

“Mr. Bell doesn’t stand in anyone’s shadow.” The New York Times

Joshua Bell Makes his Ninth Soraya Appearance, Will Lead Academy of St Martin in the Fields

Program to feature Edward Nelson, baritone

The Soraya’s Gala Evening Honors both Joshua Bell and former CSUN President Jolene Koester

Thu, Apr 4 at 6:30pm; Concert Tickets are \$59 and available now at TheSoraya.org. *Special Gala Benefit Tickets available at [The Soraya.org/Gala](https://TheSoraya.org/Gala).

(Los Angeles, CA) **March 25, 2024** — The ever-popular **Academy of St Martin in the Fields**, under the musical direction of renowned violin soloist **Joshua Bell**, returns to The Soraya with a program offering operatic highlights from Rossini and Mozart, plus symphonic work by Brahms, Mendelssohn and Saint-Saëns. The occasion marks Bell’s ninth performance with The Soraya.

“As we welcome back **Joshua Bell**, it seemed to be a fitting moment to honor the artist who’s appeared most on The Soraya stage alongside the person who is most responsible for The Soraya’s existence, former CSUN President **Jolene Koester**,” said **Thor Steingraber**, Executive and Artistic Director. “Both Jolene and Joshua set The Soraya bar of excellence for all of us who followed in their footsteps.”

About the Gala Celebration

The Gala Benefit honors the individual most responsible for The Soraya – former CSUN President Jolene Koester who moved state and local leaders and philanthropists with her vision and perseverance to open The Soraya in 2011. Now, with more than four decades of service to higher education and the state of California, Koester returns to The Soraya to be honored alongside Joshua Bell, the foremost violinist of his generation. Bell’s world travels have brought him to The Soraya more frequently than any other artist. This occasion marks his ninth time with The Soraya. This time he leads Academy of St Martin in the Fields, for which he serves as Music Director.

Proceed from The Soraya's gala will benefit the organization's arts education program. For information on Gala tickets, please visit TheSoraya.org/Gala. For tickets to the concert, click [here](#).

About the St Martin in the Fields Concert

Formed by Sir Neville Marriner in 1958, St Martin in the Fields, now led by Joshua Bell, has gained an enviable international reputation for its distinctive, polished, and refined sound. Audiences around the globe have cheered the phenomenal violinist Bell as soloist and conductor, Bell will play both roles in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. With its irresistible melodic verve and rhythmic drive, this essential masterpiece of Romantic music is a dazzling showcase for Bell's trademark emotional depth and unstoppable virtuosity. The program also includes operatic highlights from Mozart and Rossini including noted American baritone **Edward Nelson** performing "Largo al Factotum" from *The Barber of Seville*.

Since its founding in 1958, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields has been one of the world's finest chamber orchestras, renowned for fresh, brilliant interpretations of the world's greatest orchestral music. When the virtuoso Bell was named the ensemble's music director in 2011, it was a marriage ordained by the gods of music. The winning combination has produced a dazzling ensemble that retains the collegial spirit and flexibility of the original small, conductor-less chamber orchestra with playing that is marked by "propulsive energy" (*South Florida Classical Review*), "glowing interpretations" (*The Washington Post*), and a "precision that is staggering from the first downbeat" (*Palm Beach Daily News*).

For more information and interview requests, please contact:

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- ACCESS YOUR PRESS KIT [HERE](#).

About Joshua Bell

With a career spanning over thirty years as a soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, conductor and director, Joshua Bell is one of the most celebrated violinists of his era. Named the Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in 2011, he is the only person to hold this post since Sir Neville Marriner formed the orchestra in 1958, and recently renewed his contract through 2023. Bell's interests range from the repertoire's hallmarks to commissioned works, including Nicholas Maw's Violin Concerto, for which Bell received a Grammy® award. He has also premiered works of John Corigliano, Edgar Meyer, Jay Greenberg, and Behzad Ranjbaran.

Committed to expanding classical music's social and cultural impact, Bell has collaborated with peers including Chick Corea, Wynton Marsalis, Chris Botti, Anoushka Shankar, Frankie Moreno, Josh Groban, and Sting. In Spring 2019, Bell joins his longtime friends, cellist Steven Isserlis and pianist Jeremy Denk, for a ten-city American trio tour.

Bell maintains an avid interest in film music, commemorating the 20th anniversary of *The Red Violin* (1998) in 2018-19. The film's Academy-Award winning soundtrack features Bell as soloist; in 2018, Bell brings the film with live orchestra to various summer festivals and the New York Philharmonic. In addition to six *Live From Lincoln Center* specials, Bell is also featured on a PBS *Great Performances* episode, "Joshua Bell: *West Side Story* in Central Park."

Through music and technology, Bell further seeks to expand the boundaries of his instrument. He has partnered with Embertone on the Joshua Bell Virtual Violin, a sampler created for producers, engineers, and composers. Bell also collaborated with Sony on the Joshua Bell VR experience.

As an exclusive Sony Classical artist, Bell has recorded more than 40 albums garnering Grammy®, Mercury®, Gramophone and ECHO Klassik awards. Sony Classical's most recent release in June 2018, with Bell and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, features Bruch's [Scottish Fantasy](#) and G minor Violin Concerto. Bell's previous release, [For the Love of Brahms](#) in 2016, includes 19th-century repertoire with the Academy, Steven Isserlis, and Jeremy Denk. Bell's 2014 [Bach](#) album, featuring Bell conducting the Academy in [Beethoven's Fourth and Seventh Symphonies](#), debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard classical charts.

In 2007, a Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* story, on Bell performing incognito in a Washington, D.C. metro station, sparked a conversation regarding artistic reception and context. It inspired Kathy Stinson's 2013 children's book, *The Man With The Violin*, and a newly-commissioned animated film. Bell debuted the 2017 *Man With The Violin* festival at the Kennedy Center, and, in March 2019, presents a *Man With The Violin* festival and family concert with the Seattle Symphony.

Bell advocates for music as an essential educational tool. He maintains active involvement with Education Through Music and Turnaround Arts, which provides instruments and arts education to children who may not otherwise experience classical music firsthand.

Born in Bloomington, Indiana, Bell began the violin at age four, and at age twelve, began studies with Josef Gingold. At age 14, Bell debuted with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and debuted at Carnegie Hall at age 17 with the St. Louis Symphony. Bell received the 2007 Avery Fisher Prize and has recently been named *Musical America's* 2010 "Instrumentalist of the Year" and an "Indiana Living Legend." He received the 2003 Indiana Governor's Arts Award and a 1991 Distinguished Alumni Service Award from his alma mater, the Jacobs School of Music. Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin, with a François Tourte 18th-century bow. Find out more about Joshua Bell at www.joshuabell.com.

About the Academy of St Martin in the Fields

The **Academy of St Martin in the Fields** is one of the world's finest chamber orchestras, renowned for fresh, brilliant interpretations of the world's greatest orchestral music. Formed by Sir Neville Marriner in 1958 from a group of leading London musicians, the ASMF gave its first performance in its namesake church in November 1959. Through unrivalled live performances and a vast recording output – highlights of which include the 1969 bestseller Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and the soundtrack to the Oscar-winning film *Amadeus* – the orchestra gained an enviable international reputation for its distinctive, polished and refined sound. With over 500 releases in a much-vaunted discography and a comprehensive international touring program, the name and sound of the ASMF is known and loved by classical audiences throughout the world.

Today the orchestra is led by Music Director and virtuoso violinist **Joshua Bell**, retaining the collegiate spirit and flexibility of the original small, conductor-less ensemble which is an ASMF hallmark. Under Bell's direction, and with the support of Leader/Director **Tomo Keller**, ASMF continues to push the boundaries of player-directed performance to new heights, presenting symphonic repertoire and chamber music on a grand scale at prestigious venues around the globe.

ASMF has enjoyed a full 2023, including a European tour with Joshua Bell, a visit to the US with cellist **Gary Hoffman** and mandolinist **Avi Avital**, concerts across Germany and Italy with pianist **Seong-Jin Cho**, festival performances at Bravo! Vail, and features at multiple German summer festivals. A busy 2023/24 season has already included a tour of Australia with Joshua Bell & a live screening of Amadeus at the Royal Albert Hall, with a tour of Germany with **Beatrice Rana and Adam Fischer**, appearances in Spain with **Julia Fischer**, multiple visits to the US with our Chamber Ensemble, and an extensive tour of the USA with Joshua Bell to come.

Marriner 100 in April 2024, forms the centerpiece of our season in a series of special concerts and events to celebrate the life and legacy of our founder, Sir Neville Marriner, in his centenary year. At the heart of the festivities will be four concert performances. The first of the concerts begins on the 100th anniversary of the conductor's birth at the home of the ensemble's first performances, St Martin-in-the-Fields (15 April). Conductor **Jaime Martin** and former members of the Academy Chorus join ASMF for a concert celebrating the ensemble's rich history, from the first performances through to the present.

This is followed by an intimate concert led by Joshua Bell at Wigmore Hall (16 April) showcasing ASMF's versatility as a chamber ensemble.

In a celebration of ASMF today, Music Director Joshua Bell leads the ensemble in a special gala concert at the Royal Festival Hall (18 April). The program includes the UK premiere of a new work by American composer and conductor **Vince Mendoza** for violin, jazz drum kit and orchestra – featuring Joshua Bell on solo violin, and **Douglas Marriner**, Sir Neville's grandson, performing the solo for jazz drum kit.

The final concert will see ASMF return to the beautiful setting of Lincoln Cathedral (24 April), in a celebration of the conductor's birthplace and beginnings of his musical life. The ASMF continues its dedication to Learning & Participation, taking the player-directed essence of the ensemble and working with communities across London and beyond to increase wellbeing, connectedness, and autonomy. This includes work with schools, people experiencing homelessness, and supporting the next generation of orchestral musicians through collaborations with Southbank Sinfonia. Find out more about supporting the work of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields at asmf.org/support.

About the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for The Performing Arts (The Soraya) is an award-winning, state-of-the-art 1,700-seat theatre designed and built by HGA Architects and Engineers and opened in January 2011 as the Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC). Through a transformative gift by Younes and Soraya Nazarian the venue was renamed as The Soraya in 2017. Vibrant programming has served to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley and its 1.8 million residents, and as one of the top arts and culture venues in Southern California. Since its inaugural season, The Soraya has presented over 500 artists and companies across the genres of music, dance, theater, and film and is a highly in demand location for filming and rental events.

The Soraya's 2023/2024 Season boldly advances the expansive sound of orchestras both traditional and contemporary; the freestyle vibe of jazz; an array of dance luminaries, and a cultural bounty drawn from the musical well of global voices. The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to innovating, excelling, and amplifying access by offering a wide variety of performances that reflect Los Angeles' many distinctive communities and featuring new and original work and artists from the local region as well as nationally and around the world.

Located on the vibrant campus of California State University Northridge (CSUN), The Soraya and the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication share an integral link that enhances student access and opportunities in the arts and performing arts. A \$5 million contribution from record producer and former California Lieutenant Governor Mike Curb was pivotal in ensuring the completion and opening of The Soraya in 2011. For his founding support and in acknowledgment of the integral relationship between the Mike Curb College and The Soraya, Mike Curb is recognized as one of The Soraya's Cornerstone Benefactors. This partnership fosters academic and artistic excellence, elevating the talents and the future growth of CSUN's students through master classes, student tickets, concerts of student ensembles, and students appearing alongside renowned artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Aida Cuevas, and Martha Graham Dance Company.

What: Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Joshua Bell, Music Director

Program:

Rossini (1792-1868) *Il barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville)*:
Overture (8')

Rossini (1792-1868) *Il barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville)*:
"Largo al Factotum," Edward Nelson, baritone (4')

Mendelssohn (1809-1847) Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64 (26')

I. Allegro molto appassionato

II. Andante

III. Allegro non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

Joshua Bell, Violin

Mozart (1756-1791) Champagne aria from *Don Giovanni* (2')

Intermission

Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) Introduction & Rondo capriccioso, Op.28 (10')

Brahms (1833-97) Symphony No.2 in D major, Op.73 – IV: Allegro con spirito (9')

When: Thu, Apr 4
6:30 p.m. — Concert
8:30 p.m. — Gala Dinner

Where: Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

Tickets: Concert Tickets — \$59
Gala Tickets — \$1,500 (*includes entrance to concert*)

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