



Merced Symphony Association

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2019-2020

Our 62nd Year

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2019

The Merced Symphony's "Holiday Candlelight" Concert Rings In the Season with Winter Classics and a Sing-A-Long to Timeless Holiday Favorites on November 24, 2019 at the Historic Merced Theatre

On Sunday, November 24, 2019 at 6:30 p.m., enjoy a rare performance of holiday classics by Merced's world-class symphony featuring Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Mozart's *Alleluia*, and a sing along to Christmas-time favorites like *Oh Come All Ye Faithful* and *Silent Night*. This festive concert also marks the Merced debut of superstar soprano Maya Kherani!

The evening begins with selections from the *Messiah* by Georg Friedrich Händel, an *oratorio* combining orchestral, choir, and solo parts that traces the Christian story of Jesus's birth. Ms. Kherani's entrancing voice wisks us through Music Director Ming Luke's adaptation of *Overture, Rejoice Greatly, Pastoral Symphony, I Know That My Redeemer Liveth*, and *How Beautiful Are the Feet?*

Next we turn to *St. Paul Suite*, a string-driven theme written by Gustav Holst in 1913 for his orchestral students at the St. Paul's School.

Renowned violinist Ilana Blumberg Thomas leads Merced's symphony through the icy landscape of *L'inverno*, the wintertime of Antonio Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* composed in 1723. Hear chill winds and raindrops pursue the concerto's protagonist before enjoying the warmth of a fireplace safe from the elements.

We then experience the refuge of a glorious winter medley featuring *Fantasia on Greensleeves* by Vaughan Williams, *In the Bleak Midwinter* by Gustav Holst (as arranged by John Leavitt), *I Wonder As I Wander* by John Jacob Nile (as arranged by Bob Krogstad), *The Glory of Christmas* as arranged by John Leavitt, and *Alleluia* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart with Ms. Kherani exulting the audience to high jubilation.

Soprano superstar Ms. Kherani concludes the evening with a much anticipated (and heavily requested) Holiday Carol Sing-A-Long! The audience will know all the words

to this traditional arrangement by Mollie Budiansky of *Oh Come All Ye Faithful*, *The First Noel*, *Good King Wenceslas*, *Silent Night*, and *Joy to the World*.

Praised for her “crystalline tone” by OPERA NEWS, soprano Maya Kherani has sung over 37 roles spanning her 7-year career with companies such as the Houston Grand Opera, Opera Parallèle, Central City Opera, Opera San Jose, West Edge Opera, Beth Morrison Projects, Salt Marsh Opera, West Bay Opera, Opera NEO, and the American Bach Soloists. Maya was most recently seen as Gilda in *Rigoletto* with Opera Modesto, Polly Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera* with West Edge Opera, and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* with Cinnabar Theater. Upcoming roles include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Modesto as well as highly anticipated debuts in 2020 at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Boston Baroque. Prior to her singing career, Maya graduated *summa cum laude* from Princeton University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Following her debut with the San Francisco Symphony, violinist Ilana Blumberg Thomas is in demand as a chamber musician, collaborating with the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, Earplay, and Ensemble for these Times. Ms. Thomas recently worked with Philip Glass and Opera Paralelle, has recorded for film and television, including in Wynton Marsalis’ award-winning educational series *Marsalis on Music*, and performs and tours with bands on five-string electric violin. She has supported an array of musicians from Andrea Bocelli and Luciano Pavarotti to electronic duo ODESZA, Sarah Brightman, Josh Groban, Warren Haynes and countless others.

Special thanks to Concert Sponsors Dr. Vikram and Priya Lakireddy, Jim Abbate, Hon. Ron and Kathy Hansen, Dr. Art Kamangar, Shane Smith and Dr. Katrina Hoyer, and Dr. Sam and Dena Traina. The Merced Symphony Association thanks all our patrons for their continued support of live symphonic music in Downtown Merced.

Tickets for “Holiday Candlelight” range from \$25-\$45 for adults and \$10 for students with ID, and can be purchased online at tickets.mercedtheatre.org or at the Merced Theatre Box Office, 301 W Main Street. Box Office hours are Tuesday-Friday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased at the door the evening of the concert. All seats are reserved, so please purchase early for best seating.

The Merced Symphony Association provides the Central Valley with performances by world class musicians from across California. We coordinate special educational concerts with Merced County school districts so that every child can experience live symphonic music.

Please visit mercedsymphony.org and facebook.com/MercedSymphony.

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