



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NEW WEST SYMPHONY LAUNCHES HISTORIC 2026 SEASON CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY**

***Season Opener "Rachmaninoff & Gershwin" Features Pianist Janice Carissa and Works by Rachmaninoff, Gershwin, and Sousa***

**THOUSAND OAKS & CAMARILLO, CA (January 14, 2026)** — New West Symphony (NWS), under the direction of GRAMMY®-winning conductor Michael Christie, announces the launch of its 2026 Masterpiece Series with a monumental celebration of the United States' Semi quinentennial. The season kicks off with "Rachmaninoff & Gershwin", a program exploring the nation's musical heritage and the European masterpieces that have graced American concert halls for generations.

Performances will take place Saturday, January 24, 2026, at 7:00 PM at the Bank of America Performing Arts Center in Thousand Oaks, and Sunday, January 25, 2026, at 3:00 PM at the Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center in Camarillo.

As the nation marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, New West Symphony's 2026 season examines how music has tracked alongside societal shifts—responding to, and often instigating, cultural change.

"July 4, 1776, launched one of the greatest experiments in democratic governance the world has ever seen," says Maestro Michael Christie. "Our 2026 season is a curated journey through essential American classics and the symphonic treasures that have resonated in our concert halls for centuries. We are thrilled to begin this journey with a program that balances patriotic fervor with deep romantic expression."

**Program Highlights:** The concerts will open with the quintessential sounds of American patriotism, featuring The Star-Spangled Banner (Smith/Key) and John Philip Sousa's iconic march, Stars and Stripes Forever. The program transitions to the jazz-infused streets of Charleston with George Gershwin's *Suite from Porgy and Bess* ("Catfish Row"). This suite captures the energy, struggle, and vibrant spirit of American opera, blending classical forms with indigenous jazz and blues idioms.

The centerpiece of the evening is Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18*. A masterpiece of late Romanticism, this concerto is one of the most beloved works in the repertoire. It will be performed by the brilliant pianist Janice Carissa, who, according to the Chicago Classical Review, "conveys a vivid story rather than a mere showpiece."

## **Performance Dates & Venues:**

- Thousand Oaks: Saturday, January 24, 2026, at 7:00 PM | Bank of America Performing Arts Center (BAPAC), 2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
- Camarillo: Sunday, January 25, 2026, at 3:00 PM | Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center (RCPAC), 4235 Mar Vista Drive.

**Tickets & Subscriptions:** Tickets and subscription packages for the 2026 Masterpiece Series are available now, offering savings of up to 20% and exclusive benefits including free ticket exchanges. To purchase tickets or subscriptions, visit [NewWestSymphony.org](https://NewWestSymphony.org) or call 866-776-8400

## **About New West Symphony**

Founded in 1995 and celebrating 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. The Symphony also provides quality outreach and educational opportunities for the communities it serves through its annual [Symphonic Adventures](#) concert programs for youth, its traveling [Music Van](#), and the [Laby Harmony Project](#), a year-round music and leadership program for underserved students.

## **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](https://michaelchristieonline.com) and follow him on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

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