

MUSIC

2026 – 2027

SONOMA
STATE
UNIVERSITY

FALL 2026 PERFORMANCES

All concerts are held at the Green Music Center

SEP 13	12:00 p.m	Saxophone Day	Schroeder Hall
SEP 20	2:00 p.m	Navarro Trio	Schroeder Hall
SEP 25	7:30 p.m.	Symphony Orchestra	Weill Hall
OCT 1	7:30 p.m.	Symphonic Wind Ensemble & USAF Band of the Golden West	Weill Hall
OCT 5	1:00 p.m.	Department Repertory Recital	Schroeder Hall
OCT 13	7:30 p.m.	SSU Community Concert Band & BD Winds	Weill Hall
OCT 17	2:00 p.m.	Jazz Orchestra	Weill Hall
OCT 18	10:00 a.m.	Day of Strings	Schroeder hall
OCT 20–21	All Day	SSU Choral Festival	Weill Hall & Schroeder Hall
OCT 22	7:30 p.m.	Concert Jazz Ensemble & Latin Band	Schroeder Hall
NOV 7	7:30 p.m.	Concert Choir & SonoVoce	Weill Hall
NOV 9	1:00 p.m.	Department Repertory Recital	Schroeder Hall
NOV 20	7:30 p.m.	Symphony Orchestra	Weill Lawn
NOV 22	2:00 p.m.	Brass Ensemble	Schroeder Hall
DEC 2	7:30 p.m.	Chamber Ensembles	Schroeder Hall
DEC 3	7:30 p.m.	Symphonic Wind Ensemble 25th Anniversary	Weill Hall
DEC 4	7:30 p.m.	Music Theater - Opera Scenes	Schroeder Hall
DEC 5	2:00 p.m.	Music Theater - Opera Scenes	Schroeder Hall
DEC 5	7:30 p.m.	Music Theater - Opera Scenes	Schroeder Hall
DEC 6	3:00 p.m.	Jazz Orchestra	Weill Hall
DEC 8	7:30 p.m.	Guitar Ensemble	Schroeder Hall
DEC 9	1:00 p.m.	Vocal Repertory Recital	Schroeder Hall
DEC 10	7:30 p.m.	Concert Jazz Ensemble & Latin Band	Schroeder Hall
DEC 12	7:30 p.m.	Rock Collegium	Schroeder Hall
DEC 15	7:30 p.m.	SSU Community Concert Band & Piner High School	Weill Hall
DEC 16	7:30 p.m.	Noma Winds	Weill Hall

Tickets:

\$20 General

\$8 Students / Youth

\$12 Seniors

FREE for SSU Students, Staff and Faculty

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Sonoma State University Department of Music
presents

***The Sonoma State
Symphony Orchestra***

Alexander Kahn, Music Director

***SEASON OPENER:
FRENCH
IMPRESSIONS***

Friday, September 25, 2026

7:30 p.m.

Weill Hall, Green Music Center

PROGRAM

***Première Rapsodie* for Clarinet and Orchestra**

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Diego Borges, soloist and 2026 Concerto Competition winner

Selections from *Dolly Suite*, opus 56

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Orchestrated by Henri Rabaud

1. Berceuse

Mitchell Thompson, guest conductor

5. Tendresse

Alex Roig, guest conductor

6. Le Pas Espagnole

Intermission

Ballade for Trombone

Eugène Bozza (1905-1991)

Jose Palacios, soloist and 2026 concerto competition winner

Suite from *The Firebird* (composed 1909, revised 1919)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

1. Introduction
2. The Firebird and its Dance (L'Oiseau de feu et sa danse)
3. Variation of the Firebird (Variation de l'Oiseau de feu)
4. The Princesses' Round Dance (Rondes des Princesses)
5. Infernal Dance of King Kashchei (Danse infernale du roi Kachtcheï)
6. Lullaby (Berceuse)
7. Finale

THE SONOMA STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Alexander Kahn

ASSISTANT CONDUCTORS

Alex Roig

Mitchell Thompson

FLUTE/PICCOLO

Theo Hayse

Jasmine Myers

Lizeth Torres-Valencia

Charlotte Yalch

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Ray Goodenough

Aidan Williams

CLARINET/BASS CLARINET

Diego Borges

Keoni Dean

Ryan Flores

BASSOON/CONTRABASSOON

Julia Borin

Maxwell Jorgenson

Kaylee Laird

SAXOPHONE

Evan Zaitz

HORN

Peter Altamura

Eric Anderson

Emma Lunsford

Carly McVicker

Evan Zaitz

TRUMPET

Miriam Bozman

Gus Juhl

Sean Taburazza

Mitchell Thompson

TROMBONE

Kevin Mills

Jose Palacios

Anthony Lam

TUBA

Elijah Lopez

TIMPANI/PERCUSSION

Ethan Dierauf

Adam Lance

Will Schettler

Julian Scullard

PIANO/CELESTA

Alex Roig

HARP

Vincent Pierce

FIRST VIOLIN

Gracie Benham (concertmaster)

Alexander Yoon

Samuel Strong

Katie Bjornstrom

Kalea Ritz Takeuchi

Nicole Emi Smith

Diane Peterson

John Thompson

SECOND VIOLIN

Aiden Chan (principal)

Sarai Camarena

Erin Garcia-Norris

Joshua Darr

Alexa Hensel Dominguez

Mily Saavedra

Alyson Mar

VIOLA

Noa Malone (principal)

Aaron Allen

Ben Robbins
Milo Tecco
Susan Lauenstein
Omar Diaz

VIOLONCELLO

Chris Fromm (principal)
Sumithra Smith
Ella Hoffman
Jacob Garzon
Vickie Sutton
Juan Garcia
Carol Vines
Andrew Willbanks

BASS

Leif Dering (principal)
Olivia Buettner
Steven Hoffmann

PROGRAM NOTES



***Première Rhapsodie* for Clarinet and Orchestra** **Claude Debussy (1862-1918)** **Composed | Duration: 8'**

Debussy composed the *Première Rhapsodie* towards the end of his life. The piece was commissioned by the Paris Conservatoire for their annual examinations in 1910. So, this work is actually a “Solo de Concours” (competition solo) written to test the abilities of the clarinet students at the Conservatoire.

As was tradition, the students were given the music to prepare and memorize one month prior to the examinations. In addition to performing the required solo piece at the examinations, the students were also tested on sight reading. For this test in 1910, Debussy composed a very short and charming work for clarinet and piano entitled *Petite Pièce*.

The *Première Rhapsodie* is dedicated to Prospère Mimart (1859-1928), who was the professor of clarinet at the Paris Conservatoire from 1904-1918. Mimart gave the premiere performance on January 16, 1911.

As the title implies, the *Première Rhapsodie* is a free form piece. In a whirlwind seven plus minutes, Debussy poses immense challenges on the performer. The difficulties include a number of significant technical obstacles, tests of endurance, breath control, and subtleties of tone, intonation, and nuance.

Although originally conceived as a competition solo, the work was quickly recognized as a masterpiece solo work for the clarinet, and soon began appearing in programs on the concert stage. Debussy was so pleased with this work that in 1911 he orchestrated the piano part so that the piece could be performed by soloist with orchestra. The orchestration is brilliant and offers clarinetists a very special addition to the repertoire for clarinet and orchestra.

The title “*Première*” (first) *Rhapsodie* implies that perhaps Debussy may have considered the possibility of a second *Rhapsodie*, but, unfortunately, this never materialized.

- Program note by Mitchell Estrin



Selections from the *Dolly Suite* **Gabriel Fauré** **Composed 1893-96 | Duration: 11'**

Gabriel Fauré’s set of piano duets, also known as the *Dolly Suite*, were composed between 1893-96. Each duet marks the birthdays, anniversaries and other occasions in the life of the daughter of Fauré’s mistress, Emma Bardac. The daughter, Régina-Hélène Bardac, was known as Dolly to her family. Fauré had a long-time affair with Emma Bardac, and this suite was a small gesture to her and her family.

Fauré often went back and tinkered with this suite, and in 1906 Henri Rabaud created an orchestra version of the suite. The suite is in six short movements, with Fauré giving them descriptive and rather whimsical names. The first public performance of the *Dolly Suite* was given by Alfred Cortot and Édouard Risler in 1898. Fauré was known to often play these duets both on the concert stage and at home with the family.

Movement I – *Berceuse*

The opening movement of the suite, *Berceuse*, is the most famous of the six. The piece was used as the closing theme to the BBC radio programme *Listen with Mother*. This movement marks Dolly's first birthday. This movement was actually written a long time before the suite, back in 1864. Originally composed for Suzanne Garnier, Fauré went back to this piece, made some amendments and renamed it from *La Chanson dans le jardin* to *Berceuse*. This gentle cradle song presents a sparkling lullaby theme.

Movement V – *Tendresse*

Composed in 1896, *Tendresse* is an elegiac movement that shows Fauré's gentle melodic style. Dedicated to Adela Maddison, a musician and friend of the family, this slow movement shows off Fauré's colorful and creative use of chromaticism. This movement was later used in his set of Nocturnes.

Movement VI – *Le pas espagnol*

The final movement, a lively Spanish dance, is the most exciting of the suite. The fast-moving passages offer an authentic Spanish scene for the listener. The movement comes to a rousing finish with an ascending scale before the final two bold chords.

- Program note by Alex Burns



Ballade for Trombone and Orchestra Eugène Bozza (1905-1991) Composed 1944 | Duration: 8'

Born in Nice, France, Eugene Bozza (1905-1991) demonstrated his talents early as a brilliant violinist, conductor and composer at the Paris Conservatoire, including winning the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1934. Although Bozza composed numerous symphonies, operas and ballets, much of his musical output was chamber music for wind instruments.

Bozza's style is strong in fluent melody, elegance of structure and reflected his keen sense for instrumental capabilities. In his Ballade for trombone and orchestra, written in 1944 for the annual composition competition at the Paris Conservatoire, Bozza augments his elegant and smooth melodies with extensive quotations from famous trombone excerpts in symphonic works by other composers, including Debussy's *La Mer*, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*, Ravel's *Bolero*, Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*, Mahler's Third Symphony, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*.



Suite from *The Firebird*
Igor Stravinsky (1874-1934)
Composed 1909, revised 1919 | Duration: 22'

It's intriguing to speculate how the history of music in the last century would have been altered if the extraordinary ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev had not decided to gamble on the young, relatively unknown Stravinsky. Diaghilev's Ballets Russes—which the émigré Russian had established in Paris—was just starting to take the West by storm, and Diaghilev wanted a splendid new production for the climax of its season in 1910. His initial plans for better-known

composers fell through, so Diaghilev, on a hunch, gave the commission to Stravinsky, then in his late 20s. It was a risk for everyone concerned, since *The Firebird* would be the first production by the emerging ballet company to feature an entirely new score.

Stravinsky was handed a scenario (devised in part by choreographer Michel Fokine) that drew on old Russian folklore. *The Firebird* tells of the downfall of a powerful, ogre-like figure of evil, Kastchei the Deathless, who seizes young princesses as captives while turning the knights who arrive to rescue them into stone. The protagonist Crown Prince Ivan enlists the Firebird, so called for her beautiful feathers that glitter and flicker like flames, to help destroy Kastchei and free his victims.

You can readily hear how Stravinsky's own imagination must have caught fire (he even set aside his work on a bird of a different feather—the fairy-tale opera *The Nightingale*) when he took up Diaghilev's invitation. *The Firebird's* score blends the orchestral wizardry Stravinsky had learned as a student of Rimsky-Korsakov with the vitality of Russian folk music to yield a dazzling, evocative atmosphere. Throughout his later career, Stravinsky remained especially fond of *The Firebird*, returning to create three concert versions that he himself conducted tirelessly (a savvy financial move on the composer's part). The most popular is the second of these suites, introduced in 1919, which uses less than half of the original ballet score and simplifies some of its orchestration.

The Firebird's musical language shifts between chromatic gestures to illustrate the supernatural dimension (including a powerful non-Western scale that would later feature in *The Rite of Spring's* harmonic vocabulary) and the singsong simplicity of folk song for the mortals. The suite opens with a spooky conjuring, low in the strings, of Kastchei's magical realm. In his illusory garden, Prince Ivan encounters the Firebird, which is depicted with opulent colors and radiant trills. (Diaghilev spared no expense in the similarly gorgeous costumes Léon Bakst designed for this creature.) A calmly pastoral section follows, featuring Stravinsky's already characteristically imaginative scoring for woodwinds. Prince Ivan observes the princesses who have been captured by Kastchei performing their ritual Khorovod, or round dance, and falls in love with the one destined to be his bride.

To protect Ivan, the Firebird casts a spell over Kastchei and his monstrous aides. Whipped into motion by Stravinsky's frenetic rhythms, they are compelled to dance themselves to exhaustion in a savage "Infernal Dance." Their paroxysms subside, while a serene lullaby ("Berceuse") lulls the hypnotized Kastchei to sleep, its lazy tune first given by the bassoon. Ivan is instructed to destroy the giant egg containing the ogre's soul, and Kastchei's power vanishes. A solo horn, intoning the score's most famous folk tune, announces the joyful arrival of sunlight. Together with Ivan and his betrothed, the rescued captives celebrate with music that swells and rings out in glorious triumph. *The Firebird* clearly shows Stravinsky on the cusp of a new world, mixing the orchestral mastery of his Russian mentors with the rhythmic vitality of the revolutionary about to burst out of his shell.

BIOGRAPHIES



Alexander Kahn is Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities at Sonoma State University. At Sonoma State he directs the Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra and teaches courses in conducting, music history, musicianship, and general education. Alexander came to Sonoma State from Gettysburg College, where he was Associate Professor of Music and Director of Orchestral Activities at the Sunderman Conservatory of Music. Previous university-level orchestras with whom Alexander has worked include the UC Berkeley Chamber Orchestra (Founder and Music Director) and the UC Berkeley Symphony (Assistant Conductor).

In addition to his work with college-level orchestras, Alexander has worked with professional and community orchestras across the United States and throughout Europe. Currently he serves as Assistant and Cover Conductor for both the Santa Rosa Symphony and the San Francisco Symphony and as Guest Conductor for the Napa Valley Chamber Orchestra. Previous positions he has held include Principal Guest Conductor for the Bay Philharmonic, Music Director of the Metta Ensemble (Gettysburg, PA), Cover Conductor for the Baltimore Symphony, Staff Conductor for the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC, Assistant Conductor of the Bamberg Symphony, and Music Director of the Bamberg Collegium Musicum.

A champion for music education, Alexander regularly works with young musicians in his role as Music Director of the Napa Valley Youth Symphony, and as Orchestra Director at Encore Coda Performing Arts Camp (Sweden, Maine) and Cazadero Performing Arts Camp. He is a frequent guest conductor for middle school and high school honor orchestras throughout California. He also serves on the Board of the California Orchestra Directors Association (CODA) and on the Wellness Committee for the American String Teachers Association (ASTA).

Alexander earned a PhD in Music History from UC Berkeley and remains active as a scholar. His book on mindfulness and music, *Caring for the Whole Musician*, was published by Routledge Press in 2023. He lectures and offers workshops on the subject of mindfulness for musicians throughout California and beyond.

Alexander's love of music was inherited from his father, Eugene Kahn, a conductor and educator on Long Island. His primary conducting studies were at UC Berkeley with David Milnes and at the Peabody Institute with Marin Alsop, Gustav Meier and Markand Thakar. He has also participated in workshops with teachers including Larry Rachleff, Kenneth Kiesler, Daniel Lewis and Peter Gülke. When not conducting, Alexander enjoys cooking, hiking, reading, and travelling, and spending time with family.



Diego Borges, originally from Woodland, California, began his musical journey at a young age after following in the footsteps of his older brother, Herbe Borges. Inspired by his brother, Diego joined his school band in fifth grade and quickly developed a passion for music and performance. Throughout high school, he participated in a variety of ensembles, including concert bands, jazz bands, and honor bands. A pivotal moment in his development came when he was selected for the NorCal Honor Band twice, an experience that encouraged him to pursue music at the collegiate level.

After graduating from high school, Diego continued his musical education at Sonoma State University, where he studies under clarinetist Roy Zajac and oboist Laura Reynolds. Through his studies and dedication to performance, he has developed his musicianship and gained opportunities to perform with numerous ensembles throughout Northern California and the Bay Area. His performance experience includes the North State Symphony, Symphony of the Redwoods, Ukiah Symphony, and Lake County Symphony, as well as productions with Spreckels Performing Arts Center, 6th Street Playhouse, Santa Rosa Junior College Performing Arts, The Raven Performing Arts Center, and San Francisco Playhouse. At Sonoma State University, Diego serves as principal clarinet of both the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra for the past two years.

Diego is currently a fourth-year Music Teacher Preparation major at Sonoma State University, where he continues to grow as both a performer and educator. In 2026, Diego was honored as the winner of the Sonoma State Concerto Competition, earning the opportunity to perform Claude Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie* with the Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra. This achievement represents an important milestone in his musical development and reflects the dedication and passion he brings to his music. This performance is in dedication to his loving parents Cecilia and Fabian Borges.

Diego hopes to continue expanding his musical abilities and pursue a master's degree in multiple woodwind performance. Diego also plans to pursue a teaching credential and continue sharing his love of music through music education. He hopes to build a career that inspires future musicians while continuing to challenge himself as a performer. Diego strives to approach every performance with genuine passion while connecting with others through music.



Mitchell Thompson's musical journey started when he was 11 and decided to join his 6th grade band using a trumpet his parents had stored in their closet. His love and passion for playing the trumpet continued into high school where he became the first student in his school district to win an audition for membership in the NorCal honor band at Sonoma State University. As his senior year was coming to an end, he made a last minute decision to continue his musical journey at Sonoma State University where he would study under Daniel Norris for trumpet performance and Dr. Alexander Kahn for conducting.

Mitchell is currently a 4th year at Sonoma State University studying his Bachelor's of Music degree in Music Teacher Preparation. Recently, Mitchell has decided to take up the baton and was given the opportunity to conduct the Sonoma State University Symphony Orchestra as well as various

other ensembles for rehearsal and performance occasions. Mitchell hopes to continue pursuing conducting and trumpet performance as well as explore opportunities for composition and production.



Caitlin Roig is a Piano Performance Major at Sonoma State University studying under Marilyn Thompson. A classical pianist of seventeen years, she is an active and dedicated musician who is passionate about the art of performance. Prior to transferring to Sonoma State, she double-majored in music and theater arts at Sierra College Rocklin Campus for two years. Most recently, Caitlin had the pleasure of studying and performing solo and chamber works in the Music & More SummerFest summer academy and international music festival in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina. As this is Caitlin's senior year at Sonoma State, Caitlin intends to graduate in the spring with her Bachelor's Degree and apply to graduate school to continue her studies in piano performance, along with an ambition to study abroad.

Aside from her studies, Caitlin works with the Associated Students of SSU as the Senator of Academic Affairs, is the current club treasurer for the Performing Arts Club, teaches private piano lessons, and leads and accompanies her choir at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church. Caitlin also enjoys composing for various ensembles, musical theater, and songwriting. Outside of the music world, Caitlin loves playing video games, writing stories, plays, and poetry, reading, and fooling around with her Polaroid camera.



Jose Palacios is a music education student at Sonoma State University, where he studies trombone with David Ridge, principal bass trombonist of the San Francisco Opera; and Dr. Douglas Leibinger, director of jazz studies at SSU. An active performer throughout the North Bay, he has freelanced and gigged with ensembles including the Big Easy Big Band in Petaluma, the St. Helena Choral Society, and the Napa Valley Youth Symphony, among many others. Most recently, he toured Germany and the Netherlands as principal trombonist with the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra.

A devoted admirer of legendary composer and bandleader Thad Jones, Jose has begun compiling a catalog of Jones's works and aspires to one day become his biographer. Outside of music, he enjoys arranging big band charts, dancing ballet folklórico, and playing Pokémon on his Game Boy.

ABOUT THE SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE



Now in its 12th season, the Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra is comprised of the finest string, wind, brass, and percussion students at Sonoma State and of musicians from the broader Sonoma County community. Under the direction of Dr. Alexander Kahn, the Symphony Orchestra performs a diverse array of orchestral literature, ranging from the Baroque period to world premieres and from classical repertoire to film, opera, and educational works. Soloists are regularly featured, including guest artists, faculty soloists, and student soloists chosen through the annual concerto competition.

Membership is through audition only and is open to all students regardless of major as well as community members. Auditions are held during the first week of each semester. For more information regarding the audition process, please visit the orchestra homepage at <http://music.sonoma.edu/ensembles/symphony-orchestra> or email Dr. Kahn at kahnale@sonoma.edu

SUPPORT US

The Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra is generously funded through the Department of Music at Sonoma State University. However, donations are gratefully received to support our various initiatives, including our annual Concerto Competition, Composition Competition, and our Lesson Scholarship Fund for Non-Majors. Please consider making a gift to

support us! Donations can be made online here:



**For more information on how to give please contact
Dr Alexander Kahn (kahnale@sonoma.edu).**

Thank You to Our Donors!

The Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra offers its heartfelt thanks the following individuals and organizations who have supported our work in recent years:

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The Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra & Alexander Kahn, Music Director, Proudly Announces Its Twelfth Season!

(All dates and repertoire subject to change)

Friday September 25, 2026: French Impressions

Debussy *Première Rapsodie for Clarinet and Orchestra*

(Diego Borges, soloist and 2026 Concerto competition winner)

Gabriel Fauré, *Dolly Suite* (Alex Roig and Mitchell Thompson, guest conductors)

Eugene Bozza *Ballade for Trombone and Orchestra*

(José Palacios, soloist and 2026 Concerto competition winner)

Igor Stravinsky, *Suite from The Firebird* (1919)

Friday November 20, 2026: C Major Moods

(Joint concert with the Young Peoples Chamber Orchestra, Aaron Westman, Music Director)

Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony 1 in C Minor

Emilie Mayer, Symphony No. 1 in C Minor

Band and Orchestra Festival (March 17-19, 2027): American Road Trip

Composition Competition winner TBD

Michael Daugherty, *Route 66*

Leonard Bernstein, *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

Carlos Simon, *Ring Shout* from *Four Black Dances*

Saturday May 1, 2027 Transformations and Transfigurations

(Joint concert with Livermore High School Chamber Orchestras, Justin Enright, Music Director)

Works for String Orchestra TBD (Livermore HS Chamber Orchestras)

Engelbert Humperdinck, Prelude to *Hansel and Gretel* (Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra)

Richard Strauss, *Death and Transfiguration* (Sonoma State Symphony Orchestra)

John Williams, *Superman Returns* (combined ensembles)

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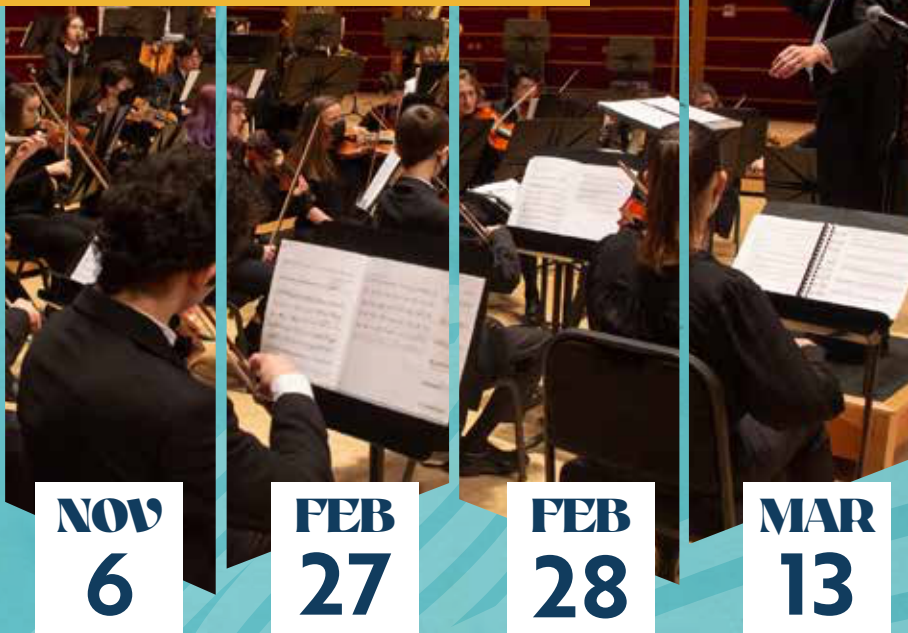
Roy Zajac

Clarinet

SONOMA STATE
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MUSIC

AUDITIONS '26-'27



**NOV
6**

**FEB
27**

**FEB
28**

**MAR
13**



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