



NEWS RELEASE

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Announcing The Soraya's 2024-25 Season!

A Season of Music, Dance, and More, with Highlights Including:

- The Launch of **LA Seen Festival**
- 4th Annual **Jazz at Naz Festival**
- Two Soraya Original Performances
- 12 Major Artist Debuts

Randy Newman's *FAUST: The Concert* Opens the 2024-25 Season on Sept 28 & 29.

(Los Angeles, CA) May 13, 2024—The Soraya announced its 2024-25 Season to a sold-out house on Saturday, May 11, at the performance of Tony Award-winning Broadway star Aaron Tveit with the Pacific Jazz Orchestra. True to The Soraya form, the new season features more than 40 events from every genre, including jazz, dance, and classical along with original presentations found only at The Soraya. The season also includes returning favorites, 12 major artists making their Soraya debuts, and a new series of innovative programming.

“Every season at The Soraya, we welcome a roster of global artists. In the 2024-25 Season, however, we also shine a bright light on American composers, choreographers, and performing artists. This is our commitment to celebrating what is enduring and uniting about America, lest that be lost amidst the noise,” said **Thor Steingraber, Artistic and Executive Director**, going on to detail several highlights of the upcoming year.

“Appearing throughout the season are the fresh faces of a new generation of American artists, such as **Conrad Tao, Lakecia Benjamin, and Randall Goosby**. Bookending the season, an appearance by one of Broadway's greatest, **Stephen Schwartz**, will close this season, while we open with the only musical score written by the ironic chronicler of the American experience, **Randy Newman**. We also introduce our first monthlong series of programs dedicated to the

performing arts and artists in Los Angeles. **LA Seen** will launch on April 6, 2025, with a program commissioned by The Soraya and presented in partnership with LA Opera's *Off Grand* initiative. **Terence Blanchard**, along with his E-Collective and Turtle Island Quartet, will perform selections from his operas, *Champion* and *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (an LA Opera co-production), both recently presented at The Metropolitan Opera and causing a sensation."

Also new this season are updates to the [Membership](#) program. Launched in 2021, Membership gives Soraya patrons the opportunity to belong to a community of people who love the performing arts and gives them a space to gather and enjoy the arts. This season features a new \$120 Jazz Membership that offers 20% off all Jazz at Naz festival concerts, priority seating, Jazz Lounge access, and more. Most Membership levels are fully tax deductible.

Membership opportunities start at \$96 and are available now. First access to ticket packages is currently open for Gold and Platinum Members and will open to Silver and Jazz level Members on May 30, to Bronze Members on June 13. Single ticket onsale for Members will begin on July 2 and will open to the public on July 9.

The Soraya's Original Programming

The **Season Opening Weekend** will kick off Sep 28 & 29 with a Soraya original, **Randy Newman's *FAUST: The Concert***. Good and evil battle it out in an American retelling of the classic story, unfolding in two dozen songs that highlight Newman's genius and wit. At its 1995 premiere, the *LA Times* hailed Randy Newman's *FAUST* as "a score, thrilling and stage-worthy... a score that brings idiosyncratic, smart humor back into the American musical."

This version of Newman's *FAUST* is the first to tell the story by way of a concert. Randy Newman's *FAUST* was originally released in 1995 as [Newman's ninth studio album](#), featuring the vocal talents of Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, Don Henley, Bonnie Raitt, and Elton John. The work later had a limited run as a musical at the La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego from September - October 1995.

The Soraya's presentation of Randy Newman's *FAUST: The Concert* comes 10 years after Newman's works were last onstage for one night only at New York City Center's Encores! as a stripped-down version of the 1995 production. Working with Newman himself to conceive this 2024 project, The Soraya will present on Sep 28 and 29 an all-new version of the concert featuring the 17-song album performed by a star-studded cast (names coming soon!).

A Season of Major Debuts

The Soraya's 2024-25 Season is filled with important debuts by both seasoned and up-and-coming artists. Making their debuts in the classical arena are the renowned pianist **Emanuel Ax**, multi-

talented upright bass player and composer **Edgar Meyer** and his trio and acclaimed young American violinist **Randall Goosby**. In the 4th Annual **Jazz at Naz festival**, GRAMMY©-winning saxophone player **Lakecia Benjamin** makes her debut in the **Jazz Club**, followed by the celebrated jazz vocalist **Kurt Elling** who hits the main stage with his concert dedicated to Weather Report.

Legendary choreographer **Twyla Tharp** stands out among The Soraya debuts as she celebrates the 60th Anniversary of **Twyla Tharp Dance**. Her works are known for creativity, wit and technical precision coupled with a streetwise nonchalance. By combining different forms of movement – such as jazz, ballet, boxing, and inventions of her own making – Ms. Tharp’s work has expanded the boundaries of ballet and modern dance.

Since graduating from Barnard College in 1963, Ms. Tharp has choreographed more than one hundred sixty works: one hundred twenty-nine dances, twelve television specials, six Hollywood movies, four full-length ballets, four Broadway shows and two figure skating routines. She received one Tony Award, two Emmy Awards, nineteen honorary doctorates, the Vietnam Veterans of America President's Award, the 2004 National Medal of the Arts, the 2008 Jerome Robbins Prize, and a 2008 Kennedy Center Honor. Her many grants include the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship.

For the holidays, **SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK**®, **Dorrance Dance Company**, and the legendary American big band, **The Glenn Miller Orchestra** all make their first appearances at The Soraya.

The season closes with one of the most anticipated debuts - Broadway’s own **Stephen Schwartz** who leads a concert of his own music from hits such as *Wicked*, *Godspell* and *Pippin*. Mr. Schwartz has contributed lyrics for a number of successful films, including *Pocahontas*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Prince of Egypt* and *Enchanted*. He has won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Lyrics, four GRAMMY Awards, three Academy Awards and has been nominated for six Tony Awards. He received the 2015 Isabelle Stevenson Award, a special Tony Award for his commitment to serving artists and fostering new talent.

Returning Artists

A number of artists return to The Soraya in the 2024-25 Season, including the Israel Philharmonic, Jason Moran, Christian McBride, Chucho Valdés, Conrad Tao, STOMP, MILOŠ, Yamato, Aida Cuevas, Leyendas del Mariachi, Ballet BC, Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles, and the Colburn Orchestra.

The Launch of the LA Seen Festival

For more than a decade, Los Angeles performing artists have had a home at The Soraya. They are standouts throughout the many seasons, performing original works, undertaking first-time

collaborations, and rising to new heights. The Soraya both keeps an eye out for rising local talent and uplifts the ongoing work of the region's favorites. Thousands of fresh eyes in The Soraya's Great Hall have been introduced to hometown dancers, jazz artists, and other musicians. In April 2025, The Soraya introduces **LA Seen**, its first monthlong series of programs dedicated to the performing arts in Los Angeles.

Opening the **LA Seen** festival on April 6 will be seven-time GRAMMY winner and two-time Academy Award nominee **Terence Blanchard** who was the first Black composer to premier an original opera at the Metropolitan Opera. ***Fire Shut up in My Bones*** took the world by storm, and then he did it again in 2023 with another groundbreaking hit, ***Champion***. The Soraya commissioned a world premiere of selections from both operas to be performed by Blanchard himself. In this collaboration with LA Opera's *Off Grand* initiative, the renowned American trumpeter and film composer leads his own E-Collective and Turtle Island Quartet with baritone Justin Austin and soprano Adrienne Danrich.

Additional LA Seen festival performances include the **Colburn Orchestra**, **Jazz Is Dead**, and a return of the **Martha Graham** celebration, **Graham100**, featuring **L.A. Dance Project**, **Lula Washington Dance Theatre** and **Glorya Kaufman USC School of Dance** performing signature works by one of the 20th Century's greatest choreographer, Martha Graham.

Jazz at Naz Festival Returns for the Fourth Season

The annual **Jazz at Naz festival** has been recognized as one of the best winter jazz festivals on the West Coast as well as the jazz epicenter in Los Angeles. Jazz at Naz has showcased major debuts for emerging artists such as two-time GRAMMY winner Samara Joy and created a home for the world's jazz legends such as **John Pizzarelli**, **Branford Marsalis**, **Dianne Reeves**, and **Charles Lloyd**, and turned the spotlight on influential crossover artists such as **Bobby** and **Taylor McFerrin**, **Diana Krall**, **Jon Batiste**, **Gregory Porter**, **Herb Alpert** and **Lani Hall**.

This season The Soraya welcomes the return of **Christian McBride**, and Saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin** to the onstage intimate **Jazz Club** for two nights each of jazz in the only-at-The-Soraya club format.

Fresh from a month-long celebration of the music of the great **Duke Ellington**, the Kennedy Center's Artistic Director for Jazz, **Jason Moran**, returns to The Soraya for the fourth time to continue the festivities honoring the Duke's enduring legacy and his 125th birthday. In addition to entertaining from the piano, Mr. Moran will lead CSUN's award-winning Jazz "A" big band to join him furthering The Soraya's ongoing commitment to music and arts education.

Jason Moran's appearance follows another Ellington offering, **Dorrance Dance: *The Nutcracker Suite***, Ellington's and Billy Strayhorn's reimagined 1960 version of Tchaikovsky's classic musical score which was featured as the nation's Nutcracker in 2023 with appearances at the Kennedy Center.

Also presented in the Great Hall during Jazz at Naz festival will be **Kurt Elling Celebrates Weather Report** with **Yellowjackets**, and **Chucho Valdés** who brings Irakere back to life honoring its 50th anniversary with special guest **Arturo Sandoval** in a return engagement.

Hecho en Las Ámericas Series Returns for its 12th Season

The **Hecho en Las Ámericas Series** continues for its 12th Season! The Series was created in the 2013-14 Season in response to the Chicana/o Studies Department at Cal State Northridge and named to be inclusive of all the communities and cultures in North, Central and South America— and the artists whose work inspires and carries on those traditions. It all began with a 2012 concert featuring Los Tigres Del Norte and blossomed into Hecho en Las Ámericas following a Mariachi Vargas de Tacalitlán concert in the 2013-14 Season. As the 2024-25 Season begins, The Soraya is proud to welcome back Series favorites Aida Cuevas, Leyendas del Mariachi, Ballet BC, and Ballet Folklórico de Los Ángeles — the dancers and creative minds behind The Soraya's holiday tradition, *Nochebuena*.

OPENING WEEKEND

Randy Newman's

FAUST: The Concert

Music and Lyrics by Randy Newman

Sat Sep 28 | 8PM*

Sun Sep 29 | 3PM

Good and evil battle it out in an American retelling of the classic story, unfolding in two dozen songs that highlight Newman's genius and wit. Thirty years since Newman's album debuted, the rock, Gospel, pop, and Broadway-inspired tunes are as timely and catchy as ever. Following in the footsteps of James Taylor, Linda Ronstadt, Elton John, and Bonnie Raitt, this Soraya-produced original concert will feature an all-star cast of fresh talent. Tickets: \$49–\$129

**Note: The first Members-only event of the Season will take place on Saturday, Sept. 28 on Opening Night with a Member Appreciation event.*

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 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 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 the Martha Graham Dance Company.

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

Website: www.TheSoraya.org

Ticket Office: 818-677-3000

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