

MODESTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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(From left to right, Top Row: Nicholas Hersh, music director; MSO Chorus; Bottom Row: Georgiana Adams, soprano; Kindra Scharich, mezzo-soprano; Alex Boyer, tenor; Matt Boehler, bass; Samuel Kraus, violin)

MODESTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS PERFORMS BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY NO. 9

May 10 & 11, 2024 - Modesto Symphony Orchestra performs the works of Beethoven, Beach, and Pärt at Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 concerts.

May 11, 2024 – Modesto Symphony Youth Orchestra performs Season Finale Concert featuring Concerto Competition Winner, Samuel Kraus.

MODESTO, CA – The Modesto Symphony Orchestra (MSO) presents **Beethoven's Symphony No. 9** on May 10 & 11, 2024 led by **Music Director [Nicholas Hersh](#)**. The weekend's program includes living composer, **Arvo Pärt's *Fratres***, **Amy Beach's *Peace I Leave With You***, and **Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9 in D minor***. The concerts will feature the **MSO Chorus**, directed by **Daniel R. Afonso Jr.**, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 will also feature guest soloists: soprano **Georgiana Adams**, mezzo-soprano **Kindra Scharich**, tenor **Alex Boyer**, and bass **Matt Boehler**.

“Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has taken on a kind of mystique of an almost supernatural masterpiece,” says Music Director Nicholas Hersh. “But its reality is anything but: it's one of Beethoven's most personal and emotional works. Beethoven's Ninth is a mountain to climb for any musician, but it's at the summit that the forces of the orchestra, chorus, and vocal soloists join together, reveling in the joy of unity with the composer's most enduring melody: the Ode to Joy. I can't wait for the MSO to take on this journey with my wonderful colleague Daniel Afonso leading the Modesto Symphony Chorus as well as the amazing guest soloists joining us from all over California!”

This concert is made possible by a generous legacy gift from Alicia Aywas and is dedicated to her memory. “As a longtime subscriber and donor, Alicia Aywas brought joy to those around her and loved classical music,” says Caroline Nickel, President & CEO. “The MSO is honored to have known Alicia Aywas and to dedicate these performances of Beethoven’s ‘Ode to Joy’ to her.”

The weekend also includes the [Modesto Symphony Youth Orchestra \(MSYO\)](#) in their [Season Finale Concert](#) on May 11th, 2024. The MSYO comprises two orchestras with students from grades 5 through 12 and is led by a deeply engaged leadership team. Their Season Finale Concert will feature works by **Grieg**, **Pascual Marquina Narro**, music from the 2017 Disney movie, **Coco**, and excerpts from **Bizet's Carmen Suite**. This concert will also feature the MSYO's annual Concerto Competition winner, **Samuel Kraus**, performing the first movement of the **Mozart Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, K. 219**. Learn more about the MSYO at ModestoSymphony.org/about-msyo.

[MODESTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 9](#)

Friday, May 10, 2024, at 7:30 pm and Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 7:30 pm

[Nicholas Hersh](#), *conductor*

MSO Chorus, [Daniel R. Afonso Jr.](#), *chorus director*

[Georgiana Adams](#), *soprano*

[Kindra Scharich](#), *mezzo-soprano*

[Alex Boyer](#), *tenor*

[Matt Boehler](#), *bass*

PROGRAM

Arvo Pärt: *Fratres*

Amy Beach: *Peace I Leave With You*

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

This concert is dedicated in memory of Alicia Aywas.

Gallo Center for the Arts, Mary Stuart Rogers Theater
1000 I Street, Modesto

TICKETS:

Pricing: \$20 / 36 / 52 / 72 / 94

\$12 student tickets available at the Gallo Center Ticket Office. Students can purchase two \$12 tickets with their student ID.

MODESTO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA, SEASON FINALE CONCERT

Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 2:00 pm

Donald Grishaw, *MSYO Concert Orchestra Conductor*

Elisha Wells, *MSYO Symphony Orchestra Conductor*

Samuel Kraus, *violin & MSYO Concerto Competition Winner*

Program

Featuring the works of Grieg, Pascual Marquina Narro, music from the 2017 Disney movie, *Coco*, and excerpts from Bizet's *Carmen Suite*. The concert also features MSYO Concerto Competition Winner, Samuel Kraus performing the first movement of Mozart's *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, K. 219*.

Gallo Center for the Arts, Mary Stuart Rogers Theater
1000 I Street, Modesto

Tickets:

Adult: \$14

Youth: \$5

Ticketing Information: Tickets are available online through ModestoSymphony.org or through the Gallo Center for the Arts Ticket Office at (209) 338-2100.

Group Prices available: Groups of 10+ receive a 15% discount on tickets. Call (209) 338-5064 for more information.

Gallo Center Ticket Office Hours: Monday through Friday 10:00am-6:00pm / Saturday 12:00pm-6:00pm

ARTIST BIOS:

NICHOLAS HERSH

American conductor Nicholas Hersh has earned critical acclaim for his innovative programming and natural ability to connect with musicians and audiences alike.

In the 2023-24 season, Hersh returns to the National, Houston, Baltimore, Colorado, and New Jersey Symphonies, while making debuts with the Springfield Symphony and Wintergreen Festival. Recent include engagements with the Detroit, Grand Rapids, New World, North Carolina, Phoenix, Portland (ME), Richmond, Tucson, Utah, and Winston-Salem symphony orchestras, Louisiana and Rochester Philharmonics, and the Florida and Sarasota Orchestras.

Over a remarkable tenure as Associate Conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Hersh created the BSO Pulse series, through which he brought together indie bands and orchestral musicians in unique collaborations; he led the BSO in several subscription weeks, and concerts in and around Baltimore; and he directed the BSO's educational and family programming, including the celebrated Academy for adult amateur musicians. Hersh also maintains a close relationship with the National Symphony Orchestra, leading concerts throughout Washington, D.C. He stepped in to replace an indisposed Yan Pascal Tortelier, on subscription, to great acclaim.

Hersh is frequently in demand as an arranger and orchestrator, with commissions from orchestras around the globe for adaptations of everything from classical solo and chamber music to popular songs. His orchestration of Beethoven's Cello Sonata Op. 69 was premiered by the Philharmonie Zuidnederland in January 2022, while his symphonic arrangement of Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody continues to see worldwide success as a viral YouTube hit. He also serves as arranger and editor for the James P. Johnson Orchestra Edition.

Hersh grew up in Evanston, Illinois and started his musical training as a cellist. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Music from Stanford University and a Master's Degree in Conducting from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Hersh is also a two-time recipient of the Solti Foundation Career Assistance Award. Nicholas lives in Philadelphia with his wife Caitlin and their two cats, and in his free time enjoys baking (and eating) sourdough bread.

DANIEL R. AFONSO JR.

Daniel R. Afonso Jr. has served as conductor of the Modesto Symphony Orchestra Chorus since its foundation in 2001 and has prepared several choral works with the ensemble. He is also Coordinator of Vocal and Choral Studies at California State University, Stanislaus. Afonso received a B.M.E. degree from the Universidade do Rio de Janeiro (UNI -Rio), a M.M. degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and a D.M.A. degree in Choral Conducting and Pedagogy from the University of Iowa. Dr. Afonso is originally from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and has studied conducting with Carlos Alberto Figueiredo, Cees Rotteveel, Eph Ehly, and William Hatcher.

Dr. Afonso has performed with choral groups in Brazil, U.S., and Europe, and has previously taught music at the Conservatório Brasileiro de Música, Universidade do Rio de Janeiro (UNI-Rio), and Doane College, Nebraska. In 1988, he won the first prize and the best performance of Villa-Lobos work award at the Concurso Villa-Lobos de Canto Coral, a national choral competition sponsored by the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. Dr. Afonso is strongly committed to the performance of new music and has commissioned and premiered many new choral works in the last few years, including several of his own works as well as works by young composition students. He had his New York debut in 2012, conducting Mozart's Requiem with members of the MSO Chorus and students from CSU Stanislaus at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

He is also a composer, arranger, and editor of choral music and has choral works published by earthsongs, Colla Voce, and Alliance Music Publications. He served as composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Choral Artists during their 2014-2015 season and has also written works for the Los Angeles Children's Choir, the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, and other ensembles in the US and abroad. He has written innumerable arrangements for the Modesto Symphony Orchestra, including a new version of The Star-Spangled Banner for chorus and orchestra, recently premiered at the opening concert for the 2015-16 concert season. Dr. Afonso is widely recognized for his research and performance of Brazilian choral music and continues to frequently present workshops and lectures about the Latin American choral repertoire.

MSO CHORUS

Formed in 2001, the Modesto Symphony Chorus is a regional ensemble of singers of all ages and experience who share a commitment to performing concerts of the highest artistic quality and enhancing the appreciation

and enjoyment of choral music among members and audiences alike. Under the skillful and inspiring direction of Dr. Daniel R. Afonso Jr., the MSO Chorus rehearses weekly and performs throughout the season with the Modesto Symphony Orchestra and also for additional community events.

GEORGIANA ADAMS, SOPRANO

American soprano, **Georgiana Adams** is an artist committed to passionate and esteemed musical storytelling. This season she will debut as a featured vocal soloist with San Francisco Ballet in a program entitled *Mere Mortals* and will join the Modesto Symphony for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

A first-year Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera, she participated in the 2023 Merola Opera Program, singing Anna in scenes of Kevin Puts' *Silent Night* in the Schwabacher Summer Concert, covering the role of Female Chorus in *the Rape of Lucretia*, and performing operatic scenes of Wagner and Mozart with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra on the Merola Grand Finale Concert.

A recent graduate of the Juilliard School, Adams earned her master's degree in music in the spring of 2023 and was awarded the Stephen Novick Grant for Career Advancement. During the 2022-2023 season, Adams made her Alice Tully Hall debut singing songs of Respighi, and made her role debut as Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Chautauqua Opera Conservatory. With the Juilliard Opera Theater, she performed the roles of Littler Sister in Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up*, Ciesca in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and covered the titular role in *Suor Angelica*. Other roles include Countess Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Lady Billows in Britten's *Albert Herring*, and the Dewfairy in *Hansel and Gretel*.

Adams is a proud winner of the San Francisco District of the 2024 Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition and was the winner of the 2020 Casa Italia Vocal Competition in her hometown of Chicago, Illinois.

KINDRA SCHARICH, MEZZO-SOPRANO

Mezzo-soprano **Kindra Scharich** has been praised by the San Francisco Chronicle for her "fearless technical precision," "deep-rooted pathos" and "irrepressible musical splendor." As a dedicated recitalist, she has performed more than 250 art songs in 15 languages, and enjoys the full complement of recital, concert and opera engagements alike.

Ms. Scharich has sung more than 40 roles from Monteverdi to Philip Glass, and has been engaged in a number of premières and new works, including: John Adam's *Antony & Cleopatra* (San Francisco Opera), Bright Sheng's *Dream of the Red Chamber* (San Francisco Opera), Laura Kaminsky's *Today it Rains* (Opera Parallèle), and Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* (West Edge Opera, west coast première). Scharich's recordings include: *In meinem Himmel: The Mahler Song Cycles*, with the Alexander String Quarter (2018), *Everyone Sang: Vocal Music of David Conte* (2018), *To my Distant Beloved*, with pianist Jeffrey LaDeur (2020), *Nepomuceno Overseas*, with pianist Ricardo Ballesterro (2021) and *To the Western Sea: Remembering Ursula K. Le Guin* (2021).

ALEX BOYER, TENOR

Tenor **Alex Boyer** is steadily gaining recognition for his commanding voice and dramatic portrayals of the lyric and spinto tenor repertoire. Hailed by the San Francisco Chronicle for Festival Opera's production of *Pagliacci*, Boyer "mustered a large, potent sound that brought a welcome measure of anguish and dark menace to the role of Canio; his delivery of the famous showpiece 'Vesti la giubba' lacked nothing in the way of grit and vocal power."

Most recently, he has been seen as Tichon in Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová* with West Edge Opera, Cassio in *Otello* and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with Livermore Valley Opera, Cavaradossi with Hawaii Opera Theatre and as Captain Ahab in Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick* with Chicago Opera Theater.

Other engagements include covering the roles of Ruggero in *La Rondine* with the Metropolitan Opera; Pollione in *Norma*, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, and Ahab in *Moby Dick* with the Dallas Opera; performing the roles of the Abbot in *Andrea Chénier* and Remendado in *Carmen* with San Francisco Opera; Rodolfo in *La bohème* and the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* with Island City Opera; Marcello in Leoncavallo's *La bohème* and Alwa in Lulu in the acclaimed West Edge Opera production.

He is an alumnus of the Merola Opera Program and the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Program for Singers.

MATT BOEHLER, BASS

Hailed as “a bass with an attitude and the goods to back it up,” by The New York Times and praised by the San Francisco Classical Voice for music that “harnesses considerable expressive power,” bass and composer Matt Boehler is known in the world of opera for his captivating, dynamic performances and his long-earned reputation as an inventive collaborative artist.

Matt’s calendar over the past several years has included engagements at some of classical music’s most prestigious venues. He has sung at The Metropolitan Opera in both *Iolanta* and *The Nose*, Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie in *Daphne*, Canadian Opera Company in *The Magic Flute*, and Santa Fe Opera in the world premiere of *The Lord of Cries* (Corigliano/Adamo).

During the 2023-2024 season, the bass will sing Frère Laurent in Toledo Opera’s production of *Roméo et Juliette*, as well as Gounod’s *St. Cecilia Mass* in La Crosse, Wisconsin. 2022-2023 saw Boehler’s role debut as Figaro in Madison Opera’s *Le nozze di Figaro* and returns to Madison Symphony for Beethoven’s *9th Symphony*, National Symphony Orchestra for Bernstein’s *Mass* and Des Moines Metro Opera for *The Love for Three Oranges* and *The Falling and the Rising* (Redler/Dye). He also reprised the role of Van Helsing for the studio recording of *The Lord of Cries* with the GRAMMY-winning Boston Modern Orchestra Project. During the 2021-2022 season, Matt made his Florida Grand Opera debut in *Rigoletto*, debuted with Austin Opera in *Fidelio*, and returned to Des Moines Metro Opera for *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. A frequent collaborator in contemporary opera, Matt has premiered roles in *Becoming Santa Claus* (Adamo) with Dallas Opera and Chicago Opera Theater, *Acquanetta* (Gordon/Artman) with Prototype Festival, and *Elizabeth Cree* (Puts/Campbell) with Opera Philadelphia, among several others.

Recent seasons have displayed Matt’s versatility in a great array of repertoire, from Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City to Il Cieco in *Iris* with Bard Summerscape and Rocco in *Fidelio* with Madison Opera. He has been met with acclaim as Méphistophélès with Michigan Opera Theater (now Detroit Opera) and as Osmin with Des Moines Metro Opera, as well as the Hotel Manager in *Powder Her Face* with New York City Opera and Festival Opéra de Quèbec. He made his role debut as Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier* with Victory Hall Opera, where he is an ensemble member as both singer and composer. While an ensemble member at Theater St. Gallen in Switzerland, Matt excelled in staples of the bass repertoire like Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Daland in *Der fliegende Holländer*, while embracing rarities such as Baldassare in Donizetti’s *La favorita* and Catalani’s *La Wally*.

Equally at home on the concert stage, he has appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, American Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and Oratorio Society of New York. In recital, he has been seen in several critically acclaimed performances with the New York Festival of Song and has concertized at the Spoleto Festival USA and with the Lotte Lehmann Foundation. His discography reflects his enthusiasm for new music and includes recordings of several world premieres by John Musto, William Bolcom and Michael Dellaira, as well as being featured on albums of song by Stefan Wolpe and David Conte.

Hailing from Minneapolis, Minnesota, Matt now proudly claims the San Francisco Bay Area as his home. He trained as an actor at Viterbo College, an opera singer at the Juilliard School, and as a composer at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

MODESTO SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1976, the Modesto Symphony Youth Orchestra (MSYO) serves young musicians and their families from more than 40 public and private schools in the Central Valley. Led by a deeply engaged leadership team, the MSYO attracts a diverse group of outstanding musicians. Members are presented the opportunity to share their gift of music in an inspiring and challenging orchestral setting alongside their peers from all social, economic, cultural, and geographical backgrounds. As a program within the Modesto Symphony Orchestra Association, members have the invaluable experience of interacting with our professional musicians, conductors, and visiting guest artists through workshops, side-by-side performances, and clinics.

The MSYO serves students of varying skill levels and is made up of two full-orchestra (strings, winds, and percussion) groups:

- The MSYO Concert Orchestra (Grades 5-9)
- The MSYO Symphony Orchestra (Grades 9-12)

Both ensembles perform a three-concert series at the Gallo Center for the Arts throughout the season. The MSYO Concert Orchestra has toured San Francisco, Sacramento, and the Central Valley. Typically, the Concert Orchestra tours local elementary schools, providing free performances, and advocating for the importance of music education. The MSYO Symphony Orchestra has also performed throughout the United States and world, including performances in England, France, Japan, Eastern Europe, Canada, and China. The Symphony Orchestra has previously partnered with the Napa Valley Youth Symphony to perform in the 2012 Mahler Festival in Vienna and for the 2014 New York Phil Young Composers workshop, where they performed at Carnegie Hall and in Central Park.

SAMUEL KRAUS

Samuel spent most of his early years living overseas, attending preschool in France and primary school in Niger, West Africa. During a visit back to Modesto at age seven, his best friend taught him “Twinkle” on her violin. Sam’s love for the violin developed from that time on, despite not being able to take regular lessons until he moved back to Modesto at age ten. Since then, he has taken lessons with Linda Brendler and has been playing in MSYO for five years. He also plays in the MJC Community Orchestra and is currently a Junior in the I.B. program at Modesto High School.

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*The Modesto Symphony Orchestra is a resident company of the Gallo Center for the Arts.
The DoubleTree Hotel is the official hotel of the MSO.*