

2025 MASTERPIECE SERIES



SATURDAY, DEC. 6 | SUNDAY, DEC. 7

Venues

Bank of America
Performing Arts Center (BAPAC)
Thousand Oaks

Rancho Campana
Performing Arts Center (RCPAC)
Camarillo

SCAN QR CODE FOR
COMPLETE PLAYBILL

Includes Program Notes
and more!

Season's Greetings!

Thank you for joining New West Symphony as we launch the bustling 2025 holiday season with music, dance, and rousing holiday cheer.

Now in its fourth year, our holiday programming embraces the broad spectrum of traditions celebrated in our home region of Southern California. We are proud, as always, to collaborate with many performance partners throughout our concert season, including our New West Symphony Chorus, the Los Robles Children's Choir, and California Contemporary Ballet today. Your toes will tap to Duke Ellington's jazzy reimagination of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, and we hope you'll enjoy our festive holiday songs in harmony with the New West Symphony Chorus.

Winter Dreams concludes our 30th Anniversary Season and we are proud to have demonstrated the full spectrum of our ambition and connection to our community.

Today, we are honoring our second class of 30 for 30 donors. This group of individuals have made significant contributions to help support the work of the New West Symphony. We are truly grateful for their support. And, we are honored to have your support, as well.

The reality is that ticket sales only cover 25% of our costs to put on a concert. The remaining 75% depends on the generosity of music lovers who believe that live orchestral music must remain vibrant and accessible. And with ongoing cuts in arts funding, your support is more critical than ever.

When you give, you do more than keep the music playing. You can give to adopt a musician or sponsor a concert. Your gift fuels life-changing educational programs, including:

- **Symphonic Adventures**, introducing thousands of local school children to live symphonic music.
- **The Laby Harmony Project**, offering free instruments and afterschool instruction to young musicians.
- The beloved **Music Van**, bringing hands-on musical discovery directly to classrooms.

Your year-end, tax-deductible contribution ensures that symphonic music continues to inspire, educate, and unite our entire region—today and for generations to come.

It's easy to give – make a direct cash donation, if you qualify gift a portion of your Required Minimum Distribution, give a gift of stock, or join our Legacy Society. For more information, please visit our website at newwestsymphony.org/support or call us at (805) 497-5800.

Please give generously to help us keep the music alive.

With gratitude,



Michael Christie, *Artistic and Music Director*

Scan for Ways To Support

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The New West Symphony inspires passion for symphonic music through live performances and educational initiatives that engage and enrich our diverse audiences.

Thank you to our learning partner: *Center for Nonprofit Leadership*

2025 Honorees

30 FOR 30 DONORS

With gratitude and admiration, we recognize donors whose extraordinary generosity honors New West Symphony's 30th Anniversary and ensures that our music continues to inspire, uplift and unite.

Linda and David Catlin
(Winterfest Class)

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(Winterfest Class)

Angelique Friend and David Esquibias, Esq.
(Winterfest Class)

Karen Dean Fritts and John Shwope
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(Summerfest Class)

Miriam Wille
(in memoriam)

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LEGACY SOCIETY

30th Anniversary

MAKE A **SOUND INVESTMENT** IN THE FUTURE

Legacy gifts to the New West Symphony support musicians, education initiatives and audiences of Ventura County. Everything we achieve together—both on stage and in the community—would not be possible without the dedication of donors like you.

We hope you make the New West Symphony a part of your legacy by investing TODAY in our future TOMORROW. By including New West Symphony in your estate plan at any level, your generosity helps ensure that what you love about experiencing live music will be available to future generations.



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This concert is generously sponsored by: ***AmaWaterways*** **|** ***Westlake Physical Therapy***

THE ARTISTS

Michael Christie, conductor

New West Symphony Chorus,
Dr. Wyant Morton, director

Los Robles Children's Choir,
Emma Roche, director

California Contemporary Ballet, Aerin Holt, artistic director and choreographer
Alexis Ash, assistant choreographer *Dancers:* Alexis Ash | Elkin Follett
Mauricio La Fuete | Bogdan Shcherbakov | Kelinda White | Tiffany Zern

Debbie Schaeffer, soprano, *Hanukkah Fantasy (Saturday)*
Lisa Wall-Urgero, soprano, *Hanukkah Fantasy (Sunday)*
Lijia Xie, bass, *Hanukkah Fantasy*
Megan Lindsey McDonald, soprano, *World of Joy*

THE PROGRAM

Pauline Frechette, music & lyrics, additional music by David Campbell World Premiere Performance	|	*Peace on Earth*
Tchaikovsky	|	Symphony No. 1, "Winter Dreams", I. Allegro tranquillo *(Dreams of a Winter Journey)*
Ellington/Strayhorn, arr. Tyzik	|	*Nutcracker Suite*
INTERMISSION		
Trad./arr. Fernando Arroyo Lascurain	|	Las Posadas Celebration
Trad./arr. Jeffrey Biegel	|	*Hanukkah Fantasy*
Gary Fry	|	*Allelujah, Venite Gaudete* *Wexford Processional* *World of Joy*

PROGRAM PREVIEW *by Michael Christie*

Welcome to our Winter Dreams program. I think you will be delighted by the variety and energy!

The performance opens with the world premiere of Pauline Frechette's *Peace on Earth* – written in collaboration with David Campbell for the orchestra, the New West Symphony Chorus and Los Robles Children's Choir. Pauline and David are long-time "family members" of New West Symphony. We last heard her work in 2021 when we premiered her *Tales of Winter* with California Contemporary Ballet!

Scan for complete Program Notes

Emerging from the glow of Pauline's heartfelt opener is Tchaikovsky's *"Dreams of a Winter Journey"* from his first symphony. I love the sense of blowing snow swirling over an idyllic winter landscape. Duke Ellington's amazing reimagination of Tchaikovsky's winter season-favorite *Nutcracker* has been high on my wish-list of music to perform. When the opportunity to present it with California Contemporary Ballet became a reality, I knew this concert would be the perfect moment to share it with you.

I love the community and celebratory tradition of Las Posadas. It is a tradition I have observed with great admiration, and it is meaningful to many in our community. Similarly, Hanukkah unites families present and past in a longstanding solemn, yet celebratory occasion for the Jewish people. We are proud to present our own concert hall take on Las Posadas and holiday favorites for you featuring our New West Symphony Chorus..

A running joke I have with my family is that December 21st is my favorite day of the year because it means every day that follows until June will have increasing daylight. The winter and summer solstices have been two of the most consequential natural phenomena impacting humans around the world. Most, if not all, of our beloved traditions and celebrations trace their origins to these observations of the sun's position. Whichever traditions you observe, enjoy the fact that nearly every generation in human history was equally fascinated and driven by their powerful observation of the solstice.

Happy Holidays to each you! Thank you for supporting your New West Symphony.



WITH
DAVID RAVETCH



Insightful and informative, our Hear & Now Live! pre-concert talks will entertain and enlighten you about the music and guest artists on the program. This lively 30-minute discussion led by passionate music expert David Ravetch, is free to ticket holders and takes place one hour prior to each performance.

JOIN US ONE HOUR BEFORE CONCERTS FOR AN ENTERTAINING AND INFORMATIVE 30-MINUTE TALK.

David Ravetch sponsored by: Judge David Long (Ret.) & Shirley Critchfield

ABOUT *the* ARTISTS



MICHAEL CHRISTIE *Artistic and Music Director*

A GRAMMY® award-winning and innovative conductor, Michael Christie has led the New West Symphony since 2018. He has served as Music Director of the Minnesota Opera (2011-18), Phoenix Symphony (2005-13), Brooklyn Philharmonic (2005-10), Colorado Music Festival (2000-2013) and as Chief Conductor of the Queensland Orchestra (2001-04) in Australia. Capping a career of adventurous programming and advocacy for living composers and exciting repertoire, Christie makes his Metropolitan Opera debut in February of 2026, leading *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*, with music by Mason Bates and a libretto by Gene Scheer. He was recently appointed an Associate Professor of Music and the Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Artistic Director of Ensembles at Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Institute starting in Fall 2026. The New West Symphony Board of Directors recently announced the extension of Christie's contract through 2029.

Michael Christie is married to Alexis, a physician, and they have two children.

michaelchristieonline.com

NEW WEST SYMPHONY CHORUS DR. WYANT MORTON *Director*



Dr. Wyant Morton is Professor Emeritus at California Lutheran University where he served for 33 years as conductor of the *Cal Lutheran Choral Ensembles*. Morton continues to serve as conductor of *Areté Vocal Ensemble, Cal Lutheran Alumni Choir* and is the director of the Chancel Choir at Ascension Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks, CA. Starting from 2015 Dr. Morton prepared choruses for performances with the New West Symphony and in 2023 was named Director of the New West Symphony Chorus. Among numerous performances, Dr. Morton conducted concerts in collaboration with Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Opera.



LOS ROBLES CHILDREN'S CHOIR, EMMA ROCHE *Director*

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.

Emma Roche holds music degrees from both Westminster Choir College and the USC Thornton School of Music. In 2017, Emma became a Roster Chorister and soloist with the Los Angeles Master Chorale performing in their regular season at

Walt Disney Concert Hall with additional performances at the Hollywood Bowl and with the LA Philharmonic. Equally passionate about music education, Roche has 15 years of experience teaching at both the elementary and high school levels.

singingchildren.org

CALIFORNIA CONTEMPORARY BALLET, AERIN HOLT *Artistic Director and Choreographer*



California Contemporary Ballet is one of Southern California's burgeoning dance companies, featuring the innovative works of choreographer and Artistic Director Aerin Holt. Her unique choreographic blend of classical, contemporary, and theatrical dance provides the company's dancers with the opportunity to perform an exciting repertoire of innovative and original dance projects, including full-scale ballets, dance concerts, theater productions, and festivals throughout Southern California and abroad. The company is located in La Cañada Flintridge and has been working with dancers and collaborating artists from surrounding communities for over 35 years. California Contemporary Ballet (CCBallet) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. In 2008, the company established itself as a professional repertory company and frequently performs works with original music by guest and resident composers. Among the company's many full-length presentations for Los Angeles audiences has been its most popular original ballet, The Snow Queen, with story by Hans Christian Andersen, presented annually for a successful 20-year run as a welcomed alternative to The Nutcracker. In 2021, the company performed with the New West Symphony and presented original choreography to the music of composer Pauline Frechette. Demonstrating the company's versatility, California Contemporary Ballet returns to NWS with new choreography certain to swing you into the holidays.



DAVID CAMPBELL

Composer, Arranger and Conductor

David is a composer, arranger and conductor. He has worked on 19 Grammy Albums of the Year, and over 100 films, winning 3 Oscars for music. He co-composed with Pharrell Williams a dance suite, commissioned by the Dallas Symphony, David's arrangements are on over 450 gold and platinum albums including: Adele, Ariana Grande, Elton John, Harry Styles, Billie Eilish (with Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Philharmonic), Beyoncé, Michael Jackson, Garth Brooks, Trisha Yearwood, and Beck.

ABOUT *the* ARTISTS



PAULINE FRECHETTE

Composer/Performer

Pauline Frechette is a composer/performer with a foundation of playing in youth symphonies on violin, winning awards in piano competitions, touring Europe singing and dancing as a teen and studying acting in England. Born and raised in Northwest Indiana to French Canadian parents, she was one of eleven children. Her father, Frigon "Lou" Frechette was a theatre organist and accompanied the Black Hawks hockey games at the Chicago Stadium on the largest pipe organ in the world. Her great-grandfather, Josef Vezina, founded the Quebec Symphony.

Although blessed with many talents, Pauline feels her greatest gift and passion is composing music. Her works are best defined as "Neo-classical" DEF. *"The use of modern techniques within the classical form composing music that reflects one's own compositional voice."* Her compositions have been performed by the Baltimore Symphony, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, New West Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, National Symphony at the Kennedy Center and at Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Pauline has composed songs for TV and Film and her musicals have been produced by The Goodspeed Opera House, the LaMirada Theatre for the Performing Arts and the Baruch Theatre in NYC.

As a singer/performer, she considers herself a 21st Century "troubadour" *DEF. "a contemporary poet-musician."* As a rock singer, she performed under the alias "Raven Kane." Her credits include singing on major motion pictures (Aladdin, Rent, Mermaids …) performing/ recording with many legendary artists including MUSE for the 2012 Olympics; Beck, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Willie Nelson, Leonard Cohen, Cher, and duets with Neil Diamond on his World Tour.

In solo concerts Pauline moves effortlessly from neo-classical piano pieces to romantic jazz and humorous theatrical songs. She loves taking her audience on an emotional journey with humor, passionate haunting melodies and stunning vocals, often playing a grand piano live to videos of ballet, jazz, art and other forms of storytelling. Frechette has brought cheering audiences to their feet with standing ovations at clubs and concert halls including the Troubadour in London, Carnegie Recital Hall in NYC and Thayer Hall in downtown L.A.

Pauline's albums have debuted on Billboard's Top Ten Classical and Classical Crossover charts. She especially loves writing ballets. Her suite for symphony and ballet, "Tales of Winter" premiered in Dec. 2021 with the New West Symphony and the California Contemporary Ballet company. Her music is currently being played worldwide and has over 30 million streams on the internet and is #1 on the Reverbnation Classical charts nationally and globally.

In 2021 Pauline was awarded the title "Ambassador for Peace through Music" by the Youth Education and Leadership Initiative (Y.E.L.I.) in Nigeria, Africa.

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30th Anniversary

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Laby Harmony Project provides musical opportunity to children in underserved communities, currently serving over 150 students in Ventura. We create pathways to success for Ventura children by engaging students in a multi-year continuum of rigorous after-school music training. Through offering tuition-free, long-term, and high-quality musical opportunity in the heart of Ventura's Westside, Harmony builds social equity. By collaborating with students, families, and local partners, and together with our generous supporters, we will build a stronger, healthier, and more musically engaged community.

For more information or ways to donate, go to:
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PROGRAM *Notes*

SYMPHONY NO. 1 *"WINTER DREAMS," ALLEGRO TRANQUILLO "DREAMS OF A WINTER JOURNEY"*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

(b. Votkinsk, Russia, 1840; d. Saint Petersburg, Russia, 1893)
Composed in 1866-1868
Premiered in Moscow on February 15,,1868

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was composing by age four; nevertheless, his parents encouraged him to train for the public service ultimately. He would go on to become a clerk in the Ministry of Justice. His interest in music would be satisfied when classes were made available in a newly established Russian Musical Society, and then by enrolling in the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Tchaikovsky was breaking new ground in Russian music with inspiration from Romantic era composers such as Mendelssohn and Schumann. The music didn't come easily, however. He would describe himself as "a step away from madness" while composing his first symphony.

Tchaikovsky's teachers were highly critical of the symphony in its early forms, which was devasting to the composer, but after revisions individual movements were performed before the complete symphony was premiered in 1868. He would revise it substantially to create the music we hear today.

Tchaikovsky would look back on his first symphony as "a sin of my sweet youth," but he wrote that "although it is in many ways immature, fundamentally it has more substance and is better composed than many of my other more mature works."

***Dreams of a Winter Journey* – Allegro tranquillo**

Quietly shivering violins suggest a tranquil, snow-covered landscape, over which the flute and bassoon swoop in the opening of the symphony, the violas soon picking up their melody. The music quickly becomes grander, as Tchaikovsky's muscular orchestral sensibilities take over. Hints of his future use of brass and reliance on call and response are immediately observed with music that changes as quickly as a winter storm passing through.

NUTCRACKER SUITE

At Christmas 1960, the composing duo of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn managed something truly extraordinary: a successful reimagining of The Nutcracker Suite. This suite was first composed as a ballet score by Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in 1892. It wasn't until 68 years later that Ellington and Strayhorn released their own version, refocused through the lens of big band jazz.

Ohio born, Billy Strayhorn, was a 25-year collaborator with Duke Ellington. Strayhorn's compositional contribution to Ellington's legacy includes "Take the 'A' Train" and "Lush Life." Early in life he strived to be a classical composer, but via introductions to Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson, Strayhorn focus shifted to jazz. Ellington would describe Strayhorn as "my right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head, my brain waves in his head, and his in mine."



WINTER DREAMS

Duke Ellington was born at the turn of the 20th century in Washington DC and would go on to write or collaborate on more than one thousand compositions. Ellington defied being type cast as a jazz composer and embraced the notion of writing American Music "beyond category." Ellington lived for 75 years, encompassing massive shifts in recording, television, travel, and categories of popular music. He is a fourteen-time Grammy Award winner, was bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom, numerous honorary degrees, and a Pulitzer Prize.

In his original liner notes for the Ellington-Strayhorn Nutcracker Suite, record producer Irving Townsend included the fantastic fiction that Ellington met Tchaikovsky while Ellington's orchestra was performing at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas. Knowing that the Russian died in 1893, a full six years before the American was born, this meeting never could have happened in the literal sense. However, listening to the jazzed-up Nutcracker, one could imagine the work as a meeting place for the three great composers, separated by oceans and decades, but communicating through art.

Ellington and Strayhorn did not simply place jazz rhythms over Tchaikovsky's music. Instead, they picked up the notes, recast the beats, communed with the themes, and recreated the work, turning it into something that was at once completely their own and completely Tchaikovsky's. In doing so, they showed that while music may be the universal language, it is spoken with many accents (and therein lies the fun).

LAS POSADAS

A treasured Christie family memory is from mid-December in the freezing Plaza of Santa Fe, New Mexico, where we were unexpectedly introduced to the beautiful Las Posadas tradition. We laughed at the response of the gathered crowd raucously jeering at the "innkeepers" turning away the young couple representing Jesus and a very pregnant Mary as they sought refuge during their journey.

Dating back over 400 years from a region outside of Mexico City, Las Posadas is a nine-day celebration representing the nine months of Mary's (the Mother of Jesus Christ) pregnancy. Two actors dress as Mary and Joseph and process to various homes, representing possible Inns. The procession of musicians and spectators sing Posadas songs, with many carrying star shaped piñatas and paper lanterns. During the procession, the group is turned away until reaching the designated Posada (shelter), where a celebration of prayer and traditional food is shared.

Like so many traditions with their origins around the Winter Solstice, Las Posadas is the merger of the Aztec celebration of Tonantzin (mother of the Gods) and birth of the Sun God Huitzilpochtli, and the parallel celebration of Advent in the Christian tradition.

I am grateful to composer Fernando Arroyo Lascurain for creating a Los Posadas "mini celebration" for the symphony and Los Robles Children's Choir to represent an important tradition for our region. There are many locations throughout west Ventura County who have Las Posadas as part of their holiday celebration. I encourage you to experience them as part of your holiday calendar.

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NEW WEST SYMPHONY

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Rachmaninoff | Piano Concerto No.2, C minor, Op. 18
Gershwin | Suite from *Porgy and Bess* "Catfish Row"

Mozart and American Voices

Sat., Mar. 7, 2026 | Sun., Mar. 8, 2026

Michael Christie, conductor
Angels Vocal Art, Kristof Van Grysperre, artistic director
New West Symphony Chorus, Dr. Wyant Morton, director

Mozart | *The Marriage of Figaro* (Selections)

Selections from Bernstein's *Candide*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, hits by Sondheim, Glass, Barber, and more!

Bernstein, Brahms & Blues

Sat., Apr. 11, 2026 | Sun., Apr. 12, 2026

Michael Christie, conductor | **Tai Murray,** violin

Bernstein | *West Side Story* Suite for Violin and Orchestra
W.C. Handy | "Saint Louis Blues"
Ravel arr. Miloradovic | Blues for string orchestra
Brahms | Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op. 68

Beethoven & Copland

Sat., Oct. 3, 2026 | Sun., Oct. 4, 2026

Francesco Lecce-Chong, conductor
Pacific Festival Ballet, Kim Maselli, director
Los Robles Children's Choir, Emma Roche, director

Beethoven | Symphony No.1 in C Major, Op. 21
Copland | *Old American Songs*
Copland | *Appalachian Spring*

Symphony Goes to Cirque

Sat., Nov. 7, 2026 | Sun., Nov. 8, 2026

Michael Christie, conductor | **Troupe Vertigo**

Back by popular demand, symphonic favorites pair with feats of strength and agility.

Too Hot to Handel

Sat., Dec. 5, 2026 | Sun., Dec. 6, 2026

Michael Christie, conductor
New West Symphony Chorus, Dr. Wyant Morton, director
Alfreda Burke, soprano | **Rodrick Dixon,** tenor

Handel, arr. Christianson/Anderson | *The Gospel Messiah*

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- All dates, artists and programs are subject to change. -

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Congratulations to New West Symphony on your 30th Anniversary! Here's to many more years of inspiring concerts, music education programs for youth, and meaningful community connections.

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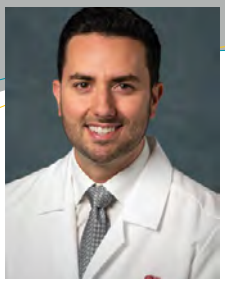
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Sean S. Rajaee, M.D., M.S.

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Education

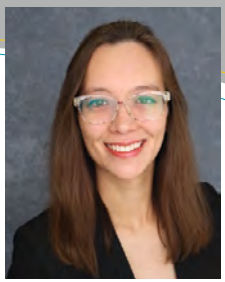
- Masters: Keck School of Medicine of USC
- Medical School: Tufts University School of Medicine
- Residency: Cedars-Sinai
- Fellowship: Havard Medical School Brigham & Women's Hospital

Achievements

- American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAKS) Health Policy Fellow, 2020
- Dean's Award for Academic Achievement, 2018
- Leo G. Rigler, M.D. Award, 2018
- California Orthopaedic Association OREF Research Paper Award, 2018
- Professor Ernest Grable, M.D. Surgical Award, 2013

Primary Care Sports Medicine

696 Hampshire Road Suite 200
Westlake Village, CA 91361
direct (424) 314-7784 fax (424) 314-7788
cedars-sinai.org



Clarinda Hougen, MD

Primary Care Sports Medicine

Clinical Interests

- Sports and musculoskeletal injuries in athletes and active individuals of all ages
- Ultrasound-guided procedures including hyaluronic acid and platelet-rich plasma injections for treatment of degenerative joint disease and various tendinopathies
- Performing arts medicine, with a focus on injury prevention, diagnosis, and management in dancers, musicians, and other performing artists
- Diagnostic ultrasound
- Care tailored to the female athlete
- Concussion management and return-to-play planning

Clinical Interests and Research

- RED-S (formerly known as the female athlete triad) and associated impacts on the development of osteoporosis and bony stress injuries
- Obesity medicine, including the intersection of metabolic health, physical activity, and musculoskeletal function

Education

- Fellowship: Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles, California
- Medical School: University of Colorado School of Medicine

Primary Care Sports Medicine

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ORCHESTRA ROSTER

This list represents New West Symphony's core orchestra as of September 2025. Musicians performing with the orchestra during this performance may be substitutes.



VIOLIN I

Alyssa Park, *Concertmaster*
Dr. Paul Finkel
Chloé Tardif, *First Associate Concertmaster*
Donna Johanson
Yaeri Choi, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Jeri Nowlen
Lisa Dondlinger
West Valley Medical Aesthetics
Tamsen Beseke
Susan Burgos
Luke Santonastaso
Giovanna D'Arrigo
Yin Jiang
Nelly Kovalev
Kate McLean & Steve Stone
Ashoka Thiagarajan
Sue & Bob Engler
Ji Eun Hwang
Chuck Cohen, In honor of Eloise Cohen
Michelle Sheehy

VIOLIN II

Ina Veli, *Principal*
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Haesol Lee, *Assistant Principal*
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Anna Corcoran
Hwi Eun Kim
Jen Choi Fischer
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VIOLA

Phillip Triggs, *Principal*
Westlake Physical Therapy
Diane Gilbert, *Assistant Principal*
Kailey Oppenheim
Alice Ping
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Youna Choi, *Principal*
Cathy and Phil Lichtenberger
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Louetta Kalof
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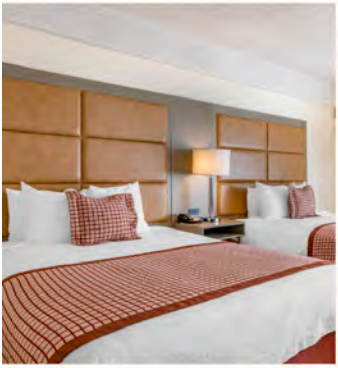
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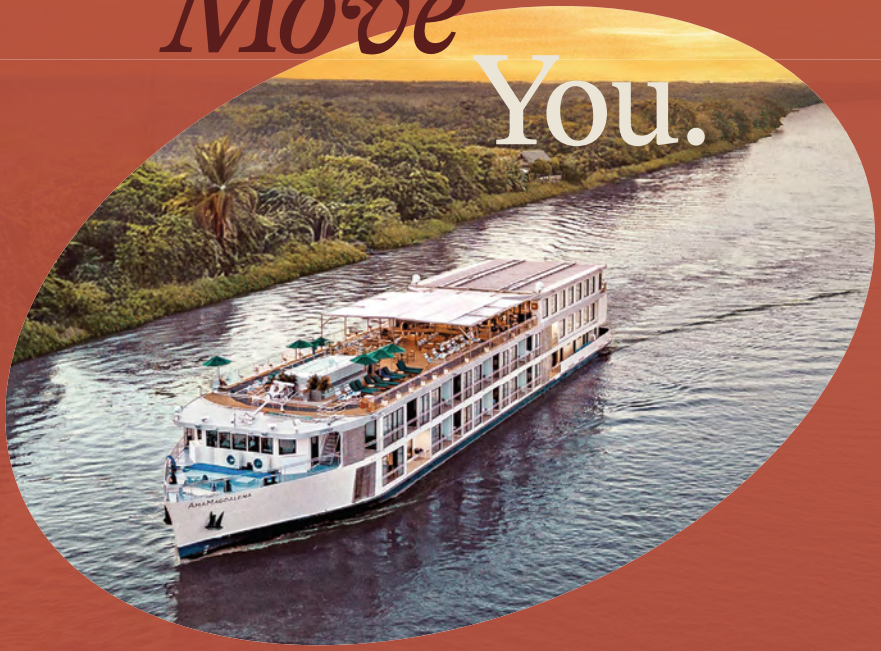
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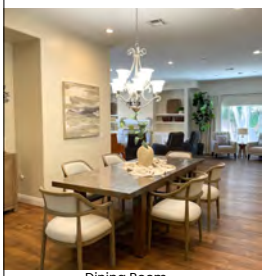
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