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NEW WEST SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES 2025 MASTERPIECE SERIES CELEBRATING ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Artistic & Music Director Michael Christie's Contract Extended to 2029

Season Highlights include:

***Carmina Burana* with the New West Symphony Chorus**

***E.T. The Extra Terrestrial* in Concert**

Selections from Bizet's *Carmen*

***Also sprach Zarathustra* (featured in *2001: A Space Odyssey*)**

Beethoven Favorites Concert



Photo: Eugene Yankevich

Thousand Oaks, CA, August 20, 2024 – The New West Symphony's (NWS) GRAMMY®-winning **Artistic and Music Director Michael Christie** and **CEO Natalia Staneva** have announced the 2025 Masterpiece Series in celebration of the Symphony's **30th Anniversary**. This milestone year, under the direction of Christie, continues their vision of welcoming established and new audiences with energetic symphonic favorites and cross-genre events.

In addition, 2024 brings three dynamic concerts to Ventura County audiences on October 5 and 6; November 2 and 3; and December 7 and 8.

“I am thrilled to be ushering New West Symphony into its 30th Anniversary season and a new decade. This anniversary year reflects our vision to offer engaging programming to the widest audiences. I’m particularly excited by the great variety of music and artistic partnerships. We’re proud to offer concert experiences inspired by community, accessibility, diversity and audience connection. Our opening concert begins with Strauss’ *Also sprach Zarathustra*, prominent in films such as *Barbie* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. *Zarathustra*’s famous ‘sunrise’ powerfully encapsulates our organization’s drive for excellence,” said Christie. “Every performance with my NWS colleagues is a joy for me and for our audiences who have come to know their energy and quality well.”

New West Symphony musicians hail from throughout the SoCal region and are contributors to their vibrant symphonic, operatic, film and education communities.

Michael Christie’s Contract Extended Five Years to 2029

Artistic and Music Director Michael Christie was appointed to his position in December 2018. The NWS Board of Directors is proud to announce an extension of his contract for five years, through December 2029.

“I speak on behalf of the entire Board of Directors when I share our gratitude and admiration for the leadership of Maestro Michael Christie. We are delighted that, with his guidance, New West Symphony will continue to bring world-class performances to Ventura County and beyond. Time and time again, the community of musicians, staff and patrons express thanks for Michael’s leadership and innovation, and we are thrilled to have him as part of the Symphony family for five more years,” said Dr. Paul Finkel, NWS Board Chair.

New West Symphony’s 30th Anniversary Season in 2025

The orchestra’s six-program 2025 Masterpiece Series commences on January 25 and 26 in two performance venues: Bank of America Performing Arts Center (BAPAC) in Thousand Oaks and Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center (RCPAC) in Camarillo.

“This year has been a wonderful season of growth for us, not only for returning patrons but also many new subscribers and concert attendees. We’re seeing our institution-wide efforts of outreach, inclusion, community partnerships, and bringing the highest caliber of music to our region reflected in our audience attendance and their enthusiastic response. I am so proud of our musicians, teachers, volunteers, Board of Directors, and staff who have worked with us over three decades, through challenges and triumphs,” said Staneva. “The Symphony’s 30-year history and the fulfilling of our vision to nurture and support the arts in Ventura County could not have happened without our community partners. With love, gratitude and appreciation, we will celebrate their contributions to our history at every concert and event in 2025.”

The January concerts, opening with *Also sprach Zarathustra*, also feature a world premiere work written by Chinese-American composer **Kui Dong** in honor of the Chinese Lunar New Year. Kui Dong teaches at Dartmouth College and is a 2024 Guggenheim Fellowship recipient. **Hong Wang**, an erhu and Chinese wind instrumentalist, who also serves as Special Researcher for the China Conservatory of Music’s Oriental Music Research Institute, will be the guest soloist. Hong Wang’s work is heard on legendary film scores, documentaries, TV and video games, including *The Legend of Korra* and *Kung Fu Panda*.

March 1 and 2 concerts exemplify NWS' commitment to community partnerships featuring Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Saint-Saëns' witty *Carnival of the Animals* highlights the internationally renowned **Vieness Piano Duo**. Regularly in demand throughout the world, the duo makes their NWS debut with these performances. The **New West Symphony Chorus** will be showcased, along with regional favorites **Los Robles Children's Choir** and **State Street Ballet**, illuminating the Symphony's ongoing commitment to providing a professional platform to community partners. Soprano **Celena Shafer** returns after enthralling audiences in recent NWS *Messiah* performances, alongside debuting tenor **Arnold Livingston Geis** and baritone **José Adán Pérez**.

Bohemian Rhapsody & Carmen, presented April 5 and 6, includes selections from Bizet's *Carmen* and Smetana's beloved "**Moldau**" from *Ma Vlast*, both works that are celebrating 150-year anniversaries in 2025. *Carmen* is presented in partnership with **Angels Vocal Art**. Selections from three 1725 **J.S. Bach** cantatas (300 years) feature our partnership with the **Pepperdine University Chamber Choir** (Dr. Ryan Board, director). **Los Robles Children's Choir** is also featured. Wrapping up this concert of rousing anniversaries is a more recent milestone from 1975 (50 years), featuring guest vocalists performing *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Rhinestone Cowboy* and *Mamma Mia*, with an audience sing-along.

Following on the success of NWS' 2023 "Binging on Mozart" project, highlighting favorites from genres spanning a composer's output, the Symphony will present "**Best of Beethoven**" on October 4 and 5, giving audiences a feast of Beethoven favorites performed by NWS principal musicians, the **NWS Chorus**, and Ukrainian pianist **Inna Faliks**, a recording artist, UCLA professor, and curator featured recently on NPR's *Morning Edition*.

NWS musicians' presence in Hollywood recording studios is acknowledged with a Halloween weekend showing of Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra Terrestrial*, with the symphony playing John Williams' Academy Award®-winning score live to picture. It promises to be fun for the entire family and the audience is encouraged to dress in their favorite costumes for these November 1 and 2 events.

The 30th Anniversary season concludes with the fourth installment of NWS' Winter Spectacular presentation, "Winter Dreams," a family-friendly event with holiday favorites and winter-inspired symphonic treats including Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker Suite*.

2025 Masterpiece Series: 30th Anniversary Season

Saturdays at 7 p.m. - Bank of America Performing Arts Center (BAPAC)

2100 E. Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks

Sundays at 3 p.m. - Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center (RCPAC)

4235 Mar Vista Drive, Camarillo

A Symphonic Odyssey

Saturday, January 25, 2025 (BAPAC) | Sunday, January 26, 2025 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor

Hong Wang, Chinese traditional instruments

R. Strauss: *Also sprach Zarathustra*

Ligeti: *Atmosphères*

Kui Dong: **World Premiere** in honor of Chinese Lunar New Year

Strauss, J. II: *On the Beautiful Blue Danube Waltz*

Carmina & Carnival

Saturday, March 1, 2025 (BAPAC) | Sunday, March 2, 2025 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor
Viness Piano Duo (Vijay Venkatesh, piano; Eva Schaumkell, piano)
Celana Shafer, soprano
Arnold Livingston Geis, tenor
José Adán Pérez, baritone
New West Symphony Chorus, Wyant Morton, director
Los Robles Children's Choir, Emma Roche, director
State Street Ballet, Cecily MacDougall, director

Saint-Saëns: *Carnival of the Animals*
Orff/Killmayer: *Carmina Burana*

Bohemian Rhapsody & Carmen

Saturday, April 5, 2025 (BAPAC) | Sunday, April 6, 2025 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor
Angels Vocal Art, Kristof van Grysperre, artistic director
Pepperdine University Chamber Choir, Dr. Ryan Board, director
Los Robles Children's Choir, Emma Roche, director

Bizet: Selections from *Carmen* (1875)
Smetana: "Moldau" from *Ma Vlast* (1875)
J.S. Bach: Selections from Cantatas - "Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern," "Jesum lass ich nicht von mir" and "Preis und Dank" (1725)
Bohemian Rhapsody, Rhinestone Cowboy, Mamma Mia (1975)

Best of Beethoven

Saturday, October 4, 2025 (BAPAC) | Sunday, October 5, 2025 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor
Inna Faliks, piano
New West Symphony Principal Musicians
New West Symphony Chorus, Wyant Morton, director

All-Beethoven Program:
Symphony No. 6, Mvt I
String Trio in G Major, Mvt IV
Sonata No. 23, "Appassionata," Mvt I
Sonata No. 5 for Cello and Piano, Mvt I
The Creatures of Prometheus Overture
Symphony No. 7, Mvt II
String Quartet in E-flat Major, "Harp," Mvt I
Choral Fantasy for piano, chorus and orchestra

E.T. the Extra Terrestrial in concert

Saturday, November 1, 2025 (BAPAC) | Sunday, November 2, 2025 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor

Director Steven Spielberg's heartwarming masterpiece is one of the brightest stars in motion picture history. Filled with unparalleled magic and imagination, *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* follows the moving story of a lost little alien who befriends a 10-year-old boy named Elliott. Experience all the mystery and fun of their unforgettable adventure in the beloved movie that captivated audiences around the world, complete with John Williams' Academy Award®-winning score performed live by the New West Symphony orchestra in sync to the film projected on a huge HD screen. Bring the family and come dressed in your Halloween best!

Winter Dreams

Saturday, December 6, 2025 (BAPAC) | Sunday, December 7, 2025 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor

New West Symphony Chorus, Wyant Morton, director

Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker Suite* will swing you into the holiday spirit along with festive carols featuring the New West Symphony Chorus (sung in English and Spanish), a Las Posadas celebration, and seasonally-inspired music from Tchaikovsky's "Winter Dreams" Symphony. The holidays never sounded so good! Additional holiday programming to be announced.

Ellington/Strayhorn/Tyzik: *Nutcracker Suite*

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 1, "Winter Dreams"

Las Posadas Celebration

Gary Fry: *Allelujah, Venite Gaudete, Wexford Processional, World of Joy*

Ticket prices range from \$35-\$125. Six-concert and nine-concert subscribers receive ticket discounts, free ticket exchanges, invitations to exclusive events and other benefits. New this year are Choose-Your-Own series packages where patrons receive 10% off tickets if they purchase 3 or more concerts. **New 2025 Masterpiece Series subscription packages are on sale now and single tickets go on sale October 1.** To order tickets, visit newwestsymphony.org or call 866.776.8400.

2024 Masterpiece Series: Three Upcoming Concerts

Saturdays at 7 p.m. - Bank of America Performing Arts Center (BAPAC)

2100 E. Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks

Sundays at 3 p.m. - Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center (RCPAC)

4235 Mar Vista Drive, Camarillo

Brahms, Mendelssohn & Ravel...plus a World Premiere

Saturday, October 5, 2024 (BAPAC) | Sunday, October 6, 2024 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor

Alyssa Park, violin

Pacific Festival Ballet, Kim Maselli, director

Brahms: *Hungarian Dances*, No. 1, No. 3 & No. 10
Ravel: *Tzigane* for Violin and Orchestra
Derrick Skye: *Amalgamation* for Violin and Orchestra (**World Premiere**, a NWS commission)
Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4, "Italian"

New World Symphony

Saturday, November 2, 2024 (BAPAC) | Sunday, November 3, 2024 (RCPAC)

Michael Christie, conductor

Lara Downes, piano

Adolphus Hailstork: Three Spirituals for Orchestra

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit, Kum Ba Yah, Oh Freedom"

Blake/Arroyo: "Love Will Find a Way"

Jessie Montgomery: *Rounds* for Piano and String Orchestra

(2024 GRAMMY® Award Winner for Best Contemporary Classical Composition)

Joplin/Buck: Two Rags for Piano and Orchestra (*Elite Syncopations, Maple Leaf Rag*)

Dvořák | Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"

accompanied by stunning images by photo historian Joseph Sohm

Winter Spectacular: Holidays of Light

Saturday, December 7, 2024 (BAPAC) | Sunday, December 8, 2024 (RCPAC)

Continuing New West Symphony's tradition, Winter Spectacular features winter-inspired symphonic classics, heart-warming seasonal favorites and regional performing partners, making this a must-see event for the entire family. Oscar-nominated for Best Animated Short Film, *The Snowman*, based on Raymond Briggs' picture book with music by Howard Blake, is featured alongside symphonic masterworks and favorite holiday carols.

Michael Christie, conductor

Los Robles Children's Choir, Emma Roche, director

Vocal soloists

Grieg: "Morning Mood" from *Peer Gynt*

Haydn: Symphony No. 59, "Fire," I. Presto

Howard Blake: *The Snowman*, accompanied by the award-winning animated short film

Mozart: Serenade in G Major, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," K. 525, Allegro

Mozart: "A Musical Joke," K. 522, Presto

Trad./O'Loughlin: *El Burrito Sabanero*

Trad./O'Loughlin: *Los Peces en el Río*

with Los Robles Children's Choir

Trad./arr. Jeffrey Biegel: *Hanukah Fantasy*

with vocal soloists

Leontovych: *Carol of the Bells*
John Rutter: *Silent Night*
with Los Robles Children's Choir

Reisman: *A Merry Little Sing-Along*
with vocal soloists
Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas, Let It Snow, The Christmas Song, Winter Wonderland, Jingle Bells
Anderson: *Sleigh Ride*

Ticket prices range from \$35-\$125. Three-concert subscribers receive ticket discounts, free ticket exchanges, invitations to exclusive events and other benefits. To order tickets, visit newwestsymphony.org or call 866.776.8400.

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About New West Symphony

Founded in 1995 and entering its 30th Anniversary season, the New West Symphony (NWS) is a professional orchestra that draws players from the rich talent pool of professional LA-area musicians. NWS is guided by the artistic direction of GRAMMY®-winning Maestro Michael Christie and CEO Natalia Staneva, recipient of the ACSO 2023 Executive Director of the Year award. NWS is the resident company of the Bank of America Performing Arts Center in Thousand Oaks and also performs at the Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center in Camarillo. The organization presents six Masterpiece Series concerts annually, performing major works from the symphonic repertoire with internationally-acclaimed guest artists. NWS also provides education and engagement opportunities for the communities it serves through its [Symphonic Adventures](#) program for youth and the [Laby Harmony Project](#), a year-round music and leadership program for underserved students. newwestsymphony.org

About Michael Christie

Named New West Symphony's Artistic and Music Director in December 2018, GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor Michael Christie is a thoughtfully innovative conductor, equally at home in the symphonic and opera worlds, who is focused on making the audience experience at his performances entertaining, enlightening and enriching. Deeply committed to bringing new works to life, he has championed commissions by leading and emerging composers. Christie served as Music Director of the Minnesota Opera (2012-18), Phoenix Symphony (2005-13), Brooklyn Philharmonic (2005-10) and Colorado Music Festival (2000-13), and as Chief Conductor of the Queensland Orchestra (2001-04) in Australia. For more information, visit michaelchristieonline.com and follow him on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.