



VENETIAN VOYAGE



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From The President



What an amazing year we've had! Since the last issue of Musical Notes, we enjoyed a sparkly and enchanting "Sparkles and Spirits" dinner before the Holiday concert. And on February 14, we celebrated Valentine's Day by embarking on a magical "Venetian Voyage"; feasting on a five course dinner, serenaded with Italian arias, and a chance to greet old friends and meet new ones. What a success! Thank you to the team of Rachel Sabajo, Mary Ann Orr, and a slew of volunteers who make these events happen. And speaking of volunteers...our next big event is the Home and Garden Tour on the weekend of June 6-7. While visitors will enjoy some absolutely beautiful homes and gardens, behind the scenes is a crew of over ninety volunteers who serve as docents, guides, etc. to make sure everything runs smoothly. We will need your help so look for messages calling for volunteers.

As we move forward to begin planning the League's calendar for next Season, we will be exploring other and new opportunities to engage League members and friends. We will continue to fundraise for our beloved Symphony, sponsor social/educational events like the Previews, and "feed the musicians". But I think it is time to step back and consider other approaches to raise funds. For example, rather than hold several "blockbuster" events like the annual Gala, should we move to some smaller, less "volunteer intensive" gatherings? Should we include more salon-style events like the "From the Page to the Stage" talk we held with Symphony Librarian Krisha Montmorency in February? These are things we will consider. If you have any thoughts about the League events you enjoy and new ones you would like to see, please email me at koohack@comcast.net. As ever, our League is a wonderful and unique community of support for our Symphony. We treasure it!

In the spirit of music, Anna



Venetian Voyage Valentine Gala

*On February 14, those of us lucky enough to have gotten a ticket experienced a beautiful evening in Venice Italy. The hall at Holy Cross was completely transformed into the Grand Canal, and revelers enjoyed a beautiful evening of food, drinks, opera, fabulous costumes, and rides in a custom-built gondola. The event was a spectacular success and the funds raised all go to supporting the programs of the Symphony. Not the least of which was "Fund A Need" which goes directly to music in the schools. This event was spearheaded by **Rachel Sabajo**, to whom we owe a tremendous amount of gratitude for her vision and determination to accomplish this event, and **Mary Ann Orr**, who always manages and serves amazing food. We also want to specifically acknowledge **Donn Sabajo**, the man who built us a **GONDOLA!** Thank you. We want to also acknowledge the team who worked so diligently to put this event together: Kellie Allyn, Tatiana Buchuretz., Janis Bolt, Holly Brown, Linda Burroughs, Mark Chambers-Bray, Jan Derecho, Mark Dybdahl, Nancy Dybdahl, Anna Hackenbracht, Cheryl Hammond, Kathy Hatfield, Anne Hayden, Nancy Meyberg, Helene Milner, Sophie Polyhronakis, Andy Rophe, Dan and Vickie Rutan, Linda Segal, Candice Stenstrom, Nancy Van Natta, and Spomenka Zaninovich.*

Symphony League Mission Statement

The League is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status. The purpose of the League is to provide financial assistance to the Santa Cruz County Symphony Association and its various programs. The League will conduct events and activities, raise funds, promote classical music education, and increase public awareness of classical music.



Spotlight: Nancy Van Natta

Nancy Van Natta is an ad hoc member of the Symphony League board and she is on the Symphony Association board as well. Between the two she is well-versed in all things about our symphony and she describes herself as a super-fan of the orchestra.



Background

Nancy spent her early years in Connecticut, attended college in Ohio and earned a masters in Boston. She married and moved to California when her then husband began his medical re at Stanford. After staying home with her two children, she returned to school to study for an MBA with an emphasis in Marketing at Santa Clara University.

Nancy embarked on a career in business when she accepted a job at Logitech, a technology startup. While working in business she also began remodeling homes, beginning with simple projects and continuing to ground-up remodels and new-build construction.

In 2001 she ended her thirty-year career as technology marketing executive and opened her own interior architecture and design practice as Nancy Van Natta Associates. She has recently closed her practice after 24 years following the death of her husband, John Dickinson, in February 2025. She now devotes her time to family, friends and volunteer activities.

Discovering the Santa Cruz Symphony

Nancy's love for the Santa Cruz Symphony began after she and her husband were invited to a preview luncheon at the Hollins House when Daniel Stewart was being considered for the Symphony conductor position. Nancy and John were very taken with Danny's musicianship and they were thrilled at how the orchestra performed with him as maestro. They turned in their season tickets to the San Francisco Symphony and wholeheartedly embraced our local symphony orchestra. John joined the Symphony Association Board and Nancy joined the League and later the Association board.

Nancy has been active in the League since she joined, serving as president from 2018 – 2020 and heading up a number of fundraising events including two galas and others.

Home & Garden Tour

Her interior design business made Nancy an obvious choice to serve as chair of the Home Tour. She co-chaired the Home Tour for the first time with Kate Sutherland in 2014 and she has chaired or co-chaired the event every year since. In 2019 she created the Home Tour magazine with descriptions of the homes, photos and insights from homeowners and advertisements from local businesses. Ads in the magazine increase the profitability of the tour. "I've looked at the Home & Garden tour as a way to showcase the many beautiful lifestyles available to us in Santa Cruz, and the many talented architects, designers and builders who make it possible," says Nancy. "Beautiful homes, large and small, are what keep people coming to our tour every year."

Nancy uses relationships with local architects and designers to find homes and gardens for the tour but often League members come forward to suggest homes and homeowners who might like to showcase their homes. The stalwart team of volunteers running the tours over the years includes Cheryl Hammond, Mary Ann Orr, Jan Derecho, Janis Bolt, Linda Segal, Rachel Sabajo, Mark Chambers-Bray and many, many others. Over one hundred volunteers participate in the tour every year. "The team is in the process of choosing homes and gardens for the Spring 2026 Tour right now," says Nancy. "Get in touch with us if you know of a wonderful home for the tour!"

When Nancy is not involved in activities with the Symphony and the League, she loves activities with OLLI (Lifelong Learners), home design, reading, and recently watching the TV series "West Wing" reruns. Two favorite restaurants in the area are Trestles in Capitola and Vim in Santa Cruz. When I interviewed Nancy, her dear little companion dog Belle, a ten-year-old chihuahua joined us for coffee and a cookie at the Buttery. Thanks, Nancy, for being part of our Symphony League and making the very important home tour project a brilliant success. Betty Dodd



Coming: AMADEUS



Santa Cruz Shakespeare and the Symphony are back for a second exciting collaboration. On March 28 and 29, a musical and dramatic experience of Amadeus will come to our community. The Amadeus you will see is based on the play written by Peter Shaffer which premiered in 1979 and received numerous Tony Awards. It was later adapted into the film, Amadeus.

By way of background, Amadeus focuses on the rivalry between two 18th century composers; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Salieri. Mozart appears as a somewhat “vulgar, childish, yet divinely gifted composer”. Salieri is the “established, pious court composer” who becomes consumed by envy and plots to destroy Mozart.

Last week, Anna Hackenbracht had an “email chat” with Charles Pasternak, Artistic Director of Santa Cruz Shakespeare about this production. Enjoy!

1. What portion of the Mozart/Salieri story will we see?

Danny has done a gorgeous job of editing the play down to exciting fragments, focusing on the chief relationship of the play: that of Salieri and Mozart. Salieri’s language about Mozart’s genius, though fueled by jealousy, is my favorite part of the play.

2. How are the acting and music blended together? Are there moments when there is both music and acting?

There are some, yes!! I believe they’ll mostly be distinct for our Amadeus evening, but there are a few - and they’re wonderful.

3. What was the collaboration like between you and Danny? Did one take the lead? How did it work?

This is our second collaboration and both times Danny has taken the lead, which is wonderful. He’s such an open, exciting artist. He gives us a great framework to work in.

4. Who are the actors and what parts do they play?

Charles Pasternak as Salieri, Will Block as Mozart, Anjoli Aguilar as Constanze, and Shaun Carrol as the Emperor.

5. Knowing that Santa Cruz Shakespeare often sets plays in a more contemporary setting, will that happen?

We will have to come up with a unified look for the piece, but we won’t have costumes and wigs of the time, so... probably. Though we’re not quite set on what that looks like yet.

This will be a wonderful and fascinating performance. See you at the Civic or the Mello!

Submitted by Anna Hackenbracht

Recent Events



As our 2025-26 season continues to unfold, we look back with pleasure on all the fundraising and social events we have enjoyed so far. At the Sparkles and Spirits Christmas dinner and concert we stepped into a magical and festively decorated room where we sipped martinis, wine, champagne, and nibbled on appetizers, followed by an excellent dinner curated by Mary Ann Orr, Rachel Sabajo, Anne Hayden, and all their helpers. With Christmas music being played on the piano by our own Symphony pianist, Kiefer Taylor, and a soloist who sang some beautiful Christmas numbers, we all left in a happy mood to attend the Holiday concert at the Civic. In spite of it being a very busy time of year, this was a sold out event. League and Symphony members were happy to come together to celebrate our shared love of the Symphony.





Recent News

Jon Nakamatsu Recital

All who attended the Jon Nakamatsu recital at the Samper Hall at Cabrillo agree these recitals are a real treasure for our Symphony community. In the first part, Jon played a solo piano performance of Bach, Beethoven and Mendelssohn pieces. Following the intermission, Jon was joined by some of our favorite Symphony members, Nancy Zhou, violin, Nigel Armstrong, violin, Daniel Stewart, viola, and Jonah Kim, cello, for a performance of a wonderful Brahms Quintet. While taking their applause and standing ovations, the wide smiles on the musicians' faces told that they were as happy playing together as we were listening to them. What a treat to see these familiar faces in a small group performance!



Music Diplomacy: A New Chapter for Nancy Zhou

Nancy was born in Texas to Chinese immigrant parents, and began violin studies with her father at a very early age. Over the years she has won competitions worldwide and toured many countries performing solo and playing with major orchestras. We have been so fortunate here in Santa Cruz to have had her as concertmaster and part of the Santa Cruz Symphony family.

In September 2026, Nancy will begin teaching as Resident Faculty in the graduate studies program at the Tianjin Juilliard School of Music in China. Tianjin is a large port city 2 hours from Beijing in Northern China. The Juilliard school was opened as a private conservatory under the direction of the Juilliard organization just 2 years ago, somewhat delayed by Covid and other considerations. There is a huge interest in classical music in China.

"The Tianjin Juilliard School is a true beacon of multiculturalism and a vital cultural voice in today's world", says Nancy. "I'm deeply honored to become part of this vibrant community and together with students and colleagues will explore the profound power of music to express our shared humanity".

Between the present and September of this year, Nancy has several engagements in the U.S. and Mexico, including Santa Cruz. We will miss Nancy and treasure all her brilliant talent and musicianship she shared with us, and wish her all the best success in this new venture.

Betty Dodd, League Member



From The Page To The Stage!

On February 26, a group of about 35 people gathered at the Civic to hear a talk by Symphony Librarian Krisha Montmorency titled "From The Page To The Stage". As the Symphony librarian, Krisha is responsible for obtaining all the music for the concerts from publishers, annotating special instructions in the books, delivering the music to the musicians two weeks before the concerts, so they can practice it, and then placing the music on the music stands on the days of the rehearsals and concerts. After the concerts she gathers the music and places it in our library at the Civic. In addition to this monumental task, she also plays the violin in the Symphony! This informative talk really helped us all appreciate what goes into making a concert happen.





2026 Events Schedule



Symphony League Annual Meeting

June 27, 2026

12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Monteville,

Scotts Valley, CA



2026 Home and Garden Tour

June 6-7, 2026

Tickets: <https://www.santacruzsymphonyleague.org/news/>



Remembering the Life of Frank Hayden



FRANK EDWARD HAYDEN
June 12, 1958 – December 1,
2025

Born on June 12, 1958, to Jack and Marie Hayden, Frank grew up in Fresno, California. He attended Bullard High School and went on to earn his undergraduate degree from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Later, he completed a master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Santa Clara University.

Frank's career in engineering took him from Watkins-Johnson to GEC Plessey and finally to co-founding Mixed Signal Systems. It was a career he was very proud of. A big believer in community service, Frank volunteered with the Santa Cruz Symphony League and served on the board of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History. He mentored 3 high school exchange students and devoted time to international service through dental clinics, working with World Wide Smiles in Uganda and Great Shapes in the Caribbean.

He was a lifelong fan of the San Francisco Giants and an avid outdoorsman, especially fishing. He was a runner for 25 years, logging many joyful miles with the Hash House Harriers, where he formed enduring friendships. Frank and Anne were globetrotters, and visited all seven continents.

Frank is survived by his wife of 33 years, Anne; his siblings Karen, John, Gene (Laura), Brian (Laura), Betty Ann and Tony (Michelle); his niece, Allison and his nephews, Jack, Bill & Pat.



Handrails at the Civic



To many League members and Symphony goers the installation of the handrails is a most welcome improvement. Sitting in the side seats or "nosebleed" seats has meant the ascent and descent has been precarious, to say the least. Due to fear of falling, people have always felt just getting to and from their seats has been daunting. However, I have made many friends when symphony goers have offered to help me. "I have always relied on the kindness of strangers!" has a special meaning for me. Now the handrails offer safety and independence. Bravo!



By: Betty Dodd

Membership



Membership is truly the magic behind the Santa Cruz Symphony League. When you join, you become part of a vibrant and dedicated community that helps support the Santa Cruz Symphony and its mission of music and education.

League members work together to raise funds that allow the Symphony to focus on what it does best—bringing inspiring music and educational opportunities to our community. Along the way, members build lasting friendships while participating in event planning, volunteer activities, and enjoyable social gatherings throughout the year.

Membership is open year-round. When you join mid-season, your membership extends into the following season, giving you even more time to be part of this special community.

We invite you to join us and experience the magic of membership.

Kellie Allyn

Director of Membership

Santa Cruz Symphony League



Membership Application

We invite you to join us. The Membership Levels are listed below, and on the back side of this form is the address where you can mail your application. Additionally, you can go to our website: www.symphonyleague.com/membership and join online. We provide funding for the symphony through events and activities all while developing lifelong friendships. Some members support a single passion, others jump from one fun event to another, while a third subset are supporting members, and may or may not provide any personal time.

Membership Levels:

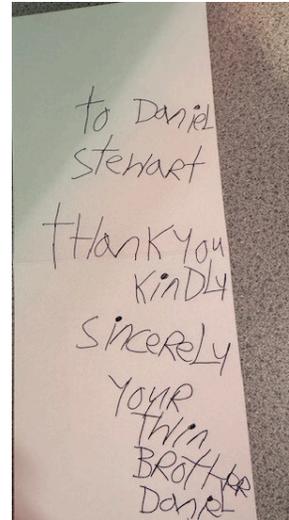
Individual: \$40. This level is for the active members who participate and attend League events.

Family: \$70. This level is perfect for two members of the same household to join. One or both members actively participate and attend events throughout the season.

Friend of the League: \$250. This level is ideal for the member who is less active in the production of events throughout the season but wants to maintain a meaningful contribution.



Membership Membership Activities



The Symphony League's primary objective is to support the symphony and our community through various activities. Recently we embarked on what seemed like a simple program to thank the musicians who play so brilliantly for us. The Gratitude Program was straightforward: A card was designed, concert attendees wrote a note to musicians thanking them for their music, and the cards were anonymously distributed to the musicians. However, we under-estimated the extent to which the musicians and our Maestro touch the community. One of the concert attendees saw the Gratitude cards and sat down and wrote a personal note to Danny. He was overwhelmed with joy that he could do this. None of us ever know the extent to which we can affect one's life with small acts of kindness.

Membership Application



SANTA CRUZ
SYMPHONY LEAGUE

Date: _____

___New

___Renewal

___\$40 Individual

___\$70 Family

___ \$250 Friend

Name: _____

Family/Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Land/Cell

Phone: (____) _____ Land/Cell

E-Mail: _____

Credit/Debit card: _____ Exp: _____ CV Code _____

Mail Application to:

Santa Cruz Symphony League

Attn: Membership

307 Church Street

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

You can also join or renew
your membership at
santacruzsymphonyleague.org/join



2025-26 Season!

By Betty Dodd

Whirlwind 2025 Season

With the memories of the magical Scheherazade and the “out of this world” Planets concerts behind us, the first part of our 2025-26 season has been thrilling. All the social events and fund raising activities and Holiday events have kept our social calendars full.

2026 Season

2026 began with the fabulous Venetian Gala and leads us into the next part of the season. With preview luncheons, popular family concert, school enrichment activities, rehearsal refreshments, salon talks, and the many opportunities for participating and volunteering, our calendars will be full again. If anyone is suffering from boredom in retirement, we invite you to join the Symphony League. We will keep you busy!

Spring concerts

Now comes the **Amadeus** concert and it will be fascinating to see what surprises Daniel Stewart and the Symphony joining with Charles Pasternak and the actors of Shakespeare Santa Cruz have in store for us. The music and drama will come alive with actors portraying Mozart and his life as told in the movie version.

Both the **Amadeus** concert and **Beethoven’s 9th Symphony** concert will feature the much loved 80 member Cabrillo Chorus under the direction of Carlin Truong. What a thrill it is to see these outstanding local groups on the stage together!

Our **Spring Pops Concert**, filled with music we all know and love, is always a wonderful evening for all ages and will bring our season to a grand finale.

See you at the Symphony !



**2026 Santa Cruz Symphony
Concert Season**

Preview Luncheons:

March 27, 2026 (sold out)

May 1, 2026

★★★★★

MUSICIAN SERIES

RECITAL

Gwendolyn Mok

Sunday, March 15, 2026

2:00 PM

*Samper Hall at Cabrillo
College*

★★★★★

Amadeus

Featuring:

Charles Pasternak

Artistic Director

Shakespeare Santa Cruz

C. Truong

Cabrillo Chorus Director

March 28-29, 2026

Saturday, March 28, 2026 7:30 p.m.

Civic Auditorium

Sunday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

Mello Center

Beethoven Symphony No. 9

May 2-3, 2026

Beethoven Symphony No. 9,

Dvorak Carnival Overture

and

World Premiere by **Jaron Lanier**

Cabrillo Symphonic Chorus

Soloists from the Metropolitan Opera

Saturday, May 2, 2026 7:30 p.m.

Civic Auditorium

Sunday, May 3, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

Mello Center

★★★★★

Spring Pops Concert

June 13, 2026

Favorites from popular movies'

evolving songbook

7:30 p.m.

Civic Auditorium

Street Party: 6:00 p.m.

On the street in front of the Civic

Tickets at: Santacruzsymphony.org