

A: Hello and welcome to *We LOVE the Library*, a twice-monthly podcast brought to you by the San Luis Obispo County Library Foundation. I'm your host, Rachel Duchak.

In this third episode, we sit down with Festival Mozaic Executive Director Lloyd Tanner, as well as Julianne McAdam, who is a board member with Festival Mozaic. Actually, we'll all be climbing into a time machine that takes us back to summer 2025. We'll hear about the Young Musicians performances that took place in several libraries in SLO County during this annual summer festival, as well as plans for more collaboration between Festival Mozaic and the public library system. Still in our time machine, we'll drop off our Festival Mozaic friends and pick up Susanna Lewis, the Coordinating Librarian for Youth Services, to learn more about the 2025 Summer Reading Program and how to keep kids and families engaged in reading throughout the year. Thanks for supporting your public library.

Hi everybody, we're here with Festival Mozaic Executive Director Lloyd Tanner and Festival Mozaic Board Member Julianne McAdam. Hello.

B: Hi.

C: Hi.

A: Thank you for joining us, and we have just popped into our time machine, and we are traveling back to summer 2025, when the Young Musicians program with the Festival Mozaic in the summertime gave performances in the library. But while we're traveling there, let's have a moment to learn a little bit more about Festival Mozaic. This is a festival or an organization that I have never attended any of these events, so I'm a total newbie. Tell me about Festival Mozaic, Lloyd.

B: Well, I mean, Festival Mozaic began as the Mozart Festival back in 1971, so we've been around for a while. We're founded by a wonderful man by the name of Cliff Swanson, and he led the organization for its first 30 years. And then in 2005, our current

music director Scott Yoo came on board, and there was a decision to change the name to Festival Mozaic to sort of represent that, yes, we're primarily a classical music organization, but we love to ride into other genres like bluegrass, world music, jazz, collaborations with dance companies, and other arts organizations as well.

A: How did you get involved, Julianne? I know that you are our president of the Library Foundation. You've heard her before on this podcast, but you're also on the board of Festival Mozaic. Why and how?

C: Well, I had heard about Festival Mozaic when I was still living in Los Angeles because my parents lived up here, and so every summer I would find a weekend that I could get away and come up and go to a couple of performances. When I moved here in 2011, I said, whoa, I can go to a whole bunch more now. So I started going to a lot of performances, and evidently my husband at one of the events suggested to a couple of board members that they should consider me for the board. He didn't tell me this. And out of the blue, I had an email saying, would you like to join the board? And I said, whoa, that would really be pretty interesting. So here I am 10 years later still on the board.

A: So great. I think it's, you have such a wide range of interests. It's perfect for you.

C: Well, it's also a great learning experience, all of these things.

A: What does that mean? Tell me what you mean.

C: Oh, being on the festival board, first of all, I've learned so much about nonprofits and about nonprofit arts organizations, about what it takes to put on a festival, what it takes to raise money for festivals. It's just, I've learned so much.

A: Awesome. Okay. Oh, I see based on my control panel that we are arriving at summer 2025. So I heard from Julianne this summer about this young musicians program in the library. And tell us about this, Lloyd. Tell us what happened and how you got the idea to bring and why music in the libraries.

B: Yeah. I convinced our board along with our music director, Scott Yoo, that it was time to create a young artists program. Many arts organizations have young artists programs that are a way to teach the next generation of musicians how to become a professional musician or to give them training to enhance where they are as a performer themselves. We were never going to be a training institution. We don't have the time or the resources necessarily to teach young musicians. But what we wanted to do, we partnered with Scott Yoo's other festival at the Colorado College, their music festival. And that is a training institution. They take many kids from all across the country. And for several weeks, they coached them up. And from those kids, Scott identified a string quartet, two violins, a viola, and cello that would then become part of our festival. And our job, as we see it as the host of this young artists program, is to teach them how to become a professional musician. And that means being prepared. That means being collaborative. That means playing nice in the pool with other people that you've never met before. Because when you're a freelance musician, you get brought in and you are assigned without your input to be a part of a group of players that are going to have a piece of music that you had no input in selecting that you're then going to put on a performance, you know, three to four days later.

A: And sometimes these performances are in like a museum or in a totally unusual non-performative space.

B: Absolutely. I mean, one of the things that we take a lot of pride in at Festival Mozaic, not only is playing in unique venues, but being throughout the county. We play in Shandon, we play in Nipomo, we're in Los Osos, we're in Slough, we're in, you know, Cambria and Atascadero. We try to hit all four corners of the county as much as possible. And I think that's, you know, when we talk about the collaboration with the libraries, that was one of the attractions was that the libraries are also an institution that is in all of our communities.

And it's an easy way to slide in to present music at those venues where people are already coming and maybe not expecting that they're going to go and get their child's book for the week. And then all of a sudden there's a performance happening. Super cool.

A: And Julianne, you went to some of these performances.

C: Unfortunately, I did not. I was out of the state. I heard about them and what I heard, I mean, I ran into one of my fellow board members, library foundation board members, and she had been to the performance in Morro Bay at the Morro Bay Library. And she said it was fabulous. There were lots of people there. They were people who don't often come, don't usually come to the library. She said it was really well received.

A: So the fact that even though you didn't go, but you still got the word of mouth about how awesome it was.

C: Oh, absolutely. No, you tell us what it was like.

B: Since you were in inaugural season, the first year we were doing this, we did not know what to expect. You create expectations, achievable expectations, but not think that you're going to knock it out of the park. Working with our friends.

A: You were using these spaces for the first time.

B: Correct. Never done performances in them. Didn't even, hadn't seen many of them. We learned a lot and we learned that we had robust interest for all of them, you know, well over 50 people at each of the, each of the places. That's great. Whether it was at 10 o'clock in the morning or three o'clock in the afternoon was a wonderful, wonderful output and looking forward to not only continuing this partnership, but seeing how we can enhance that and even do more as we move into the next season.

A: That's awesome. So the collaborations with other organizations, that's something that the San Luis Obispo County Library Foundation is really keen to help support. And Julianne, do you have some more information on how we might make more of these kinds of events possible?

C: Well, we know that because we work closely with Chris Barnicle, the library director, that one of his goals is to get more

programs like the Young Artists, other arts programs, poetry readings, musicians, whatever, into the libraries. And the library foundation fully supports this effort, but obviously it takes money. And so after much discussion, our library foundation board decided to give the library system \$40,000 for the coming year, specifically earmarked for arts and culture programs.

A: Awesome.

C: Part of that money will go to help fund this Young Artists in the library, but we're looking to do other programs as well. And the library now has some money to do that.

A: So if anyone is listening to this interview and is interested in doing some collaboration with the library, reach out to library staff.

C: Chris Barnicle or Araceli Estorva. She's the assistant director.

A: We were talking before we started to record, Lloyd, that the importance of developing a love for performance and an interest in musical instruments and other kinds of arts in childhood is something that can play out much longer in your life. Can you tell us about the efforts to try to target really young people and bringing young musicians into a library to present to families?

B: Of course. I mean, I think one of things that's really important in anyone's life is to be exposed to as many interesting experiences as possible, whether that's music or food or travel or people. I think that's what makes people really interesting as they get older. And when they're young, they're much more malleable and unafraid. We see it whether they're playing on the playground or dancing without a care to dance. So as far as the music and going into the libraries with young people, and they're young in the sense that they're in their early 20s, but I think it's important for younger children to see people that are closer to their age making these sounds and making this music, whether compared to seeing maybe their parents or even older people making the same sounds because there's a relatability to that. And there's a sense of like, that's just a big kid. That's not my mom and dad or my grandma and my grandpa.

A: And then they can see themselves in that young person and think, maybe that's something I want to do.

B: And I get asked the question all the time, like, how young is it to take somebody to a concert or take somebody to a theater or dance recital or play? And I always say, well, you know your child better than I do. I've seen four-year-olds completely captivated by a late Beethoven string quartet and not moving and completely wonderful. And I've seen a 12-year-old have a meltdown because they had to sit still for 10 minutes. So you know your child, but I also think that exposing them early and often or making, whether you're seeing concerts on the green at Sea Pines or going to the PAC to see a classical pianist do a recital, if you make that a norm, it's not, it doesn't throw that kid off when it's like, now we are going to the ballet or now we are going to go listen to this poet. If it's only every once in a while, and they're just used to watching whatever's streaming on Netflix 24-7 a day, that becomes a jarring experience for them and it throws them off their normal routine. So I think it's just, you know, I think unfortunately it falls back to the parents being actively involved with their lives. And I know it's, they're crazy busy with soccer and dance and gymnastics and piano lessons and all that kind of stuff. But the kids that I know that got exposed to all of that at a young age are usually the ones that become the cool kids when they get older.

C: And the festival especially tries to reach out to kids in several ways. We have, in addition to the Young Artists Program in the library, we do family concerts every summer as part of our summer festival at a very reduced rate, what, five dollars, so that parents can bring their kids. And it's a shorter program, it's only 40 minutes.

B: We collaborate again because we want to collaborate with other arts organizations.

C: We collaborate with Movement Arts Collective, which has kids dancing on the stage, so that these children who come to the family concert can see adults and children dancing on the stage. And we've done things like, last year it was *Babar the Elephant*,

we've done *Carnival of the Animals*, we did *Peter and the Wolf*. So that's one thing. And then we also have put on some concerts for school children during the summer, so children who are attending summer school, summer programs, get bused to the Cuesta CPAC to see Scott Yoo doing string quartet and explaining the instruments and explaining the music. I went to one of those concerts last summer and the kids were so engaged and so involved, they were jumping out of their seats to answer questions. It was really wonderful.

A: Kids love events that are targeted for kids.

C: They do.

A: They have to suffer through so much stuff with adulthood around them, so when it's for them, they really perk up and pay attention.

C: Well, I mean, and you know, just to circle back, I mean, I think that the only way it works is when you have partnerships that are also interested in sharing that experience. And I think we've tried to do a good job at Festival Mozaic to be welcoming and receptive to other organizations' interest in what we're doing and that our interest in what they're doing.

B: It's for us to promote and support everything that's going on in this community, which we have a very robust and vibrant arts scene.

A: Indeed.

B: And we live in a very noisy environment in time, both from all the things that are coming at us electronically and visually and in our lives just in general.

C: So sometimes it's hard to get above that noise. Yeah.

B: But then I hope that whenever people do find us and they come to our, you know, to one of our concerts and they see that it's not as stuffy as maybe they perceive it to be, that we have a warm and inviting environment, and then that what you're seeing on stage is truly an experience that you will take with you for a while and that you would maybe normally have to travel to LA or New York, you know, to have that same experience. That's what we're trying to bring to San Luis Obispo and to our community in

a way that doesn't feel as though that the perceptions of having to wear a tuxedo or I have to have all this knowledge of music history and music theory before I even attend.

C: Or pay a gazillion dollars for parking.

B: Or pay a gazillion dollars for parking or our tickets. We try to keep our ticket prices are very, very fair and we try to have as many free and reduced concerts as much as possible throughout the year. And I think that's another place where this collaboration with the library will offer us a real chance for growth in the community because the library obviously is a very large community. People love the libraries.

C: They use our libraries. And if we can get music into the libraries and have people come for that, I think that's a collaboration that will really grow in the future.

A: Awesome. Well, you have convinced me I'm going to try to check out festival music. You seem like you have things all year round.

C: We do.

A: So I don't have to wait until next July. I can...

C: Next performance is what, December?

B: December 5th, 6th, and 7th. We have the whole weekend of activities. We really appreciate what we're doing in the summertime with the Young Artists Program and with the libraries. We look to expand it and we just really appreciate everyone's support. I believe that libraries are at the heart of our democratic republic and it's a place where we really truly can gather and experience things free of charge, available to anyone, whether they're economic, social class, and it shows the best of who we can be.

C: The library is one place, one of the few places, where you're not a customer, you're a citizen.

A: What a great way to end this conversation. Thank you so much, Lloyd Tanner from Festival Mozaic and Julianne McAdam from our library foundation and from the Festival Mozaic board.

We appreciate you sharing all this information with us and we look forward to, if we wanted to learn more about Festival Mozaic, what's the website we should go check out?

B: Festival Mozaic, and that's M-O-Z-A-I-C dot org.

A: Thank you so much. Coming up next on We Love the Library, learn more about the summer reading program from Youth Services Coordinating Librarian, Susanna Lewis. Actually, we're just about to climb into the time machine. I'm here with Susanna Lewis, who is the Coordinating Librarian for Youth Services with San Luis Obispo County Library System. How are you, Susanna?

D: I'm good, Rachel. How are you?

A: I'm good. I've had a chance to meet you at some of these events, particularly the Back to School Extravaganza, and so I thought we would just hop in this virtual time machine and go back to summer 2025.

D: Let's do it.

A: It was a hot day for the Extravaganza, but before that there were all these months of the Summer Reading Program, which started in June. Can you tell us about the Summer Reading Program, which the San Luis Obispo County Library Foundation funds every year?

D: Yes, so the summer reading program is something that happens across all libraries in the country, and it's to help with the "summer slide," so it's to help kids continue reading through the summer while school's out. What we have been doing for the past few years is bringing local flair to our summer reading. We have, you know, our unique tote bags, and we have in-house designers, and so we've been doing all of that, and we bring shows like Reptile Ron, who's our very popular, he's from Clovis, and he brings his family operation with his reptiles, and all the kids love them. We had magicians, we had lots of crafts going on, and yeah, and then of course we ended our summer with the Extravaganza.

A: So you were talking about the crafts and the visits from Reptile Ron.

We have a picture back in episode one, if you go look at the page for episode one, you can see a picture of Reptile Ron, a Burmese python, and a quantity of children.

D: Yes, yes, it's our biggest show. I found him last year on Instagram and reached out, and he was the only person to be willing to come to all 14 branches, and so he's my best friend. I have never met him, but he's my best friend, and he came back this year. We were January 1st emailed, they were like, when do you want us? And that was the end of it, so that's our relationship now moving forward.

A: Awesome.

D: So yeah, he's our biggest draw, like we get 200 kids at some events, so yeah, it's great.

A: So the theme for the summer reading program was the Slow Curious?

D: Yes, Cabinet of Curiosities.

A: Tell us about that.

D: So we decided that every branch would have their own quote-unquote curiosity. We had some that did *Back to the Future*, like to the 80s, so we had a light bright, we had rotary phones, we had all kinds of that stuff, and then we had, in Creston, she had a collection of dolls, someone had a collection of tools, old tools, a bell collection. Here at SLO, we had bugs from Cal Poly.

A: I got to see those, those were really cool. Scorpions and everything.

D: Yeah, so yeah, so every branch had something a little different, and it was kind of in the vein of what we did in the past is our Quail Trail, so we're trying to get everyone to visit all the branches.

A: Nice. I missed some of the things that were on the main stage during the back to school Extravaganza. Can you tell us how you decided on which activities? There was a ballet, and there was a drumming performance. How did you choose, and tell us a little more about that.

D: So we wanted something big. We wanted it, we wanted to fill all the time with really big programs, so the Taiko drumming is a big draw.

A: So cool.

D: Yeah, they reach out to us every year. We have them at least once a year. They're great, so we thought they'd be great to kick off their party, and then.

A: Listeners, there were all these children at the, after the performance by the professionals, these children had a chance to do some drumming of their own. It was very cool.

D: Yes, they, yeah, they do that at every show, which is great. They have the kids come up and play the drums, and they love it.

A: Nice.

D: And then we had SLO Movement Arts, and they did a performance of *Babar*, and that was Chris Barnickel, our director, knew someone from there, and he was like, we should have, like, maybe they'll do a show, and so we're like, let's just do it, and ask them, and they were very willing to do it, and so we got them to do it, and then we had Mad Science LA, which is a science show, like a hands-on science show, so they're all the way from LA, and they're very popular. We've had them a few times, so we decided to go out with a bang, and we had them come. There was one guy who came, and he did the show for us, and yeah, they're great.

A: That's great. So you were talking about how the Summer Reading Program is designed to help kids avoid the summer slide with their reading skills, but do you also have issues with, once school starts up again, how you maintain that passion for reading all year round?

D: Yeah, so we try to, obviously we have our story times at almost all 14 of our branches. We have, we continue to work with the schools on school visits and class visits, so the classes come to the library to meet the librarian, and we try to maintain those relationships, and we are trying to build other reading programs throughout the year, so our next one is in the winter, our Cozy Winter Reading Challenge, so having those sorts of reading

challenges, I think kind of gets people excited to read again, you know. Last year we did and we're going to do bingo again, so I think it's just those little things that people can look forward to, and so I think we're just trying to build on the Summer Reading Program at a smaller scale throughout the year.

A: Cool. I know that you have, you're still taking a big breath after all the work of the summertime, but I'm excited to see what you all come up with for next year.

D: Yeah, so are we.

A: So one more thing I wanted to ask you, there were a lot of Spanish books that were for free for the kids, lots of in English and Spanish, Dog Man and Cat Boy, is that one of them?

D: Cat Kid.

A: Cat Kid. Dog Man and Cat Kid, yes, but there was also Perro Hombre y Gato Joven. So, and I see that there's lots of materials that are in Spanish through the library system. Is the San Luis Obispo County library systems unique in its commitment to bilingualism versus the rest of the state? Are you aware?

D: No, I've worked at a few different library systems and mostly in LA County, so the majority of Spanish speakers is way, it's, I only spoke Spanish pretty much when I was there. It was like 85% Spanish, the rest English, so it's always been a huge thing to make sure that you're reaching those populations, the Spanish speaking populations. A lot of them are underserved, a lot of them come from countries that don't necessarily have public libraries or know what a public library is. We get confused a lot with it being a bookstore. In Spanish, librería is bookstore, and biblioteca is library, so a lot of people confuse us with being a bookstore and think that they have to pay, so it's that whole trying to reach those communities and make them understand, like, you know, not make them understand, but show them what we have and that, you know, we have these services for them and make them feel very welcome because they are part of our community. They're part of, you know, they're your neighbor, they're my neighbor, they're everybody, you know, it's lovely to be able to include everybody. And libraries are for everyone.

A: Yes, yes. They're non-judgy, open places.

D: Exactly, exactly.

A: Which is why we love the library.

D: Oh, I love it. You're preaching to the choir.

A: Yes, my last question for you is, what do you love best about libraries?

D: Oh my goodness, I love, I obviously love the books and I love the joy of seeing kids and families coming in and being really excited about books. I used to do story time all the time, and when I was a children's librarian, and it was the best thing to have kids just love you and, like, hug you, and it was just that they're just so honest with you and so amazing, and so I love seeing families and kids just engage in the library. Like, I love going to our second floor here at the library and seeing all the families and talking to them and how excited they are when they find the book, you know, that they really want. It's just that. I think it's just the joy of reading, of seeing that. I think that's, like, my favorite. I love coming into work and seeing that. It's the best.

A: We are so, we are so lucky with so many committed people who work in the library system here in Slope County.

D: Yeah, yeah, I love my job. I really do.

A: Oh, thank you so much for speaking to us, and we look forward to seeing what you'll be delivering to the Summer Reading Program next year.

D: The pressure! Thank you, Rachel.

A: We hope you're learning more about your public library and are enjoying our *We LOVE the Library* podcast. Next time, we'll introduce a new feature within our podcast format, profiles of Library Power Users. Our first guest is Sammy, a 12-year-old reading enthusiast and someone who, like us, loves the library. We really enjoy talking to this pro-library young person. Then, learn more about the well-stocked Explorer Backpacks, Parks Passes, and other pro-nature items that library card holders can check out from their local branches.

Out in the field, we learn from Suzie Reddy of the Morro Coast Audubon Society about how to use these library items to better connect with nature. If you have ideas for future episodes of *We LOVE the Library*, send an email to podcast at [SLOLibraryFoundation.org](mailto:podcast@SLOLibraryFoundation.org). For more information about the San Luis Obispo County Library Foundation and how to donate to support the library, visit our website at slolibraryfoundation.org. That's S-L-O-L-I-B-R-Y-F-O-U-N-D-A-T-I-O-N-D-O-R-G. Special thanks to our friends at New Directions in Computing for hosting our website and supporting our online presence.

The next episode drops in two weeks. Thank you for listening, and for helping support the public library, the people's champion.