



# Symphony Tacoma Season Finale presents Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

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Symphony Tacoma will conclude its 2018-2019 season on Saturday, May 11 with Ode to Joy, a program featuring arguably Beethoven's greatest work and one of the greatest achievements in the history of Western music. The concert will take place at 7:30 pm in Tacoma's Pantages Theater.

Opening the program is In Hopes of Finding the Sun, a new work by rising-star American composer Hannah Lash that captures a contemporary woman's perspective on the famous Friedrich Schiller 1792 poem, Ode to Joy. Commissioned by Symphony Tacoma, the piece will pay tribute to the orchestra's performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

"This is my personal response to Beethoven's Ninth, particularly the Ode to Joy," says Lash. "It includes full chorus and orchestra, and the text is my own re-imagining of Schiller's poem which Beethoven set. It is interesting, in approaching a piece that celebrates joy, how deeply profound-almost onerous-the task feels. As artists, we are perhaps more accustomed to responding to painful emotions or creating art that lives in an abstract realm. When approaching a piece about joy and the Divine (in the broadest human sense rather than the religious), the responsibility one feels to make a piece that can sing is truly a solemn one. It is an honor, and I am thrilled to be working with Symphony Tacoma on this project."

Lash's compositional style is highly individual and shows beauty and great integrity. Music Director Sarah Ioannides purposefully selected Lash for this project due to the "lightness and transparency her music conveys to the listener." In Ioannides view, "Very few works can stand up to Beethoven 9, and my hope is this will be a wonderful contrast and prepare the listener for the depth of the Beethoven."

Beethoven's remarkable final symphony, Symphony No. 9 "Choral" (1822-1824), was the longest and most complex of its time. Its premiere in May 1824 marked Beethoven's return to the stage in 12 years since his hearing loss. At one point in the performance, one of the soloists had to tug on his sleeve so that he could accept the audience's ecstatic applause.

The work's most striking innovation is the use of solo voices and a chorus in the symphony's finale at the same level as the instruments. Performing the vocal parts will be Symphony Tacoma Voices under the direction of Dr. Geoffrey Boers; Bremerton Symphony Chorale under the direction of LeeAnne Campos; and soloists Kristin Vogel (soprano); Melissa Plagemann (mezzo-soprano); Ross Hauck (tenor); and Charles Robert Stephens (bass). Dubbed "the symphony to end all symphonies," the work remains timeless and is still one of the most-performed works in the world.

Tickets range from \$24 to \$85 and are on sale through the Tacoma Arts Live box office. To order tickets, call 253-591-5894 or visit [symphonytacoma.org](http://symphonytacoma.org). Ode to Joy is sponsored by Commencement Bank, General Plastics, Women's Philharmonic Advocacy and Showcase Magazine.

#### ABOUT THE COMPOSER:

Hailed by the New York Times as "striking and resourceful...handsomely brooding," Hannah Lash obtained her Ph.D in Composition from Harvard University in 2010. She has held teaching positions at Harvard University (Teaching Fellow), at Alfred University (Guest Professor of Composition), and currently serves on the composition faculty at Yale University School of Music. She is also an accomplished harpist, having played at venues including Carnegie Hall, the Cabrillo Festival, Miller Theatre, the Alabama Symphony, the Yale School of Music, and the Bennington Chamber Music Conference. As a composer, Lash has received numerous honors and prizes, including the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Fromm Foundation Commission, a fellowship from Yaddo Artist Colony, the Naumburg Prize in Composition, the Barnard Rogers Prize in Composition, the Bernard and Rose Sernoffsky Prize in Composition, among others. She is currently developing a new chamber opera and a concerto for two harps and orchestra, both scheduled to premiere in 2019.