series, Symphony Pops, and Snoopy Family Concert Series, while guiding the orchestra through one of its most ambitious artistic periods. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he conceived and led the groundbreaking SRS@Home digital concert series, allowing the orchestra to continue performing throughout the entire 2020–2021 season while many regional orchestras remained inactive. The series reached audiences around the world, generated record philanthropic support, and led to SRS's first televised concert series in partnership with NorCal Public Media, bringing live orchestral performances into more than 2.8 million households. Those performances also formed the foundation of the Symphony's first commercial recording, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's *Cello Concerto* with GRAMMY Award-winning cellist Zuill Bailey.

Lecce-Chong has expanded SRS's artistic impact through long-term creative projects that deepen audience engagement and champion contemporary music. He launched the multi-year First Symphony Project, commissioning four American composers to write their first symphonies, and has introduced large-scale programming cycles including *Road to 100*, a complete Beethoven symphony cycle leading into the orchestra's centennial season, as well as an ambitious presentation of all nine Mahler symphonies. His interdisciplinary productions, including *The Magic Flute*, have brought together musicians, students, dancers, visual artists, and community partners in uniquely collaborative performances. Under his leadership, SRS has also expanded its commitment to new music through commissions by leading composers while launching new performance series in wineries, Napa Valley, and Sonoma County libraries. His close collaboration with the Institute for Music Education has strengthened connections between professional musicians and young artists through coaching, mentorship, and side-by-side performances.

Beyond Santa Rosa, Lecce-Chong enjoys an active guest conducting career with many of North America's leading orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Utah Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Internationally, he has appeared with the Romanian National Radio Orchestra, the Janáček Philharmonic, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra, collaborating with distinguished artists including Renée Fleming and Itzhak Perlman.

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, conductor, Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra
Jaco Wong is a Hong Kong-born, San Francisco-based conductor, composer, artistic leader, and educator whose work bridges the orchestral tradition with the evolving landscape of today's musical culture. Equally at home with symphonic repertoire, opera, contemporary music, and interdisciplinary collaboration, he has built a career defined by thoughtful programming, creative partnerships, and a commitment to broadening how audiences experience classical music. Whether working with major orchestras, developing new work, or mentoring young musicians, Wong approaches music-making as both an artistic pursuit and a means of building lasting cultural connections.

Wong serves in artistic leadership roles across the Bay Area as Music Director of the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra, Artistic Director of the Mill Valley Philharmonic, Orchestra Director at The Harker School, and Conducting Faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Pre-College. He is also a frequent assistant conductor with the San Francisco Symphony, where he has assisted with conductors including Elim Chan, James Gaffigan, Dalia Stasevska, Harry Bicket, and Kazuki Yamada. He recently served as assistant conductor for the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and previously with the Oakland Symphony for three seasons, where he assisted Mei-Ann Chen, Leonard Slatkin, among others, and made his conducting debut with the orchestra. His guest appearances have also included the San José Chamber Orchestra, Diablo Symphony Orchestra, and orchestras throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.

Opera and vocal music have remained central to Wong's artistic life. As Associate Conductor of Opera Parallèle, he has contributed to productions including The Emissary, The Pigeon Keeper, Birds & Balls, and Harvey Milk: Reimagined, reflecting his commitment to championing contemporary opera alongside established repertoire. Earlier engagements include Festival Opera's Carmen and Mozart's Don Giovanni at Prague Summer Nights in the historic Estates Theatre. Before focusing primarily on orchestral conducting, Wong spent seven years as Music Director of Pacific Palisades Presbyterian Church, conducting repertoire spanning Bach and Handel to the music of today's leading composers.

As a composer, Wong explores the intersection of music, technology, and human perception. His multimedia orchestral work Inkling, for orchestra and fixed electronics, was created in collaboration with animation artist Evan Tedlock and neuroscientist Enrique Vargas of the UCSF Sound & Music Perception Lab and performed by New World Symphony. His vocal work Psithaura, a finalist for The American Prize in Composition, has received performances internationally and exemplifies his interest in immersive and interdisciplinary artistic experiences. More recently, his arrangement of David Bowie's Heroes was performed by the San Francisco Symphony with Jessica Vosk and Edwin Outwater. His music is published by See-A-Dot Music.

Education forms an essential part of Wong's artistic work. At The Harker School, he directs one of the nation's leading secondary orchestra programs, with ensembles performing at Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, Green Music Center, Royce Hall, and the Essentially Ellington Festival at Jazz at Lincoln Center. He leads the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra on tours to Germany, Korea, and beyond. He also mentors young conductors at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Pre-College and previously served as resident conductor of the Great Wall Youth Chinese Orchestra. Across each of these roles, Wong is committed to cultivating technically accomplished musicians who are equally imaginative, collaborative, and engaged citizens.

Wong holds a Professional Studies Certificate in Orchestral Conducting from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Edwin Outwater and a Master of Music in Music Composition and Choral Conducting from the University of Southern California. His artistic development has been further shaped by studies at the Eastman School of Music's Paris program in collaboration with IRCAM and conducting fellowships including Domaine Forget de Charlevoix, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Dohnányi Academy, and Conducting Programs International Tokyo.

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

North Coast Ballet California (formerly Petaluma City Ballet) was incorporated in 1981 to provide a performance vehicle for Petaluma's young dancers for 45 years. The company is based at the Petaluma School of Ballet. Ann Derby became Artistic Director in 1985 and Zoura O'Neill Co-Artistic Director in 1987.

NCBC is celebrating 45 years of excellence with its upcoming 40th annual *Nutcracker,* in collaboration with Petaluma School of Ballet, and the company's 39th anniversary.

The purpose of NCBC is to bring the art of dance to Northern California, including the younger community, by offering professional performance opportunities for dance creators and dancers.

As a member of The Ballet Alliance, NCBC has performed in 39 Festivals throughout the United States and Canada.

Many NCBC dancers have received numerous scholarships to summer intensives through TBA. Alumni have gone on to dance professionally with Peninsula Dance Theatre & San Diego City Ballet companies, as well as Ballet Met, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Central West Ballet, Juilliard, and Mark Morris Dance Company.

NCBC's repertoire includes *Coppelia, Peter & The Wolf, Snow White, Graduation Ball, Tales of Beatrix Potter, Sorcerer's Apprentice, Hansel and Gretel, Alice in Wonderland,* and *Ballet de Seuss*. Our *Once Upon a Ballet Series* reaches 2,000 school children annually. In 2025, NCBC's *Once Upon a Ballet Series* returned to our county's schools with the new ballet Ballet de Seuss and, this season, Snow White.

NCBC continues to gain inspiration and grow by being part of The Ballet Alliance and highly values our membership, as well as the networking and friendships that have developed over the years.

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 Vic & 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: Boo! Let's Dance

WHO: Santa Rosa Symphony
Francesco Lecce-Chong, conductor
Jaco Wong, SRS Youth Orchestra conductor
North Coast Ballet California

JOHANNES BRAHMS: Hungarian Dance [Ungarische Tänze] No. 5 in G minor for Orchestra
ARTURO MÁRQUEZ: Dance [Danzón] No. 2 for Orchestra (excerpt)
MAURICE RAVEL: Suite from Mother Goose [Ma mère l'Oye]
FLORENCE PRICE (arr. William Grant Still): "Nimble Feet" from Dances in the Canebrakes
JOHANN STRAUSS JR.: On the Beautiful Blue Danube [An der schönen blauen Donau] (excerpt)
ALBERTO GINASTERA: "Danza final" (Malambo) from Estancia, op. 8a

WHEN: October 25, 2026, 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 Snoopy 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

ABOUT SANTA ROSA SYMPHONY
Now in its 99th season, the Santa Rosa Symphony (SRS) is the third-oldest professional orchestra in California and oneof the oldest symphony orchestras in the western United States. The resident orchestra at Sonoma State University's Donald and Maureen Green Music Center, SRS performs seven Classical Series concert sets in the acoustically acclaimed 1,400-seat Weill Hall, along with the Snoopy Family Concert Series, Discovery Rehearsal Series, and Winterlude… Also performed are the summer series Symphony Uncorked all over wine country, the Symphony Pops at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, and a series of intimate chamber performances at the Brannan Center.

Led by Music Director Francesco Lecce-Chong since 2018, the orchestra is recognized for artistic excellence, innovative programming, and a commitment to presenting both established masterworks and new music. SRS has earned national recognition for its adventurous programming and community engagement, including an ASCAP award for adventurous programming and an American Symphony Orchestra League MetLife Award for Community Engagement.

Through the Santa Rosa Symphony Institute for Music Education, SRS reaches more than 20,000 young people annually through five youth ensembles, a beginning strings program, Simply Strings, inspired by El Sistema, in-school programs, summer music education, and free concerts for youth. Its broad community offerings also include free, family-friendly chamber music performances across all twelve Sonoma County Library regional branches, as well as other community programs throughout the region.

In 2022, SRS released its first commercial recording, Cello Concerto & Other Works, featuring music by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. The Santa Rosa Symphony is led by J. Andrew Bradford who joined SRS as President and CEO in 2023. It is supported by a 15-person full-time administrative staff and is a member of the League of American Orchestras and the Association of California Symphony Orchestras.

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