

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WATCH: WITH INTERNATIONAL CONCERTS CANCELLED, AWARD-WINNING
SANTA MONICA HIGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA DEDICATES A VIRTUAL
PERFORMANCE OF BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH FINALE
TO ALL ESSENTIAL SERVICE PERSONNEL**



All 88 members of the Samohi Symphony Orchestra perform from their homes.

Click [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djFdHt30bml) to watch the performance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djFdHt30bml>

Santa Monica, CA, May 20, 2020: High school students everywhere are facing cancelled end-of-year gatherings, graduations, and more, but the Santa Monica High School Symphony Orchestra decided to pivot and perform a portion of their international tour repertoire virtually.

The students dedicated the Beethoven Fifth Symphony's triumphant finale to health care professionals and essential workers who are risking their lives to keep everyone safe.

Recreating a symphony performance without the ability to gather was a challenge the students gladly shouldered. The award-winning orchestra's students recorded their individual parts from home while watching a video of Santa Monica High School Orchestra Conductor, **Joni Swenson**. Harvard-bound Senior, Silas Garcia-George, created a composite video by synchronizing all of the individual performances in this student-driven project. Despite the difficulties imposed by physical separation, they achieved a beautiful performance of this orchestral masterpiece. Although the group of accomplished young musicians was unable to perform at planned venues in Amsterdam and Berlin, Swenson feels that this virtual performance lifted the students' spirits,, turning disappointment into something positive.

"Beethoven's 5th starts with a dark 4-note motif in a minor key, but the finale is a triumphant expression of hope and victory. This perfectly symbolizes mankind's eventual triumph over this worldwide pandemic," Swenson said.

William Nemoy, a Senior who will be attending Georgetown University in the fall, stated "It was definitely a disappointment to have the tour cancelled. Traveling in Europe with my best friends to perform Beethoven's masterpiece in celebration of his 250th birthday would have been a dream come true. However, if there is anyone who exemplifies the persistence of creating music in the face of adversity it is Beethoven, who continued to compose even after he lost his hearing. In my mind, there is no better way to honor Beethoven's legacy than to persevere and continue to perform his work despite our separation."



Members of the 2019-2020 Santa Monica High School Symphony Orchestra

About The Santa Monica High School Orchestra Program (founded in 1913)

The Samohi Orchestra Program includes over 300 students in seven ensembles from its diverse student body. The orchestras won first in their division at the 40th Annual Northwest Orchestra Festival, Best String Section in the National Orchestra Competition at Lincoln Center in New York, and was named the Grand Champion Orchestra in the American String Teachers Association Orchestra Festival. The Samohi Symphony is the first public high school ensemble to have performed at Walt Disney Concert Hall. The Symphony has impressed audiences in performances at prestigious venues worldwide including Carnegie Hall, the Rudolfinum in Prague, and other famed concert halls in Europe, South America, and China. The Samohi Orchestras have collaborated with distinguished professionals including the world-renowned late cellist Lynn Harrell; Samohi alum, David Robertson, conductor of the Sydney Symphony, and Juilliard Conducting Professor; theatre director Peter Sellars; Daniel Boico, New York Philharmonic; Academy-Award winning film composers Michael Giacchino and Klaus Badelt; as well as Grammy Award-winning musicians Jackson Browne, Rick Springfield, and the late Glenn Frey.

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