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NEW WEST SYMPHONY CONTINUES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH “CARMINA & CARNIVAL” ON MARCH 1 & 2

Concert program includes Orff’s epic Carmina Burana, featuring New West Symphony musicians, the New West Symphony Chorus, Vieness Piano Duo, Los Robles Children’s Choir and State Street Ballet

Saint-Saëns’ Carnival of Animals presented with actor/comedian Jim Meskimen and Vieness Piano Duo



Thousand Oaks, CA, February 6, 2025 – On March 1 and 2, New West Symphony (NWS) continues a celebration of its 30th Anniversary season with Orff’s epic *Carmina Burana*, featuring New West Symphony musicians, the **New West Symphony Chorus**, **Vieness Piano Duo**, **Los Robles Children’s Choir**, **State Street Ballet** dancers and renowned vocal soloists: Celena Shafer, Arnold Livingston Geis and David Adam Moore. Saint-Saëns’ humorous and virtuosic *Carnival of the Animals* is presented with actor/comedian **Jim Meskimen** and the **Vieness Piano Duo**.

“Both works on this program highlight the extraordinary talents of the Vieness Piano Duo and our profound commitment to community partnerships, featuring the NWS Chorus, Los Robles Children’s Choir, and State Street Ballet performing world premiere choreography, plus narration by nationally-renowned actor/comedian Jim Meskimen,” said Music Director **Michael Christie**. “Whether it be the gently flowing cello melody of *Carnival of the Animals*’ ‘Swan,’ or the thundering vocals and percussion of *Carmina Burana*, I am proud to present this musical tour de force to our community.”

NWS' March concerts are generously sponsored by **Athens Services, Karen Finkel Passport to Adventures Fund, Barbara Meister, and Nancy O'Reilly and Daughters Family Foundation**. At these concerts, NWS celebrates education partners and honors the donors and foundations who contribute to NWS education programs.

"We recognize educators who are the cornerstone of our communities. They nurture the minds of our students and shape their futures. We applaud and celebrate their dedication and passion to build a brighter tomorrow," said **Natalia Staneva**, CEO of the Symphony.

Meet the Artists

Prior to the weekend performances, NWS hosts **Meet the Artists** on **Thursday, February 27 at 2 p.m.** at **University Village Thousand Oaks**. Meet the Artists provides a unique "behind the scenes" experience hosted by Maestro Christie with guest artists: Vieness Piano Duo (Vijay Venkatesh & Eva Schaumkell, pianos); Celena Shafer, soprano; Arnold Livingston Geis, tenor; and David Adam Moore, baritone. 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. The event is also livestreamed on the NWS Facebook page and YouTube channel. More info at newwestsymphony.org/meet-the-artists.

New West Symphony presents **Carmina & Carnival**

Saturday, March 1 at 7 p.m. - Bank of America Performing Arts Center (BAPAC)

2100 E. Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks

Sunday, March 2 at 3 p.m. - Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center (RCPAC)

4235 Mar Vista Drive, Camarillo

Michael Christie, conductor

Vieness Piano Duo (Vijay Venkatesh, piano; Eva Schaumkell, piano)

Celena Shafer, soprano

Arnold Livingston Geis, tenor

David Adam Moore, baritone

Jim Meskimen, narrator

New West Symphony Chorus, Wyant Morton, dir.

Los Robles Children's Choir, Emma Roche, dir.

State Street Ballet Professional Track (performing world premiere choreography), Megan Philipp, artistic dir. & Cecily MacDougall, executive dir.

Saint-Saëns: *Carnival of the Animals*

Orff/Killmayer: *Carmina Burana*

Ticket prices range from \$40-\$134. Tickets for students and children are \$15. Subscribers to the **2025 Masterpiece Series** receive up to 20% off single ticket prices and other discounts, free ticket exchanges, invitations to exclusive events and other benefits. Choose-Your-Own packages of 3+ concerts are also available for a 10% discount off single ticket prices. For full performance details and to order tickets, visit newwestsymphony.org or call **866.776.8400**.

Note: New West Symphony is offering free tickets to first responders and families who have been displaced due to the recent wildfires in the region. Please call the Box Office at 866.776.8400 to reserve. The offer is valid for up to 4 tickets per household; based on availability.

Coming Up...

Bohemian Rhapsody & Carmen

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

Michael Christie, conductor

Angels Vocal Art, Kristof van Grysperre, artistic dir.

Pepperdine University Chamber Choir, Dr. Ryan Board, dir.

Los Robles Children's Choir, Emma Roche, dir.

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)

Ticket prices range from \$40-\$134. Tickets for students and children are \$15.

Summerfest 2025

Sunday, June 29, 2025 | Rancho de las Palmas, Moorpark, CA

Celebrate America, NWS' 30th anniversary and community at the third annual Summerfest fundraising dinner and concert. Support the Symphony while feasting on a sumptuous gourmet buffet under the evening stars, followed by a concert headlined by an all-star rock band and vocalists. Proceeds benefit the Symphony's artistic and educational programs. Tickets go on sale later this spring.

About Vieness Piano Duo

Hailed as performers with "impeccable synchronized timing" and "staggering technical prowess combined with emotional depth," Vieness Piano Duo has enthralled audiences in their electric and captivating performances of a wide range of repertoire. Vijay Venkatesh and Eva Schaumkell together performed more than 50 recitals last season, as well as a three-week tour of the Midwest and concerts in Germany. In addition to their performing activities, the husband and wife team regularly teach masterclasses and are featured guest artists on Silver Sea and Cunard Cruise Lines.

vienesspianoduo.com

About Celena Shafer

Soprano Celena Shafer has garnered acclaim for her silvery voice, fearlessly committed acting and phenomenal technique. She spends much of her time on the concert stage and has appeared with orchestras in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Los Angeles, with leading conductors such as Christoph von Dohnanyi, Bernard Labadie, Robert Spano, Sir Donald Runnicles, Michael Tilson Thomas, David Robertson and Sir Andrew Davis. newwestsymphony.org/celena-shafer-biography

About Arnold Livingston Geis

In the 2024-25 season, tenor Arnold Livingston Geis returns to the role of Josef Bader in Zigman's *Emigré* with Beijing Music Festival, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Hong Kong Philharmonic. He also joins Opera Carolina for Rodolfo in *La bohème*, Cincinnati Opera for Motel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, and San Francisco Symphony for *Carmina Burana*. Last season, he sang performances of *Carmina Burana* with the Phoenix Symphony and Erie Symphony.

arnoldlivingstongeis.com

About David Adam Moore

The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* lauds baritone David Adam Moore for his "enviable swagger coupled with a subtle musicality and big, handsome voice." In the 2024-25 season, he joins REDCAT and LA Opera for the West Coast premiere of Kouyoumdjian's *Adoration* and San Francisco Opera for its production of *Dead Man Walking*. Last season, he reprised his acclaimed performances of David T. Little's monodrama, *Soldier Songs*, with Chicago Opera Theater, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera for its production of *Dead Man Walking*. davidadammoore.com

About New West Symphony Chorus

The New West Symphony Chorus is a group of dedicated skilled volunteer members who make performances of choral works for New West Symphony possible. The chorus members go through a competitive audition, rehearse and perform throughout the season. The NWS Chorus has been led by Chorus Director Dr. Wyant Morton since 2023. newwestsymphony.org/new-west-symphony-chorus-wyant-morton

About Los Robles Children's Choir

The mission of Los Robles Children's Choir is to strive for excellence in choral singing by awakening and encouraging the artistry in each child. This exploration of the children's artistic essence takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement. The performances give the singers an opportunity to share their musical achievements and artistic sensitivities with an audience under artistic direction of Emma Roche. singingchildren.org

About State Street Ballet

State Street Ballet is a renowned international dance company based in Santa Barbara, California. Established in 1994 by Founding Director Rodney Gustafson, the company embodies artistic excellence, drawing exceptional dancers from around the globe to create captivating performances that push the boundaries of traditional ballet. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Megan Philipp and Executive Director Cecily MacDougall, State Street Ballet has become a hub for dance on the Central Coast, providing a home for 20 international artists, a professional trainee program, plus annual summer intensive and educational outreach initiatives. statestreetballet.com

About Jim Meskimen

As a professional actor for 30+ years, Jim Meskimen has appeared in the films *Apollo 13*, *The Grinch*, *Frost/Nixon*, *The Punisher*, *Not Forgotten*, *There Will Be Blood* and many others. Some of his TV credits include *Friends*, *Whose Line is it, Anyway?* and *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. From 2016-24, Jim provided the voice of iconic Colonel Harland Sanders for the KFC brand on radio, web and television ads.

jimmeskimen.com

About Music Director 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. michaelchristieonline.com

About New West Symphony

Founded in 1995 and celebrating its 30th Anniversary season in 2025, the New West Symphony (NWS) is a professional orchestra that draws players from the rich talent pool of professional LA-area musicians. 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 [Symphonic Adventures](#) for youth and the [Laby Harmony Project](#) for underserved students. newwestsymphony.org

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