

FESTIVAL
MOZAIC

PRESENTS

SAN LUIS OBISPO
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

WINTER 2025 | FEB 19-22

SCOTT YOO | MUSIC DIRECTOR

New Times


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MUSIC DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

I am so excited to welcome you to the San Luis Obispo Music Festival Winter 2025! This week is filled with music that I love, performed by artists I deeply admire, in some of the most beautiful and intimate venues on the Central Coast.

One of the great joys of this festival is bringing together extraordinary musicians, and I am especially looking forward to welcoming **Hélène Grimaud** back to Festival Mozaic. She is one of the most profound and expressive pianists of our time, and her recital promises to be a breathtaking experience.

Our chamber music program is equally exciting. I can't wait to dive into **Beethoven's Piano Trio No. 1** with **Adam Neiman and Bion Tsang**—two phenomenal musicians whose artistry always inspires me. We'll also explore the **Grieg Cello Sonata**, a work full of Nordic passion, and Ravel's shimmering **Piano Trio in A Minor**, a piece that never fails to astonish me with its color and depth.

Beyond the music, I love how this festival brings people together in stunning venues across the region, from the warmth of **Patty Boyd Concert Hall** to the charm of the **Monday Club**. Each space creates a unique listening experience, allowing us to connect more deeply with the music and each other.

I am so grateful to share this festival with you and can't wait for the performances ahead.



Scott Yoo
Music Director

The Sharon Harris & Dennis Schneider Chair

Scott Yoo is the Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Mexico City Philharmonic and the Music Director of Festival Mozaic. He is also the Host and Executive Producer of the PBS Great Performances series Now Hear This. He is the Conductor of the Colorado College Music Festival and the founder of the Medellín Festicámara.

Scott has conducted major orchestras around the world, including Dallas, San Francisco, St. Paul, London Symphony, L'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. As a violinist, Scott has made solo appearances with orchestras throughout the country and as a guest with chamber music festivals worldwide. Scott was born in Tokyo and raised in Glastonbury, CT. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University and has won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions and an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

SLO MUSIC FESTIVAL

WINTER 2025

	DATE	EVENT	VENUE
	FEB 19 WED, 7:30 PM	Hélène Grimaud Piano Recital	Harold J. Miossi CPAC, Cuesta College
	FEB 20 THU, 5:30 PM	Notable Insight: Beethoven & Grieg	Patty Boyd Concert Hall, Santa Maria
	FEB 21 FRI, 5:30 PM	Notable Dinner: Ravel Trio	The Monday Club, San Luis Obispo
	FEB 22 SAT, 2:00 PM	Chamber Concert: Beethoven / Grieg / Ravel	Templeton Performing Arts Center



SAN LUIS OBISPO
MUSIC FESTIVAL
SUMMER 2025 | JULY 16-26

SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT
FEB 24, 2025

2025 FESTIVAL ARTISTS

Hélène Grimaud | Special Guest Artist

STEINWAY ARTIST

Generously underwritten by Shirley & Michael Ritter

Renaissance woman Hélène Grimaud is not just a deeply passionate and committed musical artist whose pianistic accomplishments play a central role in her life. Her multiple talents extend far beyond the instrument she plays with such poetic expression and technical control: Grimaud has established herself as a wildlife conservationist, a human rights activist and a writer, her deep dedication to her musical career reflected in and amplified by the scope and depth of her environmental, literary and artistic interests.

She has been an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist since 2002. Her recordings have been critically acclaimed and awarded numerous accolades, among them the Cannes Classical Recording of the Year, Choc du Monde de la musique, Diapason d'or, Grand Prix du disque, Record Academy Prize (Tokyo) and Midem Classic Award.

Grimaud's extensive discography includes works by Chopin, Rachmaninov, Beethoven, and Bartók. Highlights include *Credo*, *Reflection*, and collaborations with renowned orchestras like the London Symphony under Pierre Boulez. Her 2016 album *Water*, part of a large-scale installation with artist Douglas Gordon, features works by nine composers and explores themes of transformation. Recent projects include *Memory* (2018), *The Messenger* (2020), and *For Clara* (2023), which revisits German Romanticism and the works of Robert and Clara Schumann and Brahms.

In the 2024/25 season, Grimaud will perform with leading orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra, and give recitals at Carnegie Hall and

international venues in Singapore, Taipei, and São Paulo. She will also tour Europe with the Chamber Orchestra Basel and Camerata Salzburg.

Born in Aix-en-Provence in 1969, Grimaud studied at the Paris Conservatoire, earning first prize in piano performance at age 16. Mentored by György Sándor and Leon Fleisher, her career launched after a 1987 debut with the Orchestre de Paris conducted by Daniel Barenboim. She has since collaborated with the world's premier orchestras and conductors, including the Berliner Philharmoniker and New York Philharmonic.

A dedicated chamber musician, Grimaud has appeared at major festivals and collaborated with artists like Sol Gabetta, Gidon Kremer, and the Capuçon brothers. Her profound impact on classical music was recognized when she was named Chevalier of the Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur. Through her expressive performances and wide-ranging endeavors, Grimaud continues to inspire audiences worldwide.

Beyond music, Grimaud's passion for wildlife led her to establish the Wolf Conservation Center in New York in 1995, inspired by a transformative encounter with a wolf. She is also a member of Musicians for Human Rights, advocating for social change through music. For a number of years, Grimaud also found time to pursue a writing career, publishing three books between 2003 and 2013.

For more info, visit www.helenegrimaud.com



2025 FESTIVAL ARTISTS



Adam Neiman
Piano

Hailed as one of today's preeminent American classical pianists, Adam Neiman has cultivated a breathtaking career spanning more than three decades and traversing four continents. Possessed of an encyclopedic repertoire – seventy piano concertos, dozens of diverse solo recital programs, and a vast swath of the chamber music literature – Mr. Neiman has been acclaimed as a thought-provoking, charismatic, and highly virtuosic performer. Mr. Neiman has performed as soloist with numerous major orchestras, including those of Chicago, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Minnesota, Saint Louis, San Francisco, and Slovenia, as well as the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington D.C. His recitals have spanned many of the great concert halls and festivals across the globe. Mr. Neiman is an accomplished composer, with a catalogue of compositions that includes two symphonies, two piano concertos, a string quartet, and various solo and chamber works. Recent commissions include his Piano Concerto No. 2, Piano Trio No. 2 for Clarinet, Violin, & Piano, and his String Quartet. Various documentary film appearances as a pianist resulted in his eventual contribution as a composer to the PBS documentary by Emmy Award-winning director Helen Whitney entitled: "Forgiveness, A Time to Love and a Time to Hate." Mr. Neiman is a tenured Associate Professor of Piano at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, where he also serves as Chair of the Music Conservatory. From 2016 - 2022, he served as Artistic Director of the Manchester Music Festival in Vermont, and he is CEO of Aeolian Classics, LLC. For more info, visit www.adamneiman.com



Bion Tsang
Cello

Winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Bronze Medal in the International Tchaikovsky Competition, cellist Bion Tsang has appeared with the New York, Mexico City, Moscow, Busan and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestras, the Atlanta, Pacific, Civic, American and National Symphony Orchestras, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Saint Paul and Stuttgart Chamber Orchestras and the Taiwan National Orchestra. Mr. Tsang's discography includes three live concert recordings: Beethoven: Sonatas and Variations for Cello and Piano (Artek), Brahms: Cello Sonatas and Four Hungarian Dances (Artek), and Bion Tsang & Adam Neiman: Live at Jordan Hall (BHM). Tsang released *The Blue Rock Sessions* (BHM), featuring eighteen virtuoso miniatures for cello and piano, in 2017, *Dvorák/Enescu Cello Concertos* (Sony), with conductor Scott Yoo and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, in 2019, and *Bach Cello Suites* (Sony) in 2021. His latest album, *Cantabile* (Universal), with Yoo and the RSNO, was released in 2023. Mr. Tsang received his BA from Harvard University and his MMA from Yale University where he studied with Aldo Parisot. His other cello teachers included Ardyth Alton, Luis Garcia-Renart, William Pleeth, Channing Robbins and Leonard Rose. Mr. Tsang is on the faculty at the UT Butler School of Music. For more info, visit www.biontsang.com

HOST AN ARTIST

Get involved with the Festival by hosting an artist in your spare bedroom or empty apartment!

festivalmozaic.org/host



WEDNESDAY

**FEB
19**

7:30 PM

Harold J. Miossi CPAC,
Cuesta College

HÉLÈNE GRIMAUD PIANO RECITAL

BEETHOVEN / BRAHMS / BACH

ARTIST



Hélène Grimaud
piano



Concert Grand Piano
Sponsor

6:30 PM PRE-CONCERT LECTURE

with Dr. Alyson McLamore

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major, op. 109 (1820)

*Vivace, ma non troppo—Adagio espressivo
Prestissimo*

*Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung (Theme): Andante
molto cantabile ed espressivo—*

Var. I: Molto espressivo

Var. II: Leggiermente—

Var. III: Allegro vivace—

Var. IV: Etwas langsamer als das Thema

Var. V: Allegro, ma non troppo—

Var. VI: Tempo I del tema, cantabile

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Drei Intermezzi, op. 117 (1892)

No. 1 in E-flat major (Andante moderato)

No. 2 in B-flat major (Andante non troppo e con molto espressione)

No. 3 in C-sharp minor (Andante con molto)

INTERMISSION

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Fantasies, op. 116 (1892)

No. 1: Capriccio (Presto energico)

No. 2: Intermezzo (Andante)

No. 3: Capriccio (Allegro passionato)

No. 4: Intermezzo (Adagio)

No. 5: Intermezzo (Andante con grazia ed intimissimo sentimento)

No. 6: Intermezzo (Andantino teneramente)

No. 7: Capriccio (Allegro agitato)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

"Chaconne" from Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004
(c. 1720; arr. 1892 by Ferruccio Busoni)

Generously underwritten by Shirley & Michael Ritter

PROGRAM NOTES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major, op. 109 (1820)



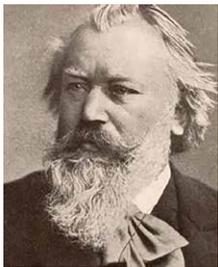
After twenty-nine previous sonatas, it seems that Beethoven was ready for some radical changes. Sure, Number 30 contains the conventional three movements—but unlike most previous sonatas, Beethoven’s central movement is the fastest of the three, instead of being the slowest. In the first movement, most listeners would expect to hear two contrasting melodies—but they would *not* expect to hear two contrasting speeds. Beethoven, however,

alternates between a lively tune that begins almost unobtrusively and a mysterious, almost rhapsodic passage; it makes use of the full width of the keyboard that was available on the pianos of Beethoven’s time (which must have added to the thrill factor). The rapid-fire central movement shifts to the minor mode and sustains a fierce intensity throughout, sounding almost thunderous at times.

Beethoven has yet another surprise in store for the finale of Opus 109. It had been the practice since the Baroque era to end multi-movement works with something fast, and thousands of pieces mimicked the bouncy dance called a jig (“gigue” in French). Although Beethoven also employs a dance-like finale, his model is the stately sarabande—which he stretches in all sorts of directions by means of six diverse variations.

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Drei Intermezzi, op. 117 (1892)



In 1890, Brahms announced that Opus 111 would be his last composition. In fact, he wrote his will after finishing it. To paraphrase Mark Twain, however, “the report of Brahms’s compositional ‘retirement’ was an exaggeration,” as testified by the presence of Opus 117 (and Opus 116) on tonight’s program. Brahms was spurred to pick up a pen once again after hearing the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld in 1891; by 1892, he asked a

Viennese friend to ship some manuscript paper to the resort Bad Ischl. Brahms had decided to return to writing for the piano, which he had not done since 1879.

The Three Intermezzi (“interludes”), op. 117, were products of that fruitful summer in the resort. Brahms told a pianist friend that they were “three lullabies for his sorrows,” which accounts for their intermixing of comfort and grief. All three of the Intermezzi are in ternary form (A-B-A), and the first of the three borrows the melody of a Scottish cradle-song. The second Intermezzo opens in the minor mode, but shifts to the major mode in its flowing central section. The third Intermezzo may also derive from a folk-song, and although the mood grows quite dark at times, it remains compellingly beautiful.

BRAHMS

Fantasies, op. 116 (1892)

Pianists eagerly embraced Brahms’s two Rhapsodies, written in 1879 and published in 1880 as Opus 79. It is likely that there were many unhappy musicians a decade later, when word got out that when Brahms had mailed String Quintet No. 2 to his publisher in December 1890 along with a message: “With this slip, bid farewell to notes of mine.” Therefore, after two barren years had elapsed, there must have been considerable excitement when new keyboard works by Brahms started to appear, the first of which was the set of Fantasies, op. 116.

At first glance, the set’s seven pieces seem to be merely a series of separate character pieces, titled either “Intermezzo” or “Capriccio,” with most lasting between two and three minutes. Still, it becomes obvious that Brahms had designed a large-scale cycle out of these assorted miniatures, using various means—such as recurring motifs—to bind them together. Moreover, there is a logic to the sequence of harmonies from piece to piece. For example, the outer “Capriccios” are both set in D minor, thereby bookending the set. The No. 7 “Capriccio,” however, shifts to D major—a common concluding gesture that leads to a feeling of triumph.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

“Chaconne” from Partita No. 2 in D minor,
BWV 1004 (c. 1720; arr. 1892 by Ferruccio Busoni)



Some contractors focus on new homes, building from the ground up. Others see the potential in older structures, often re-imagining them dramatically during the remodeling process, yet sustaining the integrity of the original building. In the case of the “Chaconne,” which concludes Bach’s Second Partita in D minor for unaccompanied violin, the original building was pretty spectacular. Bach had written the piece while

working for the music-loving Prince Leopold of Cöthen. The premise was modest: the “Chaconne” consisted of the simplest descending line imaginable, but Bach elaborated that bare-bones foundation, over and over again, in increasingly virtuosic and fantastic ways. Simply put, Bach created thirty-two variations that demonstrated nearly everything that a violin can do.

Since 1720, some two hundred people have borrowed Bach’s “blueprint” to build structures for new media ranging from solo cello to full orchestra. Ferruccio Busoni’s 1892 arrangement for piano remains one of the most formidable keyboard adaptations. Busoni himself published three revised editions between 1902 and 1916, slightly reducing the complexity each time. Still, the Busoni version offers increasingly rich harmonies and textures, and just as Bach had done with the violin, Busoni lets the “Chaconne” demonstrate virtually everything that a piano has to offer.

SATURDAY

**FEB
22**

2:00 PM

Templeton Performing
Arts Center

CHAMBER CONCERT

BEETHOVEN / GRIEG / RAVEL

ARTISTS



Adam Neiman
piano



Bion Tsang
cello



Scott Yoo
violin

1:00 PM PRE-CONCERT LECTURE

with Dr. Alyson McLamore

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Piano Trio in E-flat major, op. 1, no. 1 (1794)

Allegro

Adagio cantabile

Scherzo: Allegro assai

Finale: Presto

EDVARD GRIEG

Cello Sonata in A minor, op. 36 (1883)

Allegro agitato

Andante molto tranquillo

Allegro molto e marcato

INTERMISSION

MAURICE RAVEL

Piano Trio in A minor, M. 67 (1914)

Modéré

Pantom—Assez vif

Passacaille—Très large

Final—Animé



NOTABLE INSIGHT

Beethoven & Grieg

FEB 20, 5:30 PM

Patty Boyd Concert Hall,
Santa Maria



NOTABLE DINNER

Ravel Trio

FEB 21, 5:30 PM

The Monday Club,
San Luis Obispo

PROGRAM NOTES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Piano Trio in E-flat major, op. 1, no. 1 (1794)



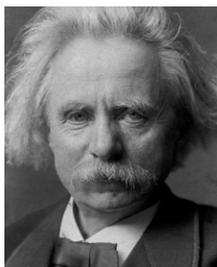
Almost surely, some people today will see “opus 1, number 1” in the program and will think, “Ah! We will be hearing Beethoven’s very first composition!” Other people may know that “opus” generally refers to *published* works, so they might expect to hear the first piece by Beethoven to be printed. Neither of those presumptions are correct: not only had Beethoven written dozens of works prior to 1795, when opus 1—a set of three piano

trios—made its print debut, but he also had *published* numerous previous pieces. Instead, Beethoven applied the “opus” designation to indicate that he regarded the piano trios as his first “significant” compositions. In fact, in later years, Beethoven issued certain pieces without opus numbers if he regarded them as unworthy of “opus” status.

The Opus 1 trios therefore hold a special position in Beethoven’s own perception of his legacy. He worked on them for at least a year, and perhaps longer. He had presented earlier drafts privately at the palatial home of Prince Lichnowsky, a long-term sponsor of Beethoven, and Haydn was particularly supportive of Numbers 1 and 2. Piano Trio No. 1, in E-flat major, clearly illustrates the care that Beethoven lavished on the set. Although he was one of Vienna’s most outstanding pianists, he gave the violin and cello substantial responsibility in the musical partnership. Melodic lines are shared, traded, and interwoven with kaleidoscopic flexibility. Portions of the trio are quiet and introspective, while others are cheerful or even boisterous. Moreover, Beethoven gave the trio added “weight” by writing *four* movements, when three would have been the norm.

EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)

Cello Sonata in A minor, op. 36 (1883)



Edvard Grieg composed only one cello sonata—and it’s easy to argue that he didn’t *need* to produce any others, since his one effort in this area was so exemplary. Of course, the right circumstances had to come into alignment before he could write it. Starting in 1880, Grieg had agreed to return to his hometown in Norway to serve as the orchestral conductor of the Bergen Harmonic Society. The responsibility was exhausting, however, and it

would be the last official post that Grieg ever accepted. By 1882, he had extricated himself from the commitment—and he also had received a commission of 3,000 Marks from the publisher Edition Peters for various new works. Even though exhaustion and ill-health left Grieg feeling out-of-sorts, the Cello Sonata (dedicated to Grieg’s brother John) was the first work to be completed for the commission; it premiered in 1883.

Despite Grieg’s general dissatisfaction with his efforts, the Cello Sonata is a powerful work. It is possible that it derived much of its energy from the fact that Grieg was *supposed* to be composing a second piano concerto as part of the commission, but channeled his creativity into this chamber work instead. The sonata seems quintessentially “Norwegian,” in part because of its references to some of Grieg’s own masterworks. He clearly was pleased enough with the piece to perform the piano part himself in numerous significant performances, including one of his very last public appearances, joining Pablo Casals in 1906. Generations of cellists besides Casals have relished the piece, including Alfredo Piatti, Hugo Becker, Mstislav Rostropovich, Steven Isserlis, Jonah Kim, and (of course!) Bion Tsang.

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Piano Trio in A minor, M. 67 (1914)



Why would a living composer label his composition as “posthumous”? In Maurice Ravel’s case, it was because he had just volunteered to serve in World War I. For this reason, he made sure that the manuscript for the Piano Trio was extremely legible, so that it would be printed accurately, no matter who edited it. Moreover, Ravel worked much more quickly than usual. He noted, “The thought that I would go away forced me to do five month’s

of work in five weeks.” He told friends, “I am ... working with the sureness and lucidity of a madman.”

Despite the unusual speed, Ravel composed with his customary attention to detail. Ravel was currently living in the seaport town of St. Jean-de-Luz, and the odd pulsations of dances from the surrounding Basque countryside left their mark; he described the *Modéré* as “Basque in color.” However, Ravel went further afield for the structure of the second movement. In the early nineteenth century, Victor Hugo had introduced French readers to the *pantoum*, a poetic form from Malaysia that contained the rhyme scheme *abab bcbc cdcd dede* (and so forth). Ravel’s interlocking motifs resemble this tight-knit poetic pattern.

Ravel looked to the past for guidance in the third movement. The *Passacaille*, known in Italy as a *passacaglia*, uses the Baroque device of a repetitive melody that shifts from instrument to instrument. Each repetition is accompanied by an ever-changing array of counter-motifs. After this dark, quiet movement, the finale seems to sparkle with energy and life, and, at times, the three instruments achieve an almost orchestral intensity.

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At Festival Mozaic we bring powerful live performances to stunning venues in San Luis Obispo County, provide meaningful hands-on opportunities for young artists, and produce memorable and inspiring experiences. The single most important key to our future is the generosity of you – our extraordinary philanthropic community. We count on you to play a part in building our future and like it has so many times before, your support will enable us to emerge stronger, more vibrant, and more creative than ever.

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