

**Tickets on Sale Now**

*The voice of System of A Down and one of the great performers in hard rock history!*

**VPAC presents North American Premiere of Serj Tankian's  
*Elect the Dead & Orca Symphonies*****Thursday, November 10 at 8:00PM**

Los Angeles, CA, July 15, 2016 – With a vocal range over four octaves, Serj Tankian, considered one of the greatest singers in hard rock history and a CSUN alumnus, will present his *Orca Symphony* and perform and sing his *Elect The Dead Symphony* alongside the CSUN Orchestra under the direction of John Roscigno at Valley Performing Arts Center for one night only on Thursday, November 10 at 8:00pm.

“Though the world first knew Serj as the front man for System of A Down, he has many diverse talents and passions including social activism, orchestral compositions, and visual art,” says Thor Steingraber, Executive Director of Valley Performing Arts Center. “The VPAC gallery will exhibit his most recent artwork, available for viewing prior to the performance. I'm proud to present Serj Tankian as the second annual CSUN Alumni concert.”

“I've got this incredible opportunity to go back to the school where I graduated from, Cal State University, Northridge and play with my alma mater, CSUN Symphony Orchestra,” said Serj Tankian in a [Youtube video](#). “This is something you don't want to miss and will be the first show of its kind in North America.”

**About *Elect the Dead & Orca Symphony***

Tankian has always created music as an outlet to express his thoughts and feelings with a level of passion and consciousness that few in today's world of music can rival.

Introduced to the melding of cultures, ideas and ideals from a very young age, Tankian learned principles from this integration and adaptation that have led to his understanding of the oneness of all things; he has since transfigured these thoughts into the music and art that he lives to create.

He emerged as a solo artist with his debut album *Elect The Dead*, which showcases the writing and arranging prowess of a man best known for his inimitable vocals, incisive lyrics, and dedication to bringing light to various issues revolving around injustice. Neither a mellow excursion into world music or the frantic war-cry of System that some had predicted, *Elect The Dead* is multi-faceted and multi-layered, containing elements of psychedelia, classical, and the trademark surrealist images and skewed time signatures that Tankian has made his own. Two years after its initial release, he began working with New Zealand composer John Psathas to rearrange and orchestrate *Elect The Dead* for a full symphony orchestra. This was followed by an inaugural *Elect The Dead Symphony* concert in Auckland with the



Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra that was recorded and filmed and released the following year, debuting at number 4 on the Classical Music charts here in the USA.

In 2012, Tankian composed his first true symphony titled *Orca Symphony No. 1*, and had its four acts recorded at the renowned Brucknerhaus in Linz, Austria with the Das Karussell Orchestra under the direction of Werner Steinmetz. According to Tankian, "Orca is known as the killer whale, but is really a dark dolphin, a symbolism for human dichotomy." The four acts of *Orca* mix influences from early 20th century composers with modern film compositional dynamics showing influences ranging from Ennio Morricone to Philip Glass. Listeners are met with a mingling of sounds and intertwining pieces that are both serene and bombastic at the same time, offering a fresh interpretation to the classical art.

### **About Serj Tankian**

Early in his career, Serj found an outlet as the rabble-raising lead singer and songwriter of the largely successful rock band System of A Down, a band that has reached into the hearts and minds of millions of people relaying multiple messages of love, awareness and activism. System of A Down has five studio album releases, three of which debuted at number one on the Billboard 200, and has also been nominated for four Grammy Awards and snagged one in 2006 for 'Best Hard Rock Performance' for their song "B.Y.O.B." Despite this success, Serj never grew complacent with his art, always striving to open up new channels of sound and arrangement to articulate his artistic expressions.

Tankian has released five albums of his own solo material, beginning with 2007's chart-topping hard rock album *Elect The Dead*. His sophomore solo album *Imperfect Harmonies* was released in 2010, followed by *Harakiri* in 2012. 2013 saw two distinct releases from Serj, with the first being the critically acclaimed *Orca Symphony No. 1*, released in June of that year, followed up with the very unique *Jazz-iz Christ* one month later.

Over the past couple years, his time spent in the recording studio has been focused on creating musical scores and compositions for film and video game projects, namely independent films *1915*, *The Last Inhabitant* and *Hardcore* along with the video game 'Midnight Star', which was created by one of the chief creators of the famed 'Halo' game franchise.

Serj Tankian's resume also includes the formation of a record label, Serjical Strike Records (established in 2001) which has released albums by eight critically acclaimed artists, including Fair To Midland, Buckethead and Death By Stereo.

Along with fellow musician Tom Morello (Rage Against The Machine, Audioslave), Serj co-founded the non-profit organization Axis Of Justice in 2002, which strives to bring together musicians, fans of music and grassroots political organizations to fight for social justice. He has also dabbled with the world of broadcasting as co-host of the Axis Of Justice Radio Network, which can be heard via Sirius Satellite Radio and KPFK in Los Angeles. With a mission of spreading diversity and understanding through music, poetry and activism, Serj Tankian will continue to surprise and enlighten those who listen to his music and hear his words.

In recent years, Tankian has split his time between holding a mic and paintbrush, having feverishly created over 40 pieces of art since 2013. His journey into the world of fine art began with his Disarming Time Musical Paintings that were exhibited at Project Gallery in Los Angeles. Since then, he has had multiple exhibitions at galleries in both the United States as well as New Zealand. Most recently, his artwork was exhibited at the grand opening of New Museum Los Gatos in Northern California as part of a group exhibit that ran through September of 2015.

## **Tickets**

Tickets for **Serj Tankian performing with the CSUN Symphony** start at \$33 and can be purchased by visiting [ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org](http://ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org) or calling (818) 677-3000. Valley Performing Arts Center is located on the campus of California State University, Northridge (CSUN), 18111 Nordhoff Street Northridge, CA 91330-8448, at the corner of Nordhoff and Lindley.

## **About Valley Performing Arts Center**

Now in its sixth season, VPAC's mission is to present a wide variety of performances that not only includes new and original work from the Los Angeles region, but also work from around the world that appeals to all of LA's rich and diverse communities. The Valley Performing Arts Center's 2016-17 Season signals a new era for the premiere event venue. Under the leadership of Executive Director Thor Steingraber, VPAC expands its programming and outstanding multi-disciplinary performances. Located on the campus of California State University, Northridge, VPAC's season offers a vibrant and diverse performance program of nearly 50 classical and popular music, dance, theater, family and international events that will serve to establish VPAC as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley and further establish itself as one of the top arts companies in Southern California. The award-winning 1,700-seat theatre was designed by HGA Architects and Engineers and was recently cited by the *Los Angeles Times* as "a growing hub for live music, dance, drama and other cultural events."

## **Calendar Listing for Serj Tankian performing with CSUN Symphony**

**Venue:** Valley Performing Arts Center  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330

**Date:** Thursday, November 10 at 8:00pm

**Tickets:** **Price:** Starting at \$33  
**In Person:** VPAC Ticket Office, located in the VPAC Courtyard  
**By Phone:** (818) 677-3000  
**Online:** [ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org](http://ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org)

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**Photos:** Click here for photos from the 2016-17 Season:  
<http://www.valleyperformingartscenter.org/press/press-photos/>

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