

MONTEREY

SYMPHONY



80 YEARS

2025-2026 SEASON

JAYCE OGREN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

PIANO CONCERTO



**Bruckner
Symphony No. 9**

**Jonathan Bailey Holland
Dream Elegy**

NOVEMBER 22 & 23, 2025

SUNSET CENTER, CARMEL

Sponsored by
Sherrie McCullough

Jayce Ogren, Music Director and Conductor
Orion Weiss, piano

Dream Elegy [running time 8']

Jonathan Bailey Holland (b. 1974)

Piano Concerto in A minor [30']

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

- I. **Allegro Molto Moderato**
- II. **Adagio**
- III. **Allegro moderato molto e marcato – Quasi presto – Andante maestoso**

———— INTERMISSION [20'] ————

Symphony No. 9 in D minor [58']

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

- I. **Feierlich, misterioso**
- II. **Scherzo: Bewegt, lebhaft; Trio. Schnell**
- III. **Adagio: Langsam, feierlich**
- IV. **Finale: Misterioso, nicht schnell**

The November concert will be rebroadcast on KAZU's HD2 Classical station
on December 13th and 14th, 2025, both at 4 PM.

Orion Weiss

PIANO



Sponsored by Carol Lee Holland

One of the most sought-after soloists and chamber music collaborators

today, Orion Weiss is a “brilliant pianist” (*The New York Times*) with “powerful technique and exceptional insight” (*The Washington Post*). He has dazzled audiences worldwide with his “head-spinning range of colors” (*Chicago Tribune*) and has performed with all of the major orchestras of North America, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic.

In 2024, Weiss will release *Arc III*, the final album in his *Arc* recital trilogy (First Hand Records). His live performance schedule includes engagements with violinist James Ehnes, who joins Weiss for his return to London’s Wigmore Hall as well as for performances in Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Seattle, Bloomington, Indiana and Bergen, Norway. Among numerous engagements with U.S. orchestras, Weiss makes his David Geffen Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra. He is featured in recitals at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Italy’s Teatro Marrucino Biglietteria and Washington University in St. Louis, as well as on a tour with Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and an appearance at LaMusica Chamber Music Festival in Sarasota, Florida. Over the last year, he made his return to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, led by Michael Tilson Thomas, debuted with the National Symphony; gave multiple performances in the United States, Canada and Asia with violinist Augustin Hadelich; and appeared at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall.

Known for his affinity for chamber music, Weiss performs at venues and festivals around the United States with such artists as violinists Augustin Hadelich, William Hagen and James Ehnes; pianists Michael Brown and Shai Wosner; cellist Julie Albers; and the Ariel, Parker, and Pacifica Quartets.

A native of Ohio, Weiss attended the Cleveland Institute of Music and made his Cleveland Orchestra debut performing Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 in 1999. That same year, with less than 24 hours’ notice, Weiss stepped in to replace André Watts for a performance of Shostakovich’s Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Weiss’s awards include the Classical Recording Foundation’s Young Artist of the Year, Gilmore Young Artist Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant and more. His teachers include Paul Schenly, Jerome Lowenthal and Sergei Babayan. In 2004, he graduated from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Emanuel Ax.

Program Notes

By Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli

November 22-23, 2025 – Concert Synopsis

SPANNING A WIDE RANGE OF EMOTION, this concert offers music both epic and intimate. Jolted to life by its famous opening chords, Grieg's beloved Piano Concerto is the self-assured statement of Norway's most famous musical son. The concerto continues to reign as an audience favorite and features brilliant piano soloist Orion Weiss. Anton Bruckner's sprawling Symphony No. 9 is a passionate symphonic statement that produces what many call a "cathedral of sound." The concert opens with American composer Jonathan Bailey Holland's *Dream Elegy*, a work he describes as "a somber response to events related to the #blacklivesmatter movement."

Dream Elegy (2015)

Jonathan Bailey Holland (b.1974)



Composer Jonathan Bailey Holland creates music deeply rooted in contemporary issues. "Across the board," he says, "artists are feeling a need to respond somehow to everything that's happening. Either to reflect on it, comment on it or make it more present." Holland composed *Dream Elegy* in 2015 for wind ensemble (later adapting it for symphony orchestra) and calls the piece "a somber response to events related to the #blacklivesmatter movement."

Dream Elegy unfolds as a plaintive chorale that builds intensity over its eight-minute duration. Beginning in the flute, the lead voice moves freely among diverse instrumental colors making it an elegy delivered by many voices. Tuba and trombone take up the chorale melody in a gradual build-up of harmonic complexity leading to an emotional crescendo for the full orchestra. Chiming notes in harp and glockenspiel bring moments of quiet reflection.

Originally from Flint, Michigan, Holland has received performances and commissions from organizations across the country and around the world. Recent orchestral works include *Assemble* for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and *Ode* for the Cincinnati Symphony. The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2022, Holland currently serves as Dean of the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University.

Piano Concerto in A minor (1868) Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)



In 1868 composer Edvard Grieg enjoyed a summer with his wife and newborn daughter on the Mothsgården Estate, a pastoral retreat in Søllerød, Denmark. It served as a welcome reprieve from a busy life performing and teaching in his home town of Bergen, Norway. In that idyllic atmosphere, the 24-year-old Grieg composed his first large scale work, the vibrant and affecting Piano Concerto in A minor. Trained at Germany's Leipzig Conservatory, Grieg largely followed the Austro-German model provided by composers like Robert Schumann, whose own piano concerto (also in A minor) Grieg studied extensively. Grieg's concerto distinguishes itself with a brilliant infusion of Norwegian folk music giving it an indelible regional character and an originality praised by another prominent German Romantic, Franz Liszt. After playing through the piano part, Liszt told Grieg: "You have what it takes and don't let anyone scare you!"

The concerto opens with a bold A minor chord given sharp impact in the highest range of the solo piano. After descending to the bottom of its range in a sequence of aggressively accented gestures, the solo piano climbs out of the depths in lush, flowing

arpeggios. This pattern of *marcato* ("accented") followed by *legato* ("flowing") is a recurring feature of the movement. In the very next phrase, woodwinds introduce the main theme: a pointed, stately march with an expressive, lyrical second half. An embellished version of the piano introduction initiates the *Animato* ("animated") section leading to a *cantabile* ("songlike") second theme in the cellos.

One beloved feature of this concerto is its ability to combine dazzling virtuosity with moments of quiet repose. The placid *Adagio* movement begins with an extended poignant theme for strings played *con sordino* ("with mutes") giving a hushed, gossamer quality to the sound. The theme suggests the influence of Frederic Chopin and anticipates Grieg's later adagios such as "Åsa's Death" and "Solveig's Song" from his incidental music to the play *Peer Gynt* (a work performed by Monterey Symphony last season).

The third movement finale launches, without pause, into a vigorous Norwegian wedding dance called the *halling*. Interrupted momentarily by a tranquil flute theme, the energetic dance returns transformed into a springer – a similar folk dance, but with a waltz feel. The movement builds to a majestic statement of the tranquil theme for the full orchestra leading the concerto to its thrilling conclusion in a bright A major.

The Piano Concerto in A minor premiered on April 3, 1869 in Denmark's capitol of Copenhagen, just a few miles from where it was composed. It became the first internationally-known piano concerto not to come from Austria or Germany and established Grieg as Norway's most celebrated musical son.



Symphony No. 9 in D minor (1887-1896)

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

Anton Bruckner's monumental symphonies produce what one critic called "a cathedral of sound." A devout Roman Catholic, Bruckner served as organist at the St. Florian Monastery just a few miles from Ansfelden, Austria, where he was born in 1824. Bruckner is one of music history's late bloomers producing his first major work, the Symphony No. 1, at age 40 and achieving his first real success, the Symphony No. 7, at age 60. Since his death in 1896, Bruckner's stature as a composer

has grown significantly due in part to the Symphony No. 9, a work he intended to be the summation of his life's work and his ultimate statement in the genre.

When Bruckner began composing the Symphony No. 9 in 1887, he was already conscious of his declining health. Fearing "the curse of the Ninth," the superstitious composer suspected this symphony, like Beethoven's and Schubert's, would

be his last. He completed three movements and extensive sketches for a fourth before passing away at age 72. Multiple scholars have orchestrated Bruckner's sketches in an attempt to complete the symphony, but common practice now allows the third movement Adagio to be, musically speaking, Bruckner's final word. The composer dedicated the work "to the beloved God" and later said: "If God takes my pen, it's His responsibility."

Bruckner is one of music history's late bloomers producing his first major work, the Symphony No. 1, at age 40.

The first movement, *Feierlich, misterioso*, ("solemnly, mysteriously") opens on the root note of D played in trembling, agitated strings – a possible reference to the same opening in Beethoven's Ninth (also in D major). A solemn, powerful theme unfolds in the brass that embarks on the kind of mysterious tonal journey characteristic of Bruckner's biggest influence, Richard Wagner. In this greatly expanded Classical sonata form, Bruckner develops not individual themes, but groups of themes, creating overlapping cycles that many interpret as Bruckner's aspiration toward a spiritual, eternal sense of time. Sections of the form are often delineated by titanic themes in unison, that is, with the entire orchestra playing the melody together. It's the kind of epic gesture that made Bruckner the target of critics in his day. Today it's respectfully called Brucknerian.

The second movement Scherzo is marked *Bewegt, lebhaft* ("Moving, lively"). It opens with sustained woodwinds playing a harmonically-ambiguous chord known in music theory as "half-diminished seventh." Historically, it's Wagner's iconic "Tristan chord" (from *Tristan and Isolde*), often cited as the birth of musical modernism. The chord is animated by a tiptoeing sequence of soft pizzicatos in the violins that builds to a thunderous stomp in the brass. An oboe introduces a light theme reminiscent of a *Ländler* – the Austrian folk dance that Gustav Mahler would later take up for his own symphonic scherzos.

Bruckner called the third movement Adagio a "farewell to life." It marks the first appearance of the Wagner tuba, a brass instrument Wagner invented for his opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*. Much smaller than the standard orchestral tuba, it is played as an alternate to the French horn and produces a brighter, more focused tone. The movement begins with an anguished upward leap in the violins that evolves into a lush, hymn-like theme in E major. The next section builds toward an apocalyptic vision culminating with a 10-note chord whose intense dissonance dissipates into silence. In the reflective coda, the oboe plays a meditative theme Bruckner borrowed from his sacred choral work *Miserere* ("Have mercy") giving the movement, and the symphony, its final benediction.

Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli

MUSICOLOGIST



Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli's innovative compositions for the concert stage, his deeply-felt scores for the studio and indie film worlds, and his skilled musical direction for artists from across the pop music spectrum earned him a reputation as a musician with a collaborative spirit and a broad vision.

His current release, *Continent's End*, received "Critic's Choice" from *Opera News*. The nine-song concert work for mezzo-soprano and piano on poems by California iconoclast Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) "perfectly embodies with its unpredictable harmonic twists and turns and its multi-tonality Jeffers' hyper-masculine, pantheistic, often erotic poetry"

(*Raphael's Music Notes*). Nominated for an Emmy Award at age twenty-one, Anderson-Bazzoli composed scores for twenty feature and short films including the Venezuelan thriller *Ellipsis* (Fox) and the technology documentary *Revolution OS* (7th Art), among others. He received a Sundance Composer Fellowship and served as copyist, music librarian, or orchestrator on over three hundred films and TV shows including Disney's *Encanto*, *The Lion King* (2019), and *Top Gun Maverick*. As a conductor he worked with top recording artists Michael Bublé, Dr. Dre, Christina Aguilera, and She & Him (Zoëy Deschanel and M. Ward) and served as editor and copyist for eminent composer-conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen.

While growing up in Pacific Grove, California, Christopher Anderson-Bazzoli learned tuba at age eleven, graduated from Stevenson School, and later earned a B.A. in Tuba and an M.A. in Music Composition from UCLA. In 2022 he relocated from Los Angeles to Carmel with his wife Donna Eshelman, a neuromuscular therapist and choreographer.



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