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Sierra Madre Playhouse Announces 2025 Season, Featuring a Record Number of World-Class Programs Across a Wide Array of Genres

The Historic Performing Arts Venue
Offers 70 Entertaining and Compelling
Music, Jazz, Theater, Dance, Cinema, and Family Events
from January 2025 to December 2025

Highlights Include:

- Debut of a Multi-Week Lunar New Year Celebration;
- Expanded Dance and Music Programming;
- World Premiere of a New Theatrical Work in Development;
- Silent Film Classics Reimagined with Alt Rock Soundtracks;
- New Artistic Partnerships with East West Players, Street Symphony, and Silents Synced and Continuing Partnerships with Wild Up and Bob Baker Marionette Theater.

(Sierra Madre, CA – November 21, 2024) **Sierra Madre Playhouse**, among the Southland’s most distinctive performing arts centers, announces its 2025 season, which includes a record-breaking number of programs, all featuring premier talent and innovative artistry. The historic cultural jewel, which last season marked its centennial, offers a compelling lineup of 70 programs from acclaimed dance ensembles and new and award-winning theatrical productions to virtuoso musicians across a plethora of genres. The season also showcases unforgettable family programming, several silent film screenings with a twist, and exciting new artistic collaborations.

“Sierra Madre Playhouse’s 2025 season is our most ambitious to date and reflects the venue’s remarkable transformation over the past 100 years from a silent film house to a full-fledged performing arts center,” says Artistic and Executive Director **Matthew Cook**. “We will be presenting in our intimate 99-seat setting an exceptional array of performers from across the globe as well as from our own Southern California backyard.”

Cook adds, “Among numerous highlights, we are proud to announce new artistic partnerships with eminent violinist and thought-leader Vijay Gupta’s impactful **Street Symphony**, noted for its inspiring musical programs

on Skid Row, **Silents Synced**, which pairs classic silent films with alt rock music, and the pioneering **East West Players**, known for its world-class theatrical productions that raise the visibility of the Asian American experience. We are also pleased to continue our collaborations with the beloved **Bob Baker Marionette Theater** and the GRAMMY-nominated contemporary music ensemble **Wild Up**.”

New this season are a multi-week Lunar New Year Celebration, welcoming the Year of the Snake with a sweeping array of programs, the premiere of a new play in development by Muslim actor and filmmaker Farah Merani, and a series showcasing the next generation of exceptional collegiate musical artists honing their craft at local universities. Sierra Madre Playhouse expands considerably both its dance and music offerings and collaborates with the City of Sierra Madre on two free community-wide events, including the city’s world-famous Wistaria Festival, celebrating the planet’s largest blooming wistaria vine, located in the heart of the city.

Lunar New Year Celebration Introduced

To help launch its 2025 season, Sierra Madre Playhouse debuts a multi-week Lunar New Year Celebration encompassing a broad range of theater, music, dance, film, and family programs beginning in January and running through mid-March.

In partnership with **East West Players**, the Playhouse presents **Patsy**, a heartwarming play about the enduring legacy of trailblazer Patsy Mink, the first Asian American congresswoman (January 25). The earliest known Chinese American feature film, **The Curse of Quon Gwon**, directed by Marion E. Wong in 1916, lights up the venue’s fabled silver screen (January 31). A special family program showcases a live Lion Dance performance by the **East Wind Foundation**, a Chinatown-based organization empowering at-risk youth through martial and performance arts, followed by a dragon puppet-building workshop for children hosted by **Bob Baker Marionette Theatre** (February 2).

The festivities continue with “Lunar Harmonies,” a concert by the **Asia / America New Music Institute** featuring compositions inspired by the moon (February 2). **Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts**, in the first of two dance performances the company gives at Sierra Madre Playhouse this season, performs “Pagdiriwang - A Celebration of Philippine Culture,” which welcomes the Year of the Snake with a fusion of lively folk dances and time-honored traditions that reflect the festive spirit of the season (February 8). Composer/drummer **Eric Ching** lays down jazz rhythms with his captivating drumming and musical storytelling (February 9). The Playhouse’s Lunar New Year celebration wraps with **Tim Dang** directing Terrence McNally’s Tony Award-winning **Master Class**, a gripping theatrical production inspired by the legendary masterclasses given by opera icon Maria Callas at Juilliard (February 14 – March 9).

Dance Programming Expands

Dance @ the Playhouse, inaugurated last season, expands this year with a total of eight performances by seven wide-ranging dance companies. **Blue13 Dance Company** merges theatrical modern dance with influences from the classical and cultural art forms of the Indian subcontinent (March 12). Interdisciplinary dance artists **Steven Atwater** and **Thomas Ford** perform “**In Search of an Exit**,” a thought-provoking piece addressing otherness and belonging (May 17-18).

Additionally, **Pacifico Dance Company** brings to life the vibrant beauty of traditional Mexican dance (June 14), **RGWW’s Sugar Houses** delivers a haunting and immersive reimagining of the Hansel and Gretel fairytale (June 28-29), and celebrated trans-media storyteller and movement composer **d. Sabela grimes** explores themes of Black identity, speculative futures, and socio-historical narratives (September 6).

Viver Brasil Dance Company returns to Sierra Madre Playhouse by popular demand with *Rezas e Folhas*, blending traditional Afro-Brazilian and indigenous dances with experimental choreography (October 17-18), and **Kayamanan Ng Lahi Philippine Folk Arts** showcases the rich and varied dance culture of the Philippines in two appearances (February 8, May 17).

Theatrical Productions Transport

Continuing its legacy of producing new and enduring theatrical productions, Sierra Madre Playhouse this season offers nine transportive plays, among them the world premiere of *Emilia’s Take*, a new work in development by Muslim actor and filmmaker Farah Merani about trailblazing Elizabethan-era poet Emilia Bassano touching on issues of gender, equity, and representation (September 8-14).

Sierra Madre Playhouse also premieres *Flashes of Light*, an award-winning new musical in development by Billy Larkin and Ron Boustead, set in late 1800s New York during the industrial revolution (May 23-June 9). Inventor Nikola Tesla, guided by Electra, the powerful Goddess of the Storm Clouds who sends him visions of groundbreaking inventions during lightning storms, is obsessed with pushing the envelope of scientific discovery. As the line between worlds mythical and scientific begins to blur, a star-crossed love story both tragic and divine unfolds. Illuminated by haunting jazz, pop, and rock melodies, heartfelt lyrics, and soaring vocals, *Flashes of Light*, received First Prize in the prestigious international competition “Search for New Musicals” for 2024 presented by New Musicals Inc.

Two plays are spotlighted as part of the Luna New Year Celebration, including **Tim Dang** directing Terrence McNally's Tony Award-winning **Master Class**, inspired by the actual life-altering masterclasses led by the uncompromising opera diva Maria Callas at Juilliard near the end of her career (February 14 – March 9), and **Patsy**, a heartwarming play by Alison Minami about the perseverance of trailblazer Patsy Mink, the first Asian American congresswoman, co-presented by the Sierra Madre Playhouse and **East West Players** (January 25).

The multi-ethnic theatre troupe **We Tell Stories** inspires wonder with a set of programs – **A Feast from the East**, which weaves together a collection of interactive tales from Japan, China, and India (August 2), and **Earth Tales**, a celebration of cultural wisdom and environmental stewardship (October 11). Two productions by **AKT Family Theatre's Fractured Fairytales** turn classic fairytales on their heads (August 30, October 25), and **Bob Baker Martionette Theatre** once again fills Sierra Madre Playhouse with joyous holiday cheer with the enchanting **Bob Baker's Nutcracker**, a beloved and magical mix of theatrics, dance, and puppetry (November 30 – January 4, 2026).

Spectrum of Classical and World Music Bridges Genres

Sierra Madre Playhouse offers nearly two dozen classical and world music concerts straddling a spectrum of Baroque, Renaissance, and contemporary repertoire and embracing the revered music traditions of South East Asia, China, and Mexico.

Among the disparate programs, renowned Hindustani classical musician **Samarth Nagarkar** displays his mastery of Khayal and meditative Raga music (January 11), and GRAMMY Award-winning guitarist **John Schneider** is featured on a program of innovative contemporary compositions (January 17). **Musikaravan** – a trio anchored by violinists **Etienne Gara** and **YuEun Kim**, and cellist **Stella Cho** – rolls into the Playhouse with its distinctive musical flair (February 12). Eminent flutist **Emi Ferguson** inspires with her fresh approach to Baroque repertoire (March 14) and collaborates with clarinetist **Josh Rubin** on a selection of contemporary works (October 24). Rubin also presents a separate program (April 19).

Choreographer/dancer **Yamini Kalluri** joins violinist **Vijay Gupta** for a mix of movement and music combining works by JS Bach and Reena Esmail with modern and traditional Kuchipudi dance (June 21), while internationally recognized sitarist **Rajib Karmakar**, who has collaborated with music legends Herb Alpert and Chris Martin of Coldplay, offers his unique global music perspective (June 22). **Jagan Ramamoorthy**, a violinist and vocalist who fuses traditional and contemporary influences, captivates with his nuanced interpretations of Carnatic and Hindustani music (August 3).

The groundbreaking, two-time GRAMMY-winning, all-female ensemble **Mariachi Divas**, delivers its signature sound of mariachi classics, jazz, and pop (August 9). Sitarist and upright bassist **Paul Livingstone**, celebrated for bridging world music and jazz, returns to the stage with a mix of traditional Indian classical raga music and more (September 7). **Darshan Trio**, Street Symphony's ensemble in residence featuring pianist **Dominic Cheli**, violinist **Vijay Gupta**, and cellist **Yoshika Masuda**, offers a boundary-expanding approach to classical music, creating immersive multimedia experiences that connect music across centuries and cultures (September 28).

Wild Up, which last season began a long-term Eastside L.A. residency at Sierra Madre Playhouse, also returns with two engaging chamber music programs on its L.A. Composers series (October 4, November 15). Prominent San Francisco-based Chinese chamber ensemble **Melody of China** highlights the beauty and versatility of traditional Chinese instruments (November 22), and **Duo Remanence**, featuring **Mana Tinkerhess** on harpsichord and **Eric Tinkerhess** on cello and viola da gamba, captivates with program of timeless Baroque music (November 23).

Other featured musical artists include the experimental music group **House on Fire** in a program of new works curated by composer/multi-instrumentalist/trio co-founder **Richard An** (August 17); **Musica Transalpina**, considered one of Southern California's premier vocal and period instrument Baroque ensembles (August 23); and **Mayuri Vasan**, a vocalist with deep roots in Carnatic South Indian classical music (October 19).

Jazz Series Lauded

Noted guitarist **Greg Porée** (Ray Charles/Aretha Franklin/Stevie Wonder), curator of Sierra Madre Playhouse's lauded jazz series, returns for his third engagement (January 12). Other marquee jazz artists appearing are GRAMMY-winning bassist **John Clayton** (March 16); bassist and composer **Del Atkins** (April 27); **Alex Johnson** with a Tribute to Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers (May 16); and pianist **Yuko Mabuchi** (August 10).

Jazz @ the Playhouse continues with **Josh Nelson and Kevin van den Elzen's West Coast Jazz Hour Quintet** (September 21); keyboardist **Kait Dunton** (October 12); bassist, cellist, and composer **Ryan Cross** (November 9); and drummer **Michael Carvin** (November 16).

Notable as well, Sierra Madre Playhouse expands its commitment to fostering emerging talent with the debut of "**Come & Play**," a new series that brings to the stage top collegiate musical groups from the region's leading

universities, giving audiences the opportunity to hear the next generation of creative voices (April 1, June 24, September 23, October 7).

Diverse Family Events Delight

Family @ the Playhouse, a series designed to enthrall people of all ages, offers a range of exceptional music, dance, and theatrical experiences infused with humor, drama, and spectacle.

Renowned mime, illusion, and movement artists Keith Berger and Sharon Diskin – known as the Chameleons – transcend traditional mime in their genre-defying show “**Story Mime**” (March 15). **Baba the Storyteller**, one of the few recognized American-born practitioners of the ancient West African storytelling craft called *Jaliyaa*, builds cultural bridges with “Road of Ash and Dust: Awakening of a Soul in Africa,” illuminating a universal rite of passage – the discovery of self (April 26).

Two free community events are slated as well. Sierra Madre Playhouse collaborates with the Sierra Madre Public Library on a free staged play reading as part of the city’s annual “**One Book, One City**” program (February 24) and throws open its doors to the public to offer a slate of free performances in conjunction with Sierra Madre’s world-famous **Wistaria Festival**, celebrating the planet’s largest blooming wistaria vine, a century-old wonder growing in the heart of the city (April 6).

Cinematic Classics Reimagined

Building upon its storied history as silent film house, Sierra Madre Playhouse partners with **Silents Synced** on two remarkable programs that reimagine iconic silent films with contemporary music, to create a compelling fusion of past and present. For the first of the innovative and immersive pairings, Buster Keaton’s 1924 silent comedy ***Sherlock Jr.*** meets the atmospheric sounds of **R.E.M.’s “New Adventures in Hi-Fi,”** merging vintage cinema and modern rock (June 13). The second cinematic amalgamation blends the haunting visuals of the classic silent film ***Nosferatu*** (1923) with the avant-garde rock soundscapes of **Radiohead’s “Kid A” and “Amnesiac”** (August 16).

In another distinctive artistic crossover, the emotional depth of Carl Dreyer’s critically hailed 1928 silent film ***The Passion of Joan of Arc*** is heightened with the live performance of a musical score composed by George Sarah that weaves together pulsing electronic beats with emotive soundscapes and rich orchestral textures (May 10).

Sierra Madre Playhouse screens three additional landmark films from cinema's Golden Age, including ***The Curse of Quon Gwon***, one of the earliest films directed by a woman, Marion E. Wong, featured in the theater's Lunar New Year Celebration (January 31), and a double bill of the timeless silent film comedies ***The Garage*** (1920), a 21-minute whirlwind of slapstick hilarity set in a small-town fire station starring Buster Keaton and Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, and ***The Battle of the Century*** (1927), Laurel and Hardy's 19-minute laugh riot legendary for its pie fight scene involving more than 3,000 cream pies (April 5).

Tickets and Information

Season subscriptions, create-your-own packages, and single tickets for Sierra Madre Playhouse's 2025 season are on sale now at 626.355.4318 or www.sierramadreplayhouse.org. Sierra Madre Playhouse is located at 87 West Sierra Madre Boulevard, Sierra Madre, CA 91024.

Editors, Please Note:

2025 performances listed in chronological order: [HERE](#)

2025 performances listed by genre:

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[Film](#)

[Holiday](#)

[Jazz](#)

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SIERRA MADRE PLAYHOUSE, a vibrant Southern California cultural hub with a rich history spanning a century, energizes audiences and the community with distinctive theatrical productions and captivating live performances. Hailed as a "jewel" (*Pasadena Weekly*) and "a landmark theater" (*ABC7 Los Angeles*), the performing arts center has garnered tremendous accolades for its varied repertoire and thought-provoking education and outreach programs curated with social impact in mind. The *Los Angeles Times* proclaims, "This is theater from the heart." As one of San Gabriel Valley's only performing arts center presenting a broad spectrum of performance genres, including theater, music, dance, film, comedy, and family-friendly productions featuring eminent local and national professional artists, the treasured artistic beacon draws audiences from across the Southland. The intimate 99-seat Sierra Madre Playhouse offers an up-close and personal connection to performances that resonate deeply, earning multiple Ovation Awards, NAACP Awards, and LA Times Critics' Choice honors. It is nestled into a historic building on the inviting Main Street of Sierra Madre, a charming village in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Retaining its distinctive movie theater façade and instantly recognizable marquee, the structure has undergone numerous transformations since opening in 1910, from furniture emporium to silent movie theatre to the artistic institution that now stands as a vibrant embodiment of the region's rich cultural legacy. The Sierra Madre Playhouse fosters creativity that aspires to bridge divides and spark dialogue, all while celebrating the rich tapestry of the American experience and the enduring pursuit of shared understanding.

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