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THE
SORAYA

NEWS RELEASE

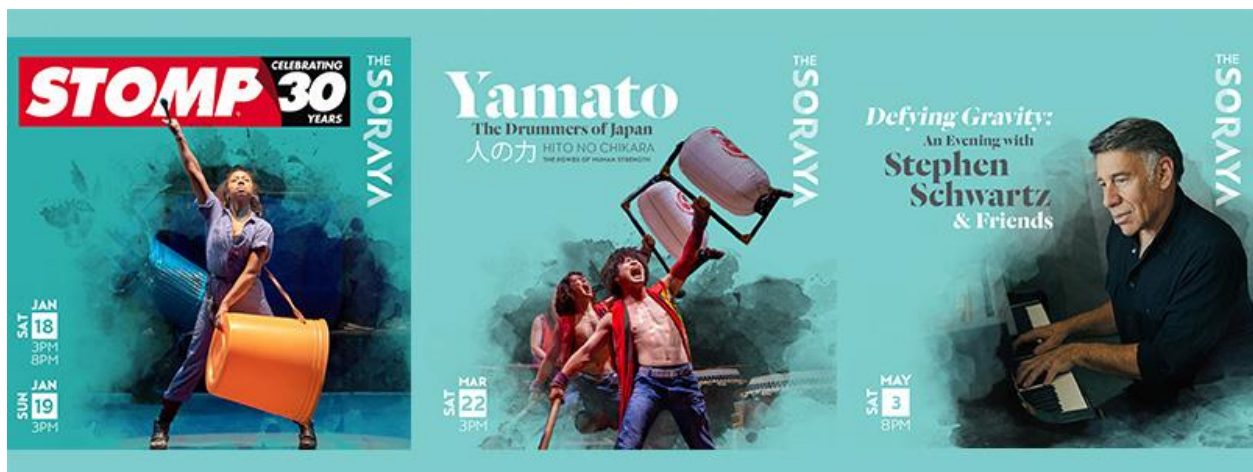
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"This strikingly beautiful concert hall on the campus of CSUN easily has the best sound of any large performance venue that I have ever experienced in the U.S." – Stage and Cinema

Create Lasting Memories in 2025 with Soraya Events for All Ages!



Five performances from Jan. 18 - May 3 for family and friends to enjoy! Tickets start at \$43 and are now available at TheSoraya.org.

(Los Angeles, CA) Jan 14, 2025 — The new year at The Soraya begins with international percussion sensation **STOMP**, with three performances on Sat & Sun, Jan. 18 & 19, and continues later this season with additional family-friendly events **Yamato: The Drummers of Japan**, and **Defying Gravity: An Evening with Stephen Schwartz and friends**.

This week, The Soraya announces the immensely talented cast who will accompany Schwartz in his Soraya debut. The evening will feature the hits of his vast catalog with Schwartz at the piano leading Tony Award-winner **Debbie Gravitte**, **Michael McCorry Rose** (most recently in the film adaptation of Schwartz' *Wicked*), one of New York's most honored vocalists **Scott Coulter**, pianist **John Boswell**, and actor and singer **Shaleah Adkisson**.

STOMP

“Electrifying! Triumphs in the infinite variety of the human experience.”

— *Los Angeles Times*

From its beginnings as a street performance in the UK, STOMP has grown into an international sensation over the past 30 years, having performed in more than 50 countries and in front of more than 26 million people. Now celebrating its 30th anniversary, the group returns to The Soraya for three performances — Jan. 18 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Jan. 19 at 3 p.m.

The performers “make a rhythm out of anything we can get our hands on that makes a sound,” says co-founder/director Luke Cresswell. A unique combination of percussion, movement and visual comedy, STOMP has created its own inimitable, contemporary form of rhythmic expression: both household and industrial objects find new life as musical instruments in the hands of an idiosyncratic band of body percussionists. It is a journey through sound, a celebration of the everyday and a comic interplay of characters wordlessly communicating through dance and drum.

Synchronized stiff-bristle brooms become a sweeping orchestra, eight Zippo lighters flip open and closed to create a fiery fugue; wooden poles thump and clack in a rhythmic explosion. **STOMP** uses everything but conventional percussion instruments - dustbins, suitcases, radiator hoses, boots, hub caps - to fill the stage with a compelling and unique act that is often imitated but never duplicated.

YAMATO: THE DRUMMERS OF JAPAN

YAMATO is a Japanese Taiko drumming group based in Asuka-mura Nara Prefecture which is well known by Japanese people as the hometown of Japan. They call themselves “YAMATO, the Taiko drumming group that travels all over the world.” They have given more than 4,500 shows across 54 countries around the world since their formation in 1993.

On stage, they are standing with more than 40 Taiko drums and all of them are having different characters. For example, their largest drum called “Odaiko”, produced from a huge tree over 400 years old, is approximately two meters in diameter and weighs 500 kg. All other Taiko drums are different sizes and have different sounds. The members of the group have trained their bodies to the limit to beat these massive Taiko drums. The acoustic pressure far surpasses what one could imagine.

The troupe returns to The Soraya to perform 人の力 Hito no chikara | *The Power of Human Strength*. Of this performance, the troupe writes:

Technology is a tool,
It is humans who wield it.
With the advancement of technology,

An era where technology possesses intelligence.
Will humans become tools used by technology?
What will become of human existence?
In this age where humans are alive,
Beat the Taiko drum.
Made of a huge wooden body and cowhide,
Resonating with the power of the human body.
It is the heartbeat.
The Power of Human strength

DEFYING GRAVITY: AN EVENING WITH STEPHEN SCHWARTZ AND FRIENDS

Stephen Schwartz wrote the music and lyrics for the current Broadway hit *Wicked* and has also contributed music and/or lyrics to *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *The Magic Show*, *The Baker's Wife*, *Working* (which he also adapted and directed), *Rags*, and *Children of Eden*. He collaborated with Leonard Bernstein on the English texts for Bernstein's *Mass* and wrote the title song for the play and movie *Butterflies Are Free*. For children, he has written songs for two musicals, *Captain Louie* and *My Son Pinocchio*. He has also worked in film, collaborating with Alan Menken on the songs for Disney's *Enchanted* as well as the animated features *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and writing the songs for the DreamWorks animated feature *The Prince of Egypt*. His first opera, *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*, was produced at Opera Santa Barbara and New York City Opera. A book about his career, *Defying Gravity*, has been released by Applause Books. Schwartz has been inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame and has been given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Awards include three Academy Awards, four GRAMMY® Awards, and a tiny handful of tennis trophies.

In 2023, the stars came out to celebrate the composer/lyricist's 75th birthday at the Metropolitan Opera. The Soraya follows suit, presenting the hits of his vast catalog with Schwartz at the piano leading Tony Award-winner **Debbie Gravitte**, Michael McCorry Rose (most recently in the film adaptation of Schwartz' *Wicked*), one of New York's most honored vocalists Scott Coulter, pianist John Boswell, and actor and singer Shaleah Adkisson.

For story development and interview requests, please contact:

- The Soraya Communications Associate Marie Estrada (marie.estrada@csun.edu)
- PR Consultant Gary Murphy (garymurphypr@garymurphypr.com)
- **[CLICK HERE](#) to access your press kit with photos and press release**

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 2024-25 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.

For Calendar Listings

STOMP!

Created by Lucas Cresswell

Sat Jan 18 | 3PM

Sat Jan 18 | 8PM

Sun Jan 19 | 3PM

Celebrating 30 Years of STOMP! Matchboxes, brooms, garbage cans, Zippo lighters, and more fill the stage with energizing beats at STOMP: the inventive and invigorating stage show that's dance, music, and theatrical performance blended together in one electrifying rhythm for the enjoyment of anyone at any age! STOMP is celebrating 30 years and more than 11,000 electrifying performances — don't miss them at The Soraya for three performances from Jan. 18 to Jan. 19, 2025, one of only two stops in California on their North America tour! **Tickets: \$43 - \$95***

Yamato – The Drummers of Japan

人の力 Hito no Chikara | The Power of Human Strength

Sat Mar 22 | 3PM

Making its fifth appearance at The Soraya, YAMATO returns with Hito no chikara, The Power of Human Strength. Packed with high energy and the traditional sounds of Japan, every YAMATO performance (they've done more than 4,000 so far!) engulfs audiences of all ages in the sound of Taiko. **Tickets: \$43 - \$95***

Defying Gravity: An Evening with Stephen Schwartz & Friends

Sat May 3 | 8PM

Godspell, Pippin, Wicked – Stephen Schwartz penned some of the most popular Broadway shows of the last five decades. In 2023, the stars came out to celebrate the composer/lyricist’s 75th birthday at the Metropolitan Opera. The Soraya follows suit, presenting the hits of his vast catalog with Schwartz at the piano leading a band and four singers, including Broadway veteran Liz Callaway. **Tickets: \$55 - \$138***

Sponsored by Owen W. & Christine H. Smith Endowment

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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