



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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December 12, 2024

**Santa Rosa Symphony Presents  
Who Wants to Compose a Symphony?  
as part of the Snoopy Family Concert Series**

Francesco Lecce-Chong, Conductor

**Sunday, January 26, 2025, Weill Hall, Green Music Center**

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) – Santa Rosa Symphony presents an innovative and interactive musical experience, *Who Wants to Compose a Symphony?*, as part of the Snoopy Family Concert Series on January 26, 2025, at 3:00 pm, at Weill Hall, Green Music Center. Composer and local Bay Area educator Danny Clay will lead the audience on a collaborative adventure to co-create a brand-new symphony, performed live on the spot by the orchestra and conducted by Music Director Francesco Lecce-Chong. Clay is known for his imaginative approach to fostering creativity and connection. His work brings together people of all ages to explore the joy of composing. Affordable tickets, available now at [srsymphony.org](http://srsymphony.org).

This interactive program features excerpts from iconic works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Antonín Dvořák, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Florence Price, which will serve as inspiration for the brand-new symphony co-composed by Danny Clay and the audience. Maestro Lecce-Chong will also welcome Snoopy on stage to help introduce the orchestra musicians to the audience, followed by a performance of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's *Snoopy Does the Samba* from *Peanuts® Gallery*.

"I am thrilled to have composer Danny Clay joining our family series for a truly never-done-before concert that will have you, our audience, helping compose a four-movement symphony on the spot and hearing the orchestra play it back for you! We also have lots of famous examples to learn from with symphonies by Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and Dvořák. I can't wait for audiences of all ages to learn about the choices that composers have to make while writing symphonies - and get a little help from Snoopy along the way."

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

Special thanks to the [Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center](http://CharlesM.SchulzMuseumandResearchCenter.org) and [Snoopy's Home Ice](http://SnoopysHomeIce.com).

**CONCERT EXTRAS:**

**Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra (SRSYO) Side-by-side**

On the first piece of the program, young concertgoers will see peers from the SRSYO perform side-by-side with Symphony musicians.

**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 each performance at 2:00 pm, which provides an opportunity for youngsters (and curious adults) to handle and play orchestral instruments.

**Multimedia Experience**

Introducing a new immersive experience that gives audiences an up-close view of the musicians, their instruments, and Maestro Francesco. Projected on a big screen above the orchestra, concertgoers will see what's happening on stage wherever they sit.

## **Meet & Greet**

Meet with Maestro Francesco Lecce-Chong and a symphony musician immediately following the concert.

## **BIOGRAPHY:**

**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.

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.

## **Danny Clay**, Composer

Danny Clay is a composer and educator whose work is deeply rooted in curiosity, collaboration, and the sheer joy of making things with people of all ages and levels of artistic experience. He sees "composing" as the act of putting things together and strives to find ways to utilize this act to foster creativity and connection – whether it be playing musical games with visitors to Chicago's Millennium Park or building experimental sound installations with classes of elementary schoolers. Working closely with artists, students, and community members alike, he builds worlds of inquiry, play, and perpetual discovery that often combine sound with other forms of media.

## **SPONSORS:**

Snoopy Family Concert Series underwritten by **Victor and Karen Trione**, and **Irene Sohm**  
Conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong sponsored by **Anonymous**

## **AT A GLANCE / CALENDAR LISTING:**

**WHAT:**

[Who Wants to Compose a Symphony?](#)

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN:** Symphony No. 7 in A major – Fourth Movement – Allegro con brio  
**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART:** Symphony No. 41 in C major, *Jupiter* – First Movement – Allegro vivace (excerpts)  
**DANNY CLAY:** YOUR Symphony – First Movement  
**ANTONIN DVOŘÁK:** Symphony No. 9 in E minor, *From the New World* – Second Movement – Largo (excerpts)  
**ELLEN TAAFFE ZWILICH:** Snoopy Does the Samba *from Peanuts® Gallery*  
**DANNY CLAY:** YOUR Symphony – Second Movement  
**FLORENCE PRICE:** Symphony No. 1 in E minor – Third Movement – Juba Dance; Allegro  
**DANNY CLAY:** YOUR Symphony – Third Movement  
**PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY** Symphony No. 4 in F minor – Fourth Movement - Finale: Allegro con fuoco (excerpts)  
**DANNY CLAY:** YOUR Symphony – Fourth Movement  
**PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY:** Symphony No. 4 in F minor – Fourth Movement -Finale: Allegro con fuoco

**WHO:** [Santa Rosa Symphony](#)

**Francesco Lecce-Chong,** conductor

**Danny Clay,** composer

**WHEN:** January 26, 2025 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 a symphony musician immediately following the concert.

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

**SINGLE TICKET PRICES:**

\$20/adult, \$10/child (12 and under)

**TICKETS:** [srsymphony.org](https://srsymphony.org) or (707) 546-8742 (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), 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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