

SANTA ROSA  
SYMPHONY

FRANCESCO LECCE-CHONG Music Director



Resident  
Orchestra  
Green Music  
Center

Classical  
REUNION  
2021 SEASON 2022

## NEWS

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### **Aram Demirjian conducts the Santa Rosa Symphony's "American Rhapsody" with George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* & Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* Michelle Cann performs *Rhapsody in Blue* and Florence Price's Piano Concerto February 12, 13 & 14, 2022 at the Green Music Center**

(Santa Rosa, Calif.) —The [Santa Rosa Symphony](#)'s February 12-14 program, "[American Rhapsody](#)," guest conducted by Aram Demirjian, offers works from American composers who changed the landscape of American symphonic music. Awarding-winning pianist Michelle Cann ascends the stage for George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Florence Price's Piano Concerto in One Movement. This culturally rich program, also includes Aaron Copland's iconic ballet *Appalachian Spring* and William Grant Still's *Darker America*.

#### **GAME-CHANGING COMPOSERS**

*Rhapsody in Blue* introduced jazz to classical concert audiences, and propelled **George Gershwin's** career.

**Florence Price** was the first female African-American composer to earn national fame, and have a symphony performed by a major orchestra (her Symphony in E minor in 1933 with the Chicago Symphony).

Over his six-decade career, **William Grant Still**, known as the "dean of African American composers," worked as a performer, arranger, orchestrator, conductor and composer. *Darker America* represents his first work for orchestra.

**Aaron Copland**, known as the "dean of American composers," was unafraid of appealing to the masses. He said, "The composer who is frightened of losing his artistic integrity through contact with a mass audience is no longer aware of the meaning of the word art."

#### **GUEST CONDUCTOR AND ARTIST**

Conductor Aram Demirjian, the 2020 recipient of The Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award and music director of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, is sought after for his "graceful, energetic direction" (*Sarasota Herald Tribune*), bold programming and distinctive communication skills with audience members and musicians alike.

Demirjian's guest conducting highlights include engagements with the Philadelphia, Sarasota, and Breckenridge Music Festival orchestras, the Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, New England Conservatory, Omaha, Portland, San Antonio and Tucson symphonies, and the Louisiana and Orlando philharmonics.

Internationally, he has conducted the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne and Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal. Demirjian is scheduled to make upcoming appearances with the KSO, in addition to debuts with the North Carolina, San Diego, and Santa Rosa symphonies. [Read Demirjian's full bio.](#)

Cann performed the New York City premiere of Price's Piano Concerto in July 2016 and the Philadelphia premiere in February 2021. She has also performed Price's works for solo piano and chamber ensemble for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Detroit and the New World Symphony, among other presenters. *The Boston Musical Intelligencer* raved, "Michelle Cann, as the piano soloist, was a compelling, sparkling virtuoso, bringing this riveting work to life in its first New York performance."

Michelle Cann began studying piano at the age of 7 and since then has placed in various state, national and international competitions, including the Music Teacher's National Association Competition, the International Russian Piano Music Competition, the Gilmore Piano Foundation Competition and the Blount Young Artists National Competition. She made her orchestral debut at the age of 14 and since then has been invited to perform with various orchestras, including the Florida Orchestra, Tampa Bay Symphony, Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Cleveland Institute of Music Symphony Orchestra. She has performed on the nationally-broadcast radio show, "From the Top," hosted by pianist Christopher O' Riley; was featured as the inaugural performer on WRTI 90.1 Philadelphia's new series, "In Recital"; and select performances have been broadcast regularly on Philadelphia's WHYY Television. [Read full bio here.](#)

#### ENHANCEMENTS:

- Program notes are available on the [concert event page](#).
- One hour prior to each performance, Demirjian provides a 30-minute pre-concert talk, with Cann.

#### COVID PROTOCOLS FOR CLASSICAL SERIES CONCERTS AT THE GREEN MUSIC CENTER

##### Age 7 through adult:

- **Masks** required
- **Photo ID** required (waived for minors accompanied by parent)
- **And one** of the following:
  - **Proof of vaccination**
  - **Negative COVID PCR test** (taken within 72 hours prior to performance)

*No one will be admitted without a mask, photo ID and either proof of vaccine or negative COVID-19 PCR test. Classical Series concerts are not appropriate for youth under the age of 7. Up-to-date information may be found on the Symphony's [COVID-19 update page](#).*

#### SPONSORS:

Concert sponsored by Viking Cruises  
Aram Demirjian underwritten by Corinne and David Byrd  
Michelle Cann underwritten by Willow Creek Wealth Management  
Discovery Open Rehearsal Series sponsored by The Stare Foundation  
and David Stare of Dry Creek Vineyard  
Pre-concert talks sponsored by Jamei Haswell and Richard Grundy  
Media sponsors: *The Press Democrat*

Hi-res photos available upon request of Cann and Demirjian

#### AT A GLANCE / CALENDAR LISTING:

**WHAT:** [Santa Rosa Symphony concert "American Rhapsody"](#)

**WHO:** [Santa Rosa Symphony](#)  
[Aram Demirjian](#), conductor  
[Michelle Cann](#), piano

#### WHEN:

Saturday, February 12, 2022 at 7:30 PM (Doors at 6:00 PM, Pre-concert talk 6:30 PM-7:00 PM)

(Discovery Open Rehearsal, Saturday, February 12, at 2:00 PM – no talk)  
Sunday, February 13, 2022 at 3:00 PM (Doors at 1:30 PM, Pre-concert talk 2:00 PM-2:30 PM)  
Monday, February 14, 2022 at 7:30 PM (Doors at 6:00 PM, Pre-concert talk 6:30 PM-7:00 PM)

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

**TICKET PRICES:**

\$24-\$97 for Classical Series performances  
\$18 / adult; \$10 / youth (7-17 years of age) for Discovery Open Rehearsal

**TICKETS:** [srsymphony.org](http://srsymphony.org) or (707) 546-8742 (Weekdays 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, opening at 10:30 AM Wednesdays)

**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 94 years, began his tenure in 2018. Alan Silow, President & CEO, began his tenure in 2002. The Symphony is committed to 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 and a four-concert Pops Series, as well as 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 the most comprehensive music education programs in California, serving nearly 30,000 youths annually. Collaborations with schools and organizations across Sonoma County have gained the Santa Rosa Symphony national attention and support.