

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 10, 2015

Contact: Robin Freeman
Associate Director of Communications
robin.freeman@sonoma.edu
707.664.3813

**WEILL HALL AT THE GREEN MUSIC CENTER
2015–16 SEASON OPENING WEEKEND, OCTOBER 3–4, 2015**

**OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE FEATURING
LUMINARY PIANIST LANG LANG**

SEASON OPENING GALA RECEPTION, DINNER AND CELEBRATION

**MUSIC EDUCATION EVENT AND CONCERT: 101 PIANISTS™
PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH LANG LANG'S INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FOUNDATION**

(Sonoma County, CA) — Weill Hall at Sonoma State University's Green Music Center announces plans for the 2015–16 Season Opening Weekend. The weekend celebrates the beginning of Weill Hall's fourth season with an opening night performance by famed pianist Lang Lang (October 3, 7:00 p.m.); an elegant Asian contemporary-themed gala benefit dinner (October 3, 6:00 p.m. and post-concert); and a Sunday afternoon presentation of 101 Pianists™, an educational event and concert presented in association with Lang Lang's International Music Foundation (October 4, 2:00 p.m.). Guided by Lang Lang's encouraging teaching style, 101 Pianists nurtures 100 young local pianists as they prepare musical selections, and culminates with this joint performance on the stage of Weill Hall with Lang Lang at the helm.

2015–16 Opening Night Performance by Lang Lang, Saturday, October 3, 2015

World-famous Chinese pianist **Lang Lang** opens the 2015–16 MasterCard Performance Series in Weill Hall on Saturday, October 3, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. Heralded by *The New York Times* as the "hottest artist on the classical music planet," Lang Lang has played sold out concerts in every major city and has performed with the world's most important symphony orchestras. The 33-year-old sensation has also made recent appearances at high-profile mainstream events such as the 2014 World Cup in Rio de Janeiro with Plácido Domingo, the 56th and 57th GRAMMY® Awards with Metallica and Pharrell Williams and the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Lang Lang's season-opening program in Weill Hall will feature his signature interpretations of Bach's *Concerto Italiano*, Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons* and Chopin's Scherzos Nos. 1–4 for solo piano. This performance marks Lang Lang's third appearance at the Green Music Center—the world-class pianist also performed at Weill Hall's grand opening in 2012 and again in recital in 2013.

2015–16 Weill Hall Season Opening Gala, Saturday, October 3, 2015

Produced by the Weill Hall and the Green Music Center Gala Committee and led by co-chairs **Joan Weill** and **Alice Chiang**, the black tie 2015–16 *Season Opening Gala* celebrates the opening of Weill Hall's fourth season and features special guest **Lang Lang**.

Beginning at 6:00 p.m., guests will enjoy a festive cocktail reception in the sophisticated surroundings of Prelude Restaurant, followed by the gala opening night recital performance by Lang Lang featuring music by Bach, Tchaikovsky and Chopin at 7:00 p.m. in Weill Hall.

Following the performance, gala patrons will return to a tented pavilion stunningly transformed by acclaimed event designer **Thierry Chantrel** of **La Follia** and lighting designer **The Lux** into an elegant Asian contemporary gala setting in a nod to guest of honor Lang Lang's proud Chinese heritage. **Trevor Kunk**, the James Beard Award-winning executive chef of PRESS Napa Valley will prepare a sumptuous gala dinner featuring premium locally-sourced California cuisine followed by further gala festivities. Onsite catering support will also be provided by Sonoma-based Elaine Bell Catering.

"I cannot think of a more exciting performer to open Weill Hall's fourth season than the exceedingly talented pianist Lang Lang," remarked Gala Co-Chair Joan Weill. "Lang Lang's recital paired with our elegant *Season Opening Gala* makes for a fitting start to what I know will be an exceptional season of world-class performances in Weill Hall."

"It is a pleasure to co-chair Weill Hall's *Season Opening Gala* celebration, one of beautiful Sonoma County's premiere events," commented Gala Co-Chair Alice Chiang. "We are always grateful to our generous supporters and I know that the event we have planned—from the performance to the food to the décor—promises to be a truly memorable evening."

101 Pianists Educational Event and Concert Featuring Lang Lang and 100 Local Piano Students, Sunday, October 4, 2015

On Sunday, October 4, 2015 at 2:00 p.m., Weill Hall at the Green Music Center, in association with Lang Lang's International Music Foundation, presents **101 Pianists**, a finale concert at the culmination of an extraordinary educational journey experienced by 100 young Bay Area pianists. In early 2015, 100 talented young pianists from throughout Sonoma, Marin, Alameda and San Francisco counties in Northern California were selected to work with their local teachers to prepare Schubert's *Marche Militaire*, No. 1, and Brahms' *Hungarian Dance* in F-sharp minor. After months of practice, these students will experience the exceptional opportunity to perform together on stage in Weill Hall with world famous pianist Lang Lang.

101 Pianists encourages young piano enthusiasts to celebrate their love of playing and allows students of the traditionally solo piano to enjoy the inherently social nature of music making as an ensemble. To date this program has inspired more than 100,000 audience members and 1,200 piano students since its inception in 2009. 101 Pianists has previously been conducted in Paris, Berlin, London, Hong Kong, Rome and Vancouver, among other international cities.

Tickets for the 101 Pianists performance on October 4 in Weill Hall are offered at the low cost of \$10 and are available to the general public, with a special emphasis on inviting students and children of all ages to experience this extraordinary event.

* * *

MasterCard is the Preferred Card of the Green Music Center.

The Press Democrat is the Media Sponsor of the Green Music Center.

Macy's and Bloomingdale's is the concert sponsor of Lang Lang's season-opening performance.

101 Pianists is sponsored by MasterCard Worldwide. Roland Corporation supplies the pianos for 101 Pianists. Asia Society Northern California is a promotional partner of 101 Pianists.

2015–16 Weill Hall Opening Night Gala Committee:

Joan Weill, co-chair
Alice Chiang, co-chair
Debby Hopkins
Cherie Hughes
Janet Lamkin
Michelle Mercer
Marne Olson
Patti Skouras
Judy Vadasz
Sharon Winslow

About Lang Lang

Lang Lang has been heralded as the “hottest artist on the classical music planet” by *The New York Times*. He has played sold out concerts in every major city in the world and is the first Chinese pianist to be engaged by the Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic and the New York Philharmonic orchestras. He has performed at the 2014 World Cup in Rio with Plácido Domingo, the 57th GRAMMY Awards with Pharrell Williams, the 56th GRAMMY Awards with Metallica, the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the Last Night of the Proms at London's Royal Albert Hall. Additionally, *Time* has recently included Lang Lang in the “Time 100,” the magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world. He has played no small part in encouraging more than 40 million Chinese children to learn to play the piano – a phenomenon coined by *The Today Show* as “the Lang Lang effect.” In February 2010, Lang Lang joined Sony Music Entertainment as an exclusive recording artist; his first album with Sony featured a live recording of his 2010 recital at Vienna's legendary Musikverein. His next album, *Liszt, My Piano Hero* and DVD *Liszt, Now!* celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the great composer, while 2012 saw the release of *The Chopin Album*.

About 101 Pianists

The 101 Pianists performances aim to inspire the next generation of music lovers and performers by engaging 100 young pianists in a unique social musical event with Lang Lang. Guided by Lang Lang's encouraging teaching style, these young piano enthusiasts celebrate their love of playing, experiment with collaboration with other musicians, and enjoy the inherently social nature of the traditionally solo piano during a master class and public performance. The participants create a joyous sound magnified one hundred times over and provide an extraordinary show for their local youth community who comprise the majority of the audience. To date this program has inspired over 100,000 audience members and 1200 piano students since 2009. This program has been conducted in Paris, Berlin, London, Hong Kong and Rome as well as many other international cities.

About Chef Trevor Kunk

Executive Chef of PRESS Trevor Kunk relocated recently to Napa Valley from the East Coast, where he spent the previous seven years as chef de cuisine at Blue Hill New York, winner of 2013's James Beard Award for Outstanding Restaurant. After graduating with an AOS in Culinary Arts from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park in 2003, Chef Kunk went on to expand his culinary and pastry education at Charlie Palmer's Aureole. In 2004, he transitioned to Blue Hill, working his way up from cook to sous chef and then on to chef de cuisine, a position he held from 2007 to 2014. Chef Kunk's move to Napa Valley in spring 2014, prompted in part by a desire for a friendlier year-round climate, was excellent timing for PRESS. The restaurant was in need of a chef to take full advantage of the agricultural bounty of Rudd Farms and the Chef's Garden at Edge Hill, two Napa

Valley farms that exist exclusively to support PRESS, Oakville Grocery, and Dean & DeLuca, and given his extensive experience and wealth of knowledge, Chef Kunk was a natural fit. Chef Kunk aims to further refine the farm-driven steakhouse with an increased focus on local, sustainable produce, humanely raised meats and responsibly sourced seafood.

About Gala Co-Chair Joan Weill

Joan H. Weill currently serves as Vice-Chair of the Weill Hall and Green Music Center Board of Advisors. As a tireless supporter of cultural, philanthropic and civic endeavors, Mrs. Weill commits a great deal of her life to public service and education. Mrs. Weill is Chair Emerita of Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, having joined the Board in 1994 and served as Chair from 2000 until January 1, 2015. The Joan Weill School of Dance at Alvin Ailey, completed in 2005, is the nation's largest facility dedicated to dance. Mrs. Weill is the past Chair of Paul Smith's College of the Adirondacks, having spearheaded the college's transition from a 2-year to 4-year institution. Mrs. Weill is also Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee of the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall, which promotes music education in classrooms around the world. Mrs. Weill's dedication to women's health issues led to her appointment as Co-Chair of the New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center's Women's Health Symposium. Long an advocate for the elderly, Mrs. Weill is also an Honorary Board Member and President Emeritus of Citymeals-On-Wheels. Mrs. Weill and her husband of 60 years Sanford I. Weill are recipients of the 2009 Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy Award in recognition of their philanthropic efforts.

About Gala Co-Chair Alice Chiang

Alice Chiang, M.D., currently serves on the Weill Hall and Green Music Center Board of Advisors. Dr. Chiang is an American board certified comprehensive ophthalmologist who also specializes in diseases of the retina, macula, and vitreous. After graduating from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, she went on to complete a residency and a vitreo-retinal fellowship at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. Dr. Chiang diagnoses and treats glaucoma, cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, diabetes and hypertensive retinopathy and many other medical eye disorders. She performs surgeries such as cataract, blepharoplasty, glaucoma and lasers. In 2011, Dr. Chiang and her husband Victor Lacombe, M.D. began planning Artemedica, a center of medical excellence that includes plastic surgery, ophthalmology, dermatology, aesthetician services and a designer boutique optical store. Artemedica opened in mid-2011 and has assembled a team of talented professionals to provide an unparalleled experience in Northern California.

About the Green Music Center

Nestled in the picturesque foothills of Northern California's esteemed wine country, the Green Music Center (GMC) is a focal point for arts in the region, with its spectacular 1400-seat Weill Hall, an acoustically exceptional venue with a modular rear wall that opens to terraced lawn seating, providing picturesque views of the surrounding countryside, and the 240-seat Schroeder Hall, a cathedral-like recital hall designed specifically to accentuate instruments, organ and voice in a small, intimate setting. A program of Sonoma State University, the GMC presents year-round programming of top classical, contemporary, jazz and world music artists through the MasterCard Performance Series and is home to the Santa Rosa Symphony.

About Sonoma State University

Sonoma State University is a public liberal arts college located in California's premier wine country, one hour north of San Francisco. Nestled at the base of the idyllic Sonoma Mountains, the campus is home to more than 9,000 undergraduate students and is among the most popular campuses in the California State University system. Named a "Most Wired" campus by *The Princeton Review* and a "Best Regional University" by U.S. News & World Report, SSU was first in the country to offer an undergraduate degree in Wine Business.

* * *

TICKETS and BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

Single tickets for the Opening Night performance by Lang Lang are priced between \$65 and \$175.

Tickets on sale to MasterCard cardholders beginning Monday, August 24 at 10:00 a.m.

Tickets on sale to the general public beginning Monday, August 31 at 10:00 a.m.

*Tickets for the Season Opening Gala are not required to attend the opening night performance

Single tickets to 101 Pianists are priced at \$10.

Tickets on sale to the general public beginning Monday, August 24 at 10:00 a.m.

For tickets call 1.866.955.6040 or visit us online at gmc.sonoma.edu.

The Box Office is open Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m., and two hours prior to all concerts.

Tickets, tables and sponsorship opportunities for the 2015–16 Season Opening Gala are available now.

For information, visit gmc.sonoma.edu/gala or contact Caroline Ammann at 707.664.3517 or

ammannc@sonoma.edu

#