

For Immediate Release
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March 2025 at the Green Music Center

Performances include

Third Coast Percussion & Salar Nader, tabla: *Murmurs in Time*

Okaidja Afroso: *Jaku Mumor - Ancestral Spirit*

YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan

Naghash Ensemble

Sonoma Guitar Series: Andrea González Caballero

(Sonoma County, CA) - The Green Music Center at Sonoma State University is bringing five acts to Weill Hall and Schroeder Hall in March 2025.

Opening the month of March, **Third Coast Percussion** and **Salar Nader** come together in *Murmurs in Time* as a tribute to the late Zakir Hussain, honoring the composer's profound legacy (Mar 1). **Okaidja Afroso**, Ghana-born multi-instrumentalist, and singer-songwriter, brings a fresh breeze of musical flavors from his new project to the stage (Mar 6).

As the month continues, **YAMATO, the Drummers of Japan**, are bringing a piece of their culture to Weill Hall (Mar 15). Evoking emotions from their audiences with the sounds of over 40 taiko drums, YAMATO always leaves their audiences entertained and inspired. **Naghash Ensemble**, led by Armenian-American composer John Hodian, presents a brilliant performance combining musical genres including Armenian folk, new classical, contemporary, and more (Mar 27).

Closing out March, "The Female Voice of the Spanish Guitar" **Andrea Gonzalez Caballero**, will perform works from her latest album *Reencuentros* (Mar 27).

Tickets are on sale now! View the full listing of performances and purchase tickets by visiting gmc.sonoma.edu or calling 707.664.4246

March 2025

Weill Hall | Schroeder Hall

Third Coast Percussion & Salar Nader, Tabla

Murmurs in Time

Saturday, March 1, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Weill Hall

\$40 - \$100

While continuing to mourn the passing of tabla master Zakir Hussain, GRAMMY® Award- winning Third Coast Percussion (TCP) announces that the collaborative tour and recording projects they had planned together will go forward as tributes to Hussain with the blessing of the artist's family. Tabla virtuoso Salar Nader, a disciple of Hussain's, has been invited to perform for the five-city tour, which brings world and regional premieres of Hussain's final work, *Murmurs in Time*. Composed for tabla and percussion quartet, the work was recorded in studio by TCP and Hussain in early October prior to the tabla artist's death on December 15, 2024. *Murmurs in Time* will be released as a standalone EP on February 7, 2025, and will also feature on Third Coast Percussion's forthcoming full-length album titled *Standard Stoppages*, recorded in honor of the ensemble's 20th anniversary and scheduled for release on April 11, 2025 from Chicago's Cedille Records.

"The opportunity to work with Ustad Zakir Hussain was one of the highlights of our personal and professional lives thus far," said TCP artist and Executive Director David Skidmore. "The outpouring since his passing has been extraordinary and highlights what an exceptional influence he was on our musical world – as well as what a warm and generous person he was. We are so sad that we won't have the opportunity to continue making music with him, but we are grateful for this beautiful piece of music that he wrote and recorded with us. We look forward to sharing *Murmurs in Time* with the world."

"It is a profound privilege and honor to perform my Guru's composition, which resonates deeply within me," said Salar Nader. "Each performance with Third Coast Percussion is a tribute to his memory."

Hussain's *Murmurs in Time* combines the beauty and complexity of Hindustani classical music with the singular sound world of Third Coast Percussion. It features on the upcoming tour program alongside three new works commissioned for TCP's 20th anniversary: Jessie Montgomery's piece *Lady Justice*, Jlin's composition *Please Be Still* and Armenian jazz pianist and composer Tigran Hamasyan's three-movement work *Sonata for Percussion*. These selections are unchanged from the original program that had been planned with Hussain. The program will also now include a tabla solo performed in Hussain's honor by Salar Nader.

The winner of four GRAMMY® Awards, among seven total nominations, Zakir Hussain was widely esteemed as a chief architect of the contemporary world music movement and one of the most influential musicians of recent times. Just weeks after recording *Murmurs in Time* with TCP in October 2024, the artist passed away at age 73.

Supported in part by Cartograph Wines.

Okaidja Afroso: *Jaku Mumor - Ancestral Spirit*

Thursday, March 6, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Weill Hall

\$30 - \$80

A multi-instrumentalist, singer-songwriter, and dancer, Okaidja Afroso comes from a family of musicians and storytellers from the fishing village of Kokrobite on Ghana's west coast. Often performed in his native language, his genre-defying songs convey a spectrum of experiences—joy, harmony, tragedy, and hope—that embrace what he calls "the rich complexity of the integrated world we inhabit." Through his

distinctive style, Afroso explores the perseverance of ancestral traditions and creates a new, contemporary African oral tradition.

With his new project *Jaku Mumor* Okaidja's distinctive musical style extends ancestral traditions and creates a contemporary African oral tradition, combining percussion, guitar, dance, and native language vocals. His artistry is grounded in traditional dance & rhythms with modern harmonies & updated lyrics. *Jaku Mumor* dives deeper into Okaidja's cultural roots by collaborating directly with the fishermen to share the full artistry of their a cappella singing and chants that awaken the spirit of the human soul.

YAMATO

The Drummers of Japan

Saturday, March 15, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Weill Hall

\$40 - \$100

YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan bring their new program entitled, *Hito no Chikara – The Power of Human Strength* to the Green Music Center. The “simply captivating” (*The Evening Post*) Taiko troupe has reached nearly 8 million people globally in over 4,000 performances throughout their thirty-two-year history, adding to that number this season with seven performances in Canada; and 29 venues throughout the United States from New England to California.

“YAMATO believes that the drumbeat, like the heartbeat, is the very pulse of life and the epitome of the Japanese spirit,” says the troupe’s Founder and Artistic Director Masa Ogawa. The physically powerful cohort of musician-athletes work and live together as a community in the Asuka Village, said to be the birthplace of Japanese culture. There they create their own musical compositions, theater productions, sets, lighting design, choreography, performance techniques, costumes, makeup, stage settings and props. They make their own bachi sticks used to play the traditional Japanese instruments, beginning each show by hitting a Wadaiko drum weighing half a ton, made from a single piece of wood from a 400-year-old tree.

Hito no Chikara – The Power of Human strength examines humanity’s ever evolving relationship with technology and artificial intelligence. Masa Ogawa wonders, “Will there ever be a machine that can play Taiko with unparalleled accuracy? Will advanced algorithms make them sound human-like? Will people be used by the tools they have created, or will we no longer need people in the future? What will happen to Taiko drumming?” Ogawa concludes, “Let us beat the Taiko as we are YAMATO. We do not know when the end of humanity is, but we will strike until that moment. The sounds struck by the heart, resonating with each other, will become *Hito no Chikara – The Power of Human strength*.”

Supported in part by Oxford Suites and the Japan Foundation.

Naghash Ensemble

Thursday, Mar 27, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Weill Hall

\$30 - \$80

Celebrating the release of their new album *Songs of Wisdom*, Armenia's internationally acclaimed Naghash Ensemble will perform at the Green Music Center's Weill Hall on Thursday, March 27.

Based in Yerevan and led by Armenian-American composer John Hodian, the ensemble combines the earthy spirituality of Armenian folk song, new classical music, and contemporary post-minimalism with the energy of rock and jazz. Featuring three exceptional female vocalists and some of Armenia's finest instrumentalists on duduk, oud, dhol, and piano, their performances bring new life to the sacred texts of medieval Armenian mystic poets Mkrtych Naghash and Kostandin Erznkatsi. Drawing from this rich literary tradition, the new music from their upcoming album will be at the heart of their North American tour.

The Naghash Ensemble's music is both ancient and modern, a synthesis of sacred tradition and contemporary innovation that draws deep from Armenia's storied past while pushing forward into new uncharted terrain. Written by Armenian-American composer John Hodian, the ensemble's latest work, *Songs of Wisdom*, expands on a project that began nearly two decades ago with a serendipitous encounter at Garni temple in Armenia. Hodian heard soprano Hasmik Baghdasaryan's ethereal voice reverberating through the ancient ruins, which he recalls as "the most beautiful sound I've ever heard." His determination to use Hasmik's voice in a new way would lead to the creation of a musical language that deftly marries Armenian folk traditions, classical music, and the minimalism of contemporary Western composition. The result is music that feels timeless—suffused with the soul-stirring spirituality of Armenian liturgical music but framed by a sense of modernity.

Sonoma Guitar Series

Andrea González Caballero

Saturday, Mar 29, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Schroeder Hall

\$25 - \$35

Known as "the female voice of the Spanish guitar," Andrea González Caballero is a laureate of multiple prestigious international competitions. This rising star of the classical guitar will perform music from her latest album *Reencuentros*, which features the Spanish composers Isaac Albéniz, Manuel de Falla, and Manuel López-Quiroga.

Andrea is a laureate of multiple prestigious international guitar competitions, receiving First Prize and Special Prize at the "XL International Competition F. Sor" (Rome), and First Prize at the "XIII Alhambra International Guitar Competition" (Valencia), of which she was the youngest guitarist to receive first prize.

The *BBC Music Magazine* described her as one of today's young rising stars of the classical guitar. Andrea has appeared at international festivals and concert series around the world. Recent highlights include performances at Palau de la Música in Barcelona, National Auditorium and Juan March Foundation in Madrid, as well as performances with Sinfonietta Ratingen and Neue Philharmonie Westfalen in Germany.

About the Green Music Center

The Green Music Center is the performing arts center at Sonoma State University, a regionally serving public university committed to educational access and excellence. As a cornerstone of Sonoma State University's commitment to the arts, the Green Music Center is a place to witness artistic inspiration through year-round programming, serving as home to the Sonoma State University Department of Music, the Santa Rosa Symphony, and Sonoma Bach.

The mission of the Green Music Center is to present the most compelling artists of our time, to investigate ideas, and to provide access to diverse artistic experiences that educate, connect, and inspire Sonoma State University and neighboring North Bay communities.

Built to bring together artists, students, families, music-lovers, and more, the Green Music Center at Sonoma State University is a gathering place for our diverse communities in Sonoma County to explore and enjoy the things that move and inspire us. The center includes the 1,400-seat Weill Hall, with a rear wall that opens to lawn seating for a unique summertime experience, and the intimate 240-seat Schroeder Hall.

ABOUT SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Located in California's premier wine country one hour north of San Francisco, Sonoma State is a small campus with big ideas. With a tradition of promoting intellectual and personal growth, leadership opportunities and technological proficiency, SSU offers its students a friendly, safe and informal atmosphere on a beautiful campus setting. One of the most requested campuses in the CSU system, SSU is regularly named a "Best Regional University" by U.S. News & World Report.

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