

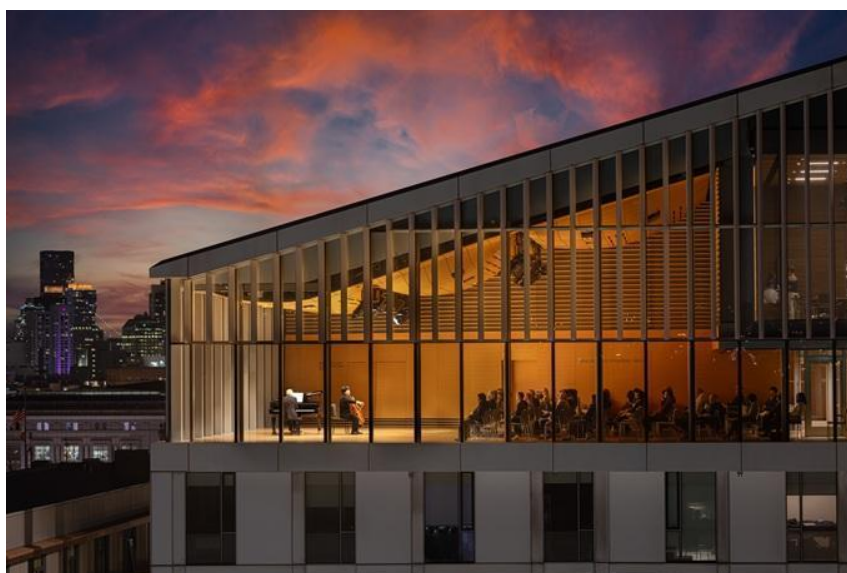
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Five Years After Opening the Bowes Center, SFCM's 2026–27 Season Brings a New Model for Conservatory Education to Life

Landmark season highlights SFCM's growing role and expanded opportunities for students with Global Creative Alliance artist residencies, Side-by-Side performances, and professional collaborations



Barbro Osher Recital Hall in SFCM's Bowes Center, marking its fifth anniversary this season. Photo: Matthew Washburn.

(SAN FRANCISCO, CA) — September 28, 2026 — Five years after opening the Ute and William K. Bowes, Jr. Center for Performing Arts in the heart of San Francisco's Civic Center, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music enters its 2026–27 season celebrating the building's fifth anniversary and a period of significant institutional growth.

Since opening in November 2021, the Bowes Center has become home to most of SFCM's student body, SF Ballet students, and San Francisco residents, as well as a hub for performances, recordings, artist residencies, and collaborations across the Bay Area's arts community.

Inside the \$200 million, 170,000-square-foot vertical campus includes performance and rehearsal spaces, state-of-the-art recording facilities, student housing, classrooms, faculty and partner offices, and KDFC Radio/Classical California. Its location places students within walking distance of the San Francisco Symphony, Opera, Ballet, and SFJAZZ, all educational partners of SFCM.

The fifth anniversary also shines a spotlight on SFCM's broader transformation under President David H. Stull. Alongside the Bowes Center, SFCM has established programs in Technology and Applied Composition (TAC) and Roots, Jazz, and American Music (RJAM), expanded professional development and business

education, and created a direct and immersive connection to the professional music industry through its acquisitions of Opus 3 Artists, Askonas Holt, and Pentatone Music. Together with SFCM, the companies form its Global Creative Alliance, with Askonas Holt and Pentatone marking milestones of their own this season: 150 and 25 years, respectively.

This season, that evolution becomes increasingly tangible for students as SFCM turns some of its most successful collaborations into recurring parts of the student experience, including annual artist and conductor residencies, internships, Winter Term projects, side-by-side performances, and recording-centered work.

“Our collective ambition is to build the most innovative professional music school in the world, one that provides a transformative education of peerless excellence and launches highly successful artists and individuals who are educated for life,” says Stull. “Our creative partners Opus 3, Askonas Holt, and Pentatone allow the school to be a guided immersion in and exchange with the professional world. Our students recognize themselves from day one as critical components of the professional musical ecosystem, not hopefuls waiting to graduate but active and valued participants.”

The Bowes Center at Five

Five years after its opening, the Bowes Center has become more than an expansion of SFCM's campus. Its performance and recording spaces bring students together with visiting artists and industry professionals, while its location has strengthened SFCM's connections across San Francisco's Civic Center arts community. The Bowes Center's recording facilities have become an important part of that activity. Studio G, a large recording and performance space, supports professional recording sessions as well as student work and performances. Projects produced and recorded at the Bowes Center include Pentatone's *GRACE: The Music of Michael Tilson Thomas, Deified* featuring the National Brass Ensemble led by SF Opera Music Director Eun Sun Kim, and Lara Downes's *Rhapsody in Blue Reimagined* with the SFCM Orchestra under Edwin Outwater.

SFCM's Growth in San Francisco

The Bowes Center is part of a broader period of growth at SFCM. Since Stull became president in 2013, the Conservatory's student population has grown by more than 15%, its endowment has increased fivefold, and student scholarships have quadrupled. SFCM has also expanded its curriculum and professional development offerings, including the Technology and Applied Composition program, which has developed collaborations with Bay Area companies and organizations including Dolby, Skywalker Sound, EA, and the San Francisco International Film Festival. Additionally, SFCM's Professional Development and Engagement Center offers 24 professional development classes, while its “Hire SFCM” initiative has placed student orchestra concerts on the mainstage of San Francisco's Game Developers Conference for two consecutive years, as well as a Super Bowl LX in Santa Clara, California.

Inside the Industry

The Global Creative Alliance expands those opportunities through relationships with artists, ensembles, managers, and recording professionals from around the world. Recent projects have included a week-long residency with cellist Alisa Weilerstein centered on her *FRAGMENTS* project; collaborative performances and new work with pianist Yuja Wang; workshops of operas by SFCM faculty member Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer; a three-day Academy of St Martin in the Fields residency culminating in a side-by-side performance with students and violinist Joshua Bell; and the National Brass Ensemble Academy, which brought advanced students into the studio alongside leading professional brass players for a Pentatone recording, while the label's new album *Spaces*, released September 4, includes SFCM graduate Zoe Yost's *Three Hymns for Wind Quintet*, selected at the suggestion of SFCM Composition Department Chair David Conte.

2026-27 Season Highlights

The 2026–27 season carries that momentum forward. SFCM Orchestra Music Director Edwin Outwater conducted Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony on September 26. In November, Alliance artist Giancarlo Guerrero

returns for a residency with students and leads the SFCM Orchestra in music of Roberto Sierra and Bartók, on a program that also features two student conductors presenting works by Jimmy López and Ravel.

Side-by-side projects with Alliance artists Il Pomo d'Oro and Canadian Brass create additional opportunities for students to perform alongside leading professional musicians. SFCM's Voice program presents Puccini's *Suor Angelica* in November and Sondheim's *Into the Woods* in December. Beyond San Francisco, the RJAM Big Band returned to the Monterey Jazz Festival on September 26, and in January two SFCM students will travel to Guangzhou, China to participate in Youth Music Culture Guangdong under incoming Los Angeles Philharmonic Music Director, Daniel Harding.

SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: FALL HIGHLIGHTS

Date	Location	Program
Oct 30 & 31	San Francisco, CA	SFCM New Music Ensemble Concert featuring Shara Nova
Nov 14	San Francisco, CA	Giancarlo Guerrero, conductor; Lanie Antham, mezzo-soprano; SFCM Orchestra — López: Loud (SFCM premiere; Grace Whalen, cond.); Sierra: Sinfonia No. 4; Ravel: Shéhérazade (Jason Gluck, cond.); Bartók: The Miraculous Mandarin, Op. 19
Nov 19 & 20	San Francisco, CA	Puccini: Suor Angelica
Dec 11 & 12	San Francisco, CA	Sondheim: Into the Woods
Jan 15–29	Guangzhou, China	Youth Music Culture Guangdong with two SFCM participants; Daniel Harding, Music Director

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