

MODESTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Contact:

Caroline Nickel
(209) 523-4156
cnickel@modestosymphony.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / January 9, 2024

[FOR COMPLETE ARTIST BIOS AND HIGH-RES PHOTOS, PLEASE CLICK HERE](#)



(From left to right: conductor Nicholas Hersh, Modesto Symphony Orchestra)

MODESTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMS GERSHWIN'S AN AMERICAN IN PARIS AND YOUTH ORCHESTRA PERFORMS SPRING CONCERT IN FEBRUARY

February 9 & 10, 2024 - Modesto Symphony Orchestra Performs Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony*, and Boulanger's *D'un Matin de Printemps (Of a Spring Morning)*

February 10, 2024 - Modesto Symphony Youth Orchestra to perform Mozart, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Tchaikovsky in Spring Concert

MODESTO, CA – The Modesto Symphony Orchestra (MSO) will perform [Gershwin's *An American in Paris*](#) on February 9 & 10, 2024 led by Music Director [Nicholas Hersh](#). The weekend's program includes MSO's premiere of **William L. Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony***, as well as **Lili Boulanger's *D'un Matin de Printemps (Of a Spring Morning)*** which will feature a video presentation created in collaboration with **Visit Modesto**. The program will end with **Gershwin's *An American in Paris***.

"Our February Classics program explores the shifting sonic landscape of the early 20th Century, when musical innovation was constant, and the now-familiar "swing" and "jazz" were new!" says Music

Director Nicholas Hersh. “Anchoring our concert is Gershwin’s famous orchestral travelogue, *An American in Paris*, which captures all the hustle and bustle of the Champs-Élysées and the composer’s own bittersweet homesickness for New York. Before that, we’ll hear the rarely performed Negro Folk Symphony by William Dawson, which weaves traditional Black American spirituals into a symphonic tour-de-force. And connecting the two: the wordless tone poem *Of a Spring Morning* by the French prodigy Lili Boulanger, featuring a new multimedia collaboration with Visit Modesto just in time for almond blossom season!”

The video presentation made in collaboration with Visit Modesto will feature photos and footage of almond blossoms, capturing the beauty of springtime in Stanislaus County. It will be projected on screen during the MSO’s performance of Boulanger’s *D’un Matin de Printemps (Of a Spring Morning)*, similar to MSO’s live-to-film concert movie performances.

This weekend also includes the [Modesto Symphony Youth Orchestra \(MSYO\)](#) in their Spring Concert on February 10, 2024. The MSYO comprises two orchestras with students from grades 5 through 12 and is led by a deeply engaged leadership team. For this concert, the MSYO Symphony Orchestra will be conducted by former MSYO Music Director and the MSO’s current Principal Pops Conductor, [Ryan Murray](#). This Spring Concert will feature works by Mozart, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, and more. Learn more about the MSYO at [ModestoSymphony.org/about-msyo](#).

MODESTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, [GERSHWIN’S AN AMERICAN IN PARIS](#)

Friday, February 9, 2024, at 7:30 pm and Saturday, February 10, 2024, at 7:30 pm

[Nicholas Hersh](#), conductor

PROGRAM

William L. Dawson: Negro Folk Symphony

Lili Boulanger: *D’un Matin de Printemps (Of a Spring Morning)*

George Gershwin: *An American in Paris*

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, [SPRING CONCERT](#)

Saturday, February 10, 2024, at 2:00 pm

[Donald Grishaw](#), MSYO Concert Orchestra Conductor

[Ryan Murray](#), MSYO Symphony Orchestra Conductor

Program to include works by Mozart, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, and more!

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 2022-2023 season, Hersh debuts with the Utah, Colorado and Modesto symphonies, and The Florida Orchestra, and returns to the Baltimore, Houston and New Jersey symphony orchestras, and Rochester Philharmonic. Highlights of the prior season include engagements with the National (D.C.), Detroit, Grand Rapids, Portland (ME), and Tucson symphony orchestras, Louisiana Philharmonic, Sarasota Orchestra, and symphonies of Richmond and Winston-Salem, and Peabody Opera. Other recent conducting appearances include the Phoenix Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, and New World Symphony.

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. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hersh developed and conducted the BSO's new digital concert series, BSO Sessions. Mixing performance with documentary-style interviews, Hersh introduced the BSO and online audiences to a wide variety of new repertoire, including numerous living composers as well as seldom-performed historical composers. "His commitment to performing works by composers of color," described BSO leadership, "will continue to inform the BSO's programming long into the future."

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.

An avid educator, Hersh has embraced the Young Persons Concert format as a crucial method for orchestras to serve their communities. From 2016-2020, he served as Artistic Director of the Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestras, and he continues to be a frequent collaborator and guest faculty at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University.

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, studying with David Effron and Arthur Fagen. In 2011 and 2012, he was a Conducting Fellow with the prestigious American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, studying with mentors Robert Spano, Hugh Wolff, and Larry Rachleff, and has participated in masterclasses with Bernard Haitink and Michael Tilson Thomas. 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.

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.

###

*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.*