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## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release, October 8, 2009

### **Choral Concert “1791: Mozart’s Last Year” Nov. 13, 14, 15** **Santa Rosa Symphony, Sonoma County Bach Choir** **and 4 soloists perform Mozart *Requiem* and more**

(SANTA ROSA, CA) — Friday through Sunday, November 13-15, three Sonoma County churches will host the newly-named Donald and Maureen Green Orchestral Choral Concert Series presented by Santa Rosa Symphony and the Sonoma County Bach Choir. The holiday season starts early with these stirring performances at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Petaluma, St. Eugene’s Cathedral in Santa Rosa and Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Windsor. “1791: Mozart’s Last Year” features choral masterpieces of the great composer’s final days—the exquisite *Requiem Mass*, Overture to *The Magic Flute*, the *Masonic Cantata*, Overture to *La Clemenza de Tito* and *Ave verum corpus*.

Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director Robert Worth conducts members of the orchestra in collaboration with the Sonoma County Bach Choir and guest soloists: **Jenni Samuelson**, soprano; **Erin Neff**, mezzo soprano; **Scott Whitaker**, tenor; and **Hugh Davies**, baritone.

“The concert is inspired by H.C. Robbins Langdon’s book of the same name, a rare work of accessible musicology in which the events and dizzying array of compositions of Mozart’s last year are recounted and lovingly described,” said choral director Worth. “The performance will be in chronological order, opening with the lovely motet *Ave verum corpus*, from January 1791, and ending with the great *Requiem*, left unfinished at his death in December of the same year.”

From 7:00-7:30 p.m., there will be a pre-concert talk (free to ticket holders) by Sonoma State University musicologist John Palmer, an engaging writer and speaker who has presented at the San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Opera. Palmer will speak about Mozart’s colorful life and help audiences “hear” the music with more understanding. The concert itself begins at 8 p.m.

This series is underwritten by the Donald and Maureen Green Foundation.

Tickets for *1791: Mozart's Last Year* are \$20 each through the Santa Rosa Symphony Patron Services Office (707) 54-MUSIC [546-8742], or online at [www.santarosasympphony.com](http://www.santarosasympphony.com).

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**Photos of soloists Jenni Samuelson, Erin Neff, Scott Whitaker, Hugh Davies and conductor Robert Worth are available upon request.**

(CALENDAR LISTING and SOLOISTS' BIOS follow)

**Heading:** Classical Music

**What:** *1791: Mozart's Last Year* -- The Donald and Maureen Green Orchestral Choral Series

**Who:** Santa Rosa Symphony and the Sonoma County Bach Choir under the direction of Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director Robert Worth

**Soloists:** Jenni Samuelson, soprano; Erin Neff, mezzo soprano; Scott Whitaker, tenor; and Hugh Davies, baritone.

**Time:** Pre-concert talk: 7:00-7:30 p.m.  
Performance: 8 p.m.

**Venues:**

**Friday, November 13, 2009**

St. Vincent de Paul Church  
35 Liberty Street, Petaluma

**Saturday, November 14, 2009**

St. Eugene's Cathedral  
2323 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa

**Sunday, November 15, 2009**

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church  
8400 Old Redwood Hwy, Windsor

**Tickets:** \$20 general seating. Call the Santa Rosa Symphony Patron Services Office (707) 54-MUSIC [546-8742], or purchase online at [www.santarosasympphony.com](http://www.santarosasympphony.com).

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**Robert Worth, Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director**

Robert Worth is Professor of Music and Choral Director at Sonoma State University, where he has taught since 1983. At SSU, he directs two choruses: The Sonoma County Bach Choir and the SSU Chamber Singers. Worth is also the founding music director of the Sonoma County Choral Society, a university-community partnership which fosters the performance and appreciation of choral music in the northern Bay Area.

In addition to his work in the field of choral music, Worth has a specialty in Kodály musicianship training, and for ten years ran the ear training program at SSU. He is a composer and arranger of both choral music and jazz, and his vocal jazz arrangements have been performed by many groups throughout California and beyond. He has been deeply involved in the Green Music Center project since its inception, serving as consultant to the architects on such issues as acoustics, choral performance facilities and the Cassin organ.

Worth received his B.A. in music at SSU in 1980, and earned his M.A. in musicology at UC Berkeley. He has received numerous community and university honors, including Sonoma State University's Outstanding Professor Award for 1996-97 and Distinguished Alumni Award for 2007-08. After completing numerous collaborative projects with the Santa Rosa Symphony, he was named to the position of Symphony choral director in 2002.

### **Sonoma County Bach Choir**

The Sonoma County Bach Choir, under the direction of Robert Worth, is a group of 50-60 singers specializing in the music of the Baroque period, with special emphasis on Johann Sebastian Bach. For further information about the Sonoma County Choral Society and the other ensembles under its umbrella, visit [www.sonomachoral.org](http://www.sonomachoral.org).

### **Jenni Samuelson, soprano**

Jenni Samuelson has performed in over 25 lead roles with companies throughout the country including the San Francisco Opera Center, Western Opera Theater, Eugene Opera, Opera San Jose, Cinnabar Theater, Chicago Light Opera Works and The Skylight in Milwaukee. Her signature roles include: Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*); Musetta (*La Boheme*); Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*); Despina (*Così fan tutte*); Adina (*The Elixir of Love*); Nanetta (*Falstaff*); Phyllis (*Iolanthe*) and Johanna (*Sweeney Todd*).

Concert appearances have been equally varied and include: *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* by Villa Lobos; *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Vaughn Williams; Bach's *B Minor Mass*, *Magnificat* and *Christmas Oratorio*; Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; Mozart's *Requiem* and *C Minor Mass*; Monteverdi's *Vespers* and *Gloria* and Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*. She has performed with the Carmel Bach Festival, San Francisco Chorale, Sonoma Bach Society, Merced Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony and Brookline Chorus in Boston.

She is an active recitalist and consummate chamber musician having performed many works including the Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes*; Bach's *Coffee Cantata*; Berio's *Folk Songs* and the world premiere of *Return Receipts* by Amanda McTigue and Jeff Langley.

Samuelson received her Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Northwestern University in 1997, and was a three-time regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

### **Erin Neff, mezzo soprano**

Mezzo soprano Erin Neff's dynamic performance abilities and radiant sound have earned her the veneration of her musical peers and made her an audience favorite throughout the country. "Neff's mezzo soprano finely wove through trills and ornaments to touch our hearts... triumphant..." applauded the *Pacifica Tribune*.

Equally at home in the operatic, lied and oratorio repertoires, Neff is a much sought-after singer. In 2008, she launched a program titled "Degenerate Music" featuring the works of Weil, Schoenberg and Eisler. It has been performed twice in California and will be featured at the Telluride Music Festival in June 2009. Also in the summer of 2009, she made her debut with Festival Opera in the role of Siebel for their production of *Faust*. She has been engaged by Sacramento Opera for the role of Flora in their production of *La Traviata* in March 2010. Neff has performed with the San Francisco Opera, the Berkeley Opera, Livermore Valley Opera, North Bay

Opera and San Francisco Lyric Opera, to name a few. She is also a frequent recitalist and chamber music soloist.

**Scott Whitaker, tenor**

Scott Whitaker is an active concert singer, based in the San Diego area. For the past 27 years, he has performed and recorded a broad range of repertoire, from 12<sup>th</sup> century organum to film soundtracks by John Williams, from Renaissance polyphony to the avant-garde polyphony of Pierre Boulez. He has extensive concert performance experience, both as a soloist and ensemble singer, with major orchestras, professional choral groups, chamber ensembles and at churches throughout the United States and Japan. He has taught singing at U.C. Davis, Sonoma State University and San Diego State University, and currently teaches at San Diego Mesa College.

**Hugh Davies, baritone**

Hugh Davies was born and educated in England, and started his singing career as a boy chorister at St. Albans Abbey under the direction of Peter Hurford and Simon Preston. While a student at Cambridge University, he was a Choral Scholar at King's College, where the director of music was David Willcocks.

As a professional singer based in London, he appeared with Glyndebourne Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and performed as a soloist with leading choirs and orchestras throughout Europe. He was a member of the Monteverdi Choir, the Schütz Choir and the John Alldis Choir, and made many recordings and broadcasts on television and radio.

After teaching music in Australia for two years, Davies moved to California in 1986. He now sings in the San Francisco area both as a soloist and as a member of several professional ensembles, and has appeared with groups such as Theatre of Voices, the American Bach Soloists, the California Bach Society, Magnificat, the Santa Rosa Symphony, the Sonoma County Bach Choir and the Albany Consort.

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