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## **NEW WEST SYMPHONY PRESENTS PIANIST LARA DOWNES AND DVOŘÁK'S "NEW WORLD" SYMPHONY ON NOVEMBER 2 & 3**

*Pianist and KUSC radio host Lara Downes performs 2024 GRAMMY®-winning composition  
"Rounds" by Jessie Montgomery*

*Dvořák's epic "New World" Symphony to be accompanied by stunning images  
by Joseph Sohm and pre-recorded narration by Hollywood Walk of Fame honoree  
William Shatner*



**Thousand Oaks, CA, October 15, 2024** – On November 2 and 3, New West Symphony (NWS) presents the "New World" Symphony by Dvořák, ragtime tunes by Scott Joplin, *Three Spirituals for Orchestra* by Adolphus Hailstork, "Love Will Find a Way" by Eubie Blake, and the 2024 GRAMMY®-winning composition, *Rounds*, by Jessie Montgomery. Pianist and KUSC radio host **Lara Downes** is the featured soloist.

"The heartbeat of American music is propulsive and yet expansive, as demonstrated by this treasure trove of works. I look forward to welcoming Lara Downes to our stages and wowing our community with synchronized drone imagery by photo historian **Joseph Sohm**, set to Dvořák's glorious 'New World' Symphony. This Americana-inspired program reminds us of the wondrous natural beauty of our country and the imagination of artists to reflect our heritage through music," said Artistic and Music Director **Michael Christie**.

Photographer/videographer Sohm says, “I was commissioned by the US Bicentennial Commission on the US Constitution in Philadelphia to write and photograph a multimedia piece that I entitled ‘NEWORLD’ (musically based upon Dvořák’s ‘New World’ Symphony). I contracted **William Shatner** to read my narration in 1987, and it is this script combined with all-new motion imagery that I have taken across the 50 states over the past five years that will be on display during the November concerts—all as part of the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of America. The concerts will be illustrated throughout with drone, timelapse and video imagery spanning the 50 states.”

Prior to the weekend performances, NWS hosts **Meet the Artists on Friday, November 1 at 2 p.m. at University Village Thousand Oaks**. Meet the Artists provides a unique “behind the scenes” experience hosted by Maestro Christie with guests Lara Downes and Joseph Sohm. The free event begins with a dessert reception at 1 p.m. Reservations are required by calling University Village at 805.241.3300 at least 48 hours in advance.

## **New West Symphony presents “New World” Symphony**

**Saturday, November 2 at 7 p.m.** - Bank of America Performing Arts Center (BAPAC)  
2100 E. Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks

**Sundays, November 3 at 3 p.m.** - Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center (RCPAC)  
4235 Mar Vista Drive, Camarillo

**Michael Christie**, conductor

**Lara Downes**, piano

**Joseph Sohm**, story and visuals

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

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 Joseph Sohm and pre-recorded narration by William Shatner*

*Encore: Audience Sing-along*

Ticket prices range from \$35-\$125. Tickets for students and children are \$15. The November concerts are generously sponsored by **University Village Thousand Oaks**. At these concerts, New West Symphony honors **Founding and Legacy Society Donors**.

New 2025 Masterpiece Series subscription packages and single tickets are on sale now. Season subscribers receive up to 20% off single ticket prices and other discounts, free ticket exchanges, invitations to exclusive events and other benefits.

For full performance details and to order tickets, visit [newwestsymphony.org](http://newwestsymphony.org) or call 866.776.8400.

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### **About Lara Downes**

NPR's *Performance Today* 2022 Classical Woman of the Year, American pianist Lara Downes has been called "a musical ray of hope" by *NBC News* and "an explorer whose imagination is fired by bringing notice to the underrepresented and forgotten" by *The Log Journal*. An iconoclast and trailblazer, Downes occupies a unique position of visibility through her dynamic work as a sought-after soloist, a Billboard Chart-topping recording artist and a beloved NPR personality as host of her popular video show *Amplify with Lara Downes*. A cultural visionary with a firm finger on the pulse of tomorrow, Downes is increasingly active as a curator and creative partner with institutions including Lincoln Center, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Brevard Music Festival, and as Resident Artist for Classical KDFC in San Francisco and Classical KUSC in Los Angeles. Her uniquely insightful approach to concept and curation has created an extensive and acclaimed series of chart-topping recordings on the Pentatone, Sony Masterworks and Sono Luminus labels, including her latest release, *Rhapsody in Blue Reimagined*. [laradownes.com](http://laradownes.com)

### **About Joseph Sohm**

American History teacher turned Photographer-Author-Public Speaker Joseph Sohm is both student and teacher of America's past, present and future. He conceived "Visions of America"™ (previously presented with the New West Symphony) as an ongoing multimedia project dedicated to capturing the American spirit in print and multimedia presentations. Spanning 30 years, Sohm has traveled and photographed all 50 states. Images from his "Visions of America" collection are published 50,000 times worldwide a year and 500,000 times over his lifetime, through international photo agencies Getty Images, Corbis, Shutterstock, etc. His contribution to this concert is NEWORLD, a video collage of images depicting gorgeous American landscapes, plus a moving script narrated by William Shatner, set to Dvořák's "New World" Symphony. [joesohm.com](http://joesohm.com)

### **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. [michaelchristieonline.com](http://michaelchristieonline.com)

### **About New West Symphony**

Founded in 1995 and entering its 30<sup>th</sup> 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. NWS is a 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](http://SymphonicAdventures.org) program for youth and the [Laby Harmony Project](http://LabyHarmonyProject.org), a year-round music and leadership program for underserved students. [newwestsymphony.org](http://newwestsymphony.org)