

## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release: February 3, 2011

### **Finnish violinist Elina Vähälä plays Brahms concerto with Santa Rosa Symphony March 19-21**

**First prize winner in Young Concert Artists International featured in all-German program**

(SANTA ROSA, CA) – Santa Rosa Symphony Music Director Bruno Ferrandis and the orchestra present German Romanticism at its best at the March 19, 20 and 21 concerts at the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts. Brahms' sole violin concerto will be performed with emotional potency by Finnish violinist Elina Vähälä on a 1678 Stradivarius. The program opens with *Ernster Gersang* ("Serious Song") by the 59-year-old contemporary composer Wolfgang Rihm, referred to by Maestro Ferrandis as "the Boulez of Germany." Rihm's moody, pensive song cycle takes its inspiration from Brahms, whose Symphony No. 4 anchors this program. Brahms' symphony invites audiences to plunge into a haunting, probing journey that builds to a stormy, tympani-drenched ending. The work's final movement is credited by one music critic as having a "level of technical ingenuity that surpasses almost anything else in the symphonic repertoire."

#### **About Elina Vähälä**

*Svenska Dagbladet* of Stockholm has written of this first prize winner in the Young Concert Artists International: "Vähälä's playing was blinding, answering to all the demands of the music in power, virtuosity and soft melancholy...absolutely brilliant." *The New York Times* called her "highly musical" and *Le Monde* wrote: "this young woman reveals herself to be a top level soloist...impeccable accuracy...radiant and luminous."

**Get Cued in with Pre-Concert Talks and Online Notes**

To hear Maestro Ferrandis' musings on, and insights about, the March program, come to "Conversations with the Conductor," a pre-concert talk with Q & A beginning one hour before each performance (excluding the Saturday Discovery Open Rehearsal). This is an open-seating event that is free to ticket holders. [Program Notes](#) for this concert are available online.

### **Concert Sponsors**

Santa Rosa Symphony's March concerts are underwritten by **The Stare Foundation and David Stare of Dry Creek Vineyards**. Guest artist Elina Vähälä is underwritten by **Anderson, Zeigler, Disharoon, Gallagher & Gray**. Santa Rosa Symphony acknowledges the **FountainGrove Inn** for providing accommodations for our distinguished guest artists.

### **Concert Times**

Concert times are Saturday, March 19 and Monday, March 21 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, March 20 at 3 p.m. at the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts, 50 Mark West Springs Road, in Santa Rosa. The popular, family-friendly Discovery Series of open rehearsals continues at 2 p.m. on March 19. The Discovery concerts, economically priced at \$10 for adults and \$6 for youth, offer a sneak peek into the final rehearsal process before each concert set.

### **Tickets**

For tickets, call (707) 546-8742, purchase online at [santarosasympphony.com](http://santarosasympphony.com), or come in person to the Symphony Patron Services Office at 50 Santa Rosa Avenue (north door entrance, off the elevator lobby), from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, Wednesdays 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tickets may also be purchased at the door 1½ hours before each performance (based on availability.) Single tickets are \$28-\$55, with student and senior discounts available. \$10 Student Rush tickets (student I.D. required) can be purchased a half hour prior to curtain.

—Photo of Elina Vähälä available upon request. Bio of the artist follows the calendar listing—

### **CALENDAR LISTING**

**Heading:** Classical

**What:** Symphony Concert

Bruno Ferrandis, conductor  
Elina Vähälä, violin

**Date and Time:**

Sat., March 19, 2011 at 8 p.m.  
(Discovery Rehearsal, Sat., March 19 at 2 p.m.)  
Sun., March 20, 2011 at 3 p.m.  
Mon., March 21, 2011 at 8 p.m.

**Program:**

RIHM: *Serious Song*  
BRAHMS: Violin Concerto  
BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4

The pre-concert talks start one hour before each performance (except Discovery Rehearsal).

**Venue:** Wells Fargo Center for the Arts, 50 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa, CA

**Cost:** Single tickets \$28-\$55, with senior and student discounts available.

**Tickets:** Online [santarosasympphony.com](http://santarosasympphony.com), by phone 54-MUSIC (707-546-8742) or in person at the SRS Patron Services Office, 50 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

### Guest Artist Brief Bio

**Elina Vähälä, violin**

Born in the United States and raised in Finland, violinist Elina Vähälä made her concerto debut at the age of 12 with the Sinfonia Lahti. In 1993-1994 she was chosen “Young Master Soloist” of the Sinfonia Lahti, and since then she has performed regularly with this Gramophone Award-winning orchestra. She has also performed with other major orchestras in her home country, including the Helsinki, Turku and Tampere Philharmonic orchestras, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra and Virtuosi di Kuhmo Chamber Orchestra. She is the first prize winner of the 1999 Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York and has also won prizes in the Lipinsky-Wieniawski competition in Lublin, Poland, and in the Joseph Joachim Violin Competition in Hannover, Germany.

She has appeared in chamber concerts at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall and for the Boston Chamber Music Society, among many others. Vähälä has performed with the Israel Camerata, Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerakademie, Danish Radio Sinfonietta, Northwest Chamber Orchestra and English Chamber Orchestra. She has performed in England, Finland, Poland, Greece, Turkey, South Africa, the Caribbean Islands and Spain. She has been a guest artist at festivals in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa, including the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, Helsinki Festival, Naantali, Turku, Oulu and Korsholm music festivals, La Roque d’Antheron Festival and Pablo Casals Festivals in Prades and Paris, Spoleto USA, El Paso and Gilmore festivals, the Forbidden City Music Festival in Beijing, and the International Classical Music Festival in South Africa.

Vähälä plays a 1678 Stradivarius violin generously loaned by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. Complete bio [here](#).

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