



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tchaikovsky & Prokofiev

Featuring renowned international pianist Jon Kimura Parker
November 9, 10 & 11, 2024 Weill Hall, Green Music Center

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) — Santa Rosa Symphony presents Tchaikovsky & Prokofiev, a powerful collection of timeless works conducted by Francesco Lecce-Chong. The program will showcase Jon Kimura Parker performing Tchaikovsky's renowned Piano Concerto No. 1. Additionally, the Symphony will present a selection of four episodes from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, curated by Lecce-Chong. The program will also showcase Valerie Coleman's moving tribute to frontline workers, *Seven O'Clock Shout*. Performances at Weill Hall, Green Music Center, November 9, 10 and 11, 2024. Tickets are on sale at srsymphony.org.

Coleman, a leading contemporary composer, penned *Seven O'Clock Shout for Orchestra* in just two weeks. She described the piece as an anthem "inspired by the tireless frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic," capturing the essence of nature's landscape, the dedication of healthcare professionals, and the sacrifices of everyday heroes.

Jon "Jackie" Kimura Parker, a performer known for his dynamic stagecraft, will play Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor. Through performance and pop culture references, the piece has taken on an identity of its own. The concerto opens with a powerful horn call and response, followed by a robust piano entrance. It features fiendishly difficult and riveting passages that have made a lasting impact on the world of music. Parker uniquely interprets the lavishly ornate passages by invoking quiet contemplation.

"Prokofiev's beloved ballet *Romeo and Juliet* is truly one of the pillars of orchestral writing, and it is a daunting task for any conductor to reduce its epic proportions into a concert work. In creating this symphony from Prokofiev's music, I have brought together four of the most famous episodes from the ballet in a way that mirrors the standard early 20th-century symphonic form. My goal is not to take away from the narrative but to heighten the structure of the classic story of tragic love. I believe *Romeo and Juliet* is a plea for empathy that is as relevant now as it was 500 years ago."

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

BIOGRAPHIES:

Francesco Lecce-Chong, Music Director and Conductor

Francesco Lecce-Chong has established himself as a respected leader in the orchestral world through acclaimed performances, innovative projects, and passionate arts advocacy.

Appointed Music Director of Eugene Symphony and Santa Rosa Symphony (SRS) before age 30, he launched groundbreaking projects, commissioned over a dozen major works, and forged innovative community partnerships. Now in his seventh season, he has grown the SRS's reputation as one of the most prominent US regional orchestras, with performances at the world-class Green Music Center. This season, he also serves as Artistic Partner with the Eugene Symphony, further advancing his artistic vision.

Lecce-Chong regularly appears with major US orchestras, from the San Francisco Symphony to the New York Philharmonic, collaborating with top soloists such as Renée Fleming and Itzhak Perlman. Additional debuts include Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Utah Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, and Detroit Symphony. In 2023, Lecce-Chong debuted in

Europe at the prestigious George Enescu Festival with the Romanian National Radio Orchestra, which led to a regular relationship with the orchestra.

Throughout his career, Lecce-Chong has fostered an unparalleled dedication to the orchestral art form's future. One of his first large-scale endeavors was the "First Symphony Project," which consisted of major commissions from next-generation composers across four seasons, including multiple residencies. He has integrated a dozen new orchestral works into the repertoire from composers like Grammy winner Michael Daugherty, Conrad Tao, Clarice Assad, and Gabriella Smith. To keep SRS connected to its community during the pandemic, he spearheaded SRS @ Home, which brought live internet performances to thousands of households. Several performances were broadcast on local PBS TV, reaching two million viewers. This series included works by living composers and a partnership with Pulitzer Prize winner Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, culminating in a CD release in 2022.

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 served as staff conductor with the Santa Fe Opera and led performances with Milwaukee's Florentine Opera. Recently, he led the Eugene Symphony's semi-staged presentation of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. At SRS, Lecce-Chong conducted and directed Opera in Concert: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, featuring his original dialogue, and partnered with a local arts high school to create a multi-disciplinary experience.

Trained 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 has received several distinctions, including the Solti Foundation Award. He has been mentored by renowned conductors, including Bernard Haitink, David Zinman, Edo de Waart, Manfred Honeck, Donald Runnicles, and Michael Tilson Thomas.

Jon Kimura Parker, piano

Pianist Jon Kimura Parker is known for his charisma, infectious enthusiasm, and dynamic performances. A veteran of the international concert stage, he has performed regularly in the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, the Sydney Opera House, and the Beijing Concert Hall. He was recently named Creative Partner for the Minnesota Orchestra's Summer at Orchestra Hall. Additionally, he serves as the Artistic Director for the Honens International Piano Competition and as Artistic Advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival. He is also on the faculty of the Shepherd School of Music faculty at Rice University.

Highlights of his 2023-24 season included performances with the Taiwan Philharmonic, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach with Gary Hoffman and Arnaud Sussman.

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Parker has performed with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Pablo Ziegler, and Sanjaya Malakar. As a founding member of *Off the Score*, he also performed with Stewart Copeland – the legendary drummer of The Police – for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival's 20th Anniversary Season, featuring his own arrangements of music by Prokofiev, Ravel, and Stravinsky. In addition, he performs widely throughout North America and Europe with the Montrose Trio (together with violinist Martin Beaver and cellist Clive Greensmith).

Parker's discography of a dozen albums features music ranging from Mozart and Chopin to Barber and Stravinsky. His most recent recording *Fantasy*, built around Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy, was described by *Musical Toronto* as giving "a big, clear picture window of a rich soul and great artistic depth." His YouTube channel features a series of *Concerto Chat* videos, which explore the piano concerto repertoire.

Parker studied with Edward Parker and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and the University of British Columbia, Marek Jablonski at the Banff Centre, and Adele Marcus at The Juilliard School. After winning the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, Parker has gone on to become an Officer of the Order of Canada and to receive Honorary Doctorates from the University of British Columbia and the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.

Known to friends as “Jackie,” Parker is married to violinist/violist Aloysia Friedmann. Their daughter Sophie graduated from Rice University in 2021.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE:

VALERIE COLEMAN: *Seven O’Clock Shout* for Orchestra

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto No. 1 in B-flat minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 23

SERGEI PROKOFIEV: Symphony from *Romeo and Juliet*

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

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 and Jon Kimura Parker provide a 30-minute pre-concert talk one hour prior to the performances.

SPONSORS:

Classical Series underwritten by **Anderman Family Foundation**

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Guest Artist Jon Kimura Parker sponsored by **Jacques & Barbara Schlumberger**

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

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Pre-concert Talk sponsored by **Jamei Haswell and Mack Schwing**

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AT A GLANCE / CALENDAR LISTINGS:

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

WHAT: [Tchaikovsky & Prokofiev](#)

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

WHEN:

Saturday, November 9, 2024 at 2:00 pm – Discovery Open Rehearsal, (no Pre-concert talk)

Saturday, November 9, 2024 at 7:30 pm (Doors at 6:00 pm, Pre-concert Talk 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm)

Sunday, November 10, 2024 at 3:00 pm (Doors at 1:30 pm, Pre-concert Talk 2:00 pm - 2:30 pm)

Monday, November 11, 2024 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 college 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, the Resident Orchestra of the Green Music Center, is the third-oldest professional orchestra in California and the largest regional symphony north of Los Angeles. Francesco Lecce-Chong, the Symphony's fifth music director in its 97 years, began his tenure in 2018. J. Andrew Bradford joined SRS as President and CEO in 2023. The Symphony is committed to the core values of artistic excellence, innovative

programming, comprehensive music education, and community service.

The Symphony's performance schedule includes 21 Classical Series concerts (seven sets), seven Discovery Dress Rehearsal concerts, a three-concert Family Series, a four-concert Pops Series, and special concerts.

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).

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.

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