



La Jolla
Symphony
& Chorus

2019-2020
SEASON

Mandeville Auditorium

December 7-8, 2019

STEVEN SCHICK
Music Director

RUBEN VALENZUELA
Choral Director

La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

2019 - 2020 SEASON

Sat, Feb 8, 2020 at 7:30pm

Sun, Feb 9, 2020 at 2pm

Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

Steven Schick, *conductor*

ANAHITA ABBASI

**Brenda &
Steven Schick
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JOHANNES BRAHMS

Symphony No. 3

MICHAEL PISARO

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for Amplified
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with soloist Greg Stuart



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Steven Schick Music Director

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Saturday, December 7, 2019, 7:30pm

Sunday, December 8, 2019, 2:00pm

Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

CELESTE ORAM

a loose affiliation of alleluias
concerto for violin and three voices

Keir GoGwilt, violin soloist

**Barbara Byers, Lauren Jones and
Celeste Oram**, offstage vocalists

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Violin Concerto in D Minor

Im Kräftigen, nicht zu schnellen tempo

Langsam

Lebhaft, doch nicht schnellen

Keir GoGwilt, violin

INTERMISSION

JOHN ADAMS

Harmonium

Negative Love

Because I could not stop for Death

Wild Nights

We gratefully acknowledge our underwriters for this concert
Cathy & Bill Funke ■ Ida Houby & Bill Miller

From the Conductor

The conversation usually goes something like this: I'll ask a group of music lovers what they love about music. (After all, that's why we call them *music lovers*.) After a tentative start, someone will say, "beauty, pure and simple." Or, "I love a melody that I can sing." There is usually someone in every group who grooms the image of the tragic romantic composer toiling in isolation to produce a work of great genius. And, for every fan of the profane, there is someone who hews to the sacred. "When I listen to music, I feel like I can touch the cosmos," went one comment, more or less. And, every once in a while—frankly more often in our audiences than anywhere else—someone will make my day. "Music is a way of experimenting with life." Bless you! You know who you are.

Cosmic, romantic, personal, strange, intimate, experimental. If these answers seem about right, then you'll love today's concert. And, if we have done our work well, you'll find all of them in every piece.

2019-20 Nee Commission recipient, Celeste Oram's extraordinary and inventive piece, *a loose affiliation of alleluias*, exists only in my mind at the moment—I am writing these words before our first rehearsal. But, imagine a piece that opens with three "Teen Angels" singing a beautiful melody by the experimental Brooklyn singer, serpentwithfeet, which is answered by an improvising violin soloist, the extraordinary Keir GoGwilt, and a traditional symphony orchestra playing music with rhythmic and tonal roots in the Renaissance. We're only one minute into the concert and all the answers above are already on the table. Based loosely on the structure of a popular song, and drawing inspiration from diverse sources, Oram's piece balances theater and sound; old and new; cosmic and intimate.

When the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus established the Nee commission in honor of my predecessor, long-time music director Thomas Nee, this kind of freshness and inventiveness was just what we hoped for!

We'll follow Celeste Oram's evocation of the mystical and meticulous in music by an equally

engaging and enigmatic counterpart from the 19th century, Robert Schumann's *Violin Concerto*. And as soloist, we welcome back the 2016 winner of the La Jolla Symphony's Young Artist Competition, the mesmerizing Keir GoGwilt, as soloist. No sooner was Keir's electrifying 2017 performance of Thomas Adès's *Concentric Paths* in our rearview mirror than he and I began talking about a return engagement. From the stratospheric Adès we go to the strato-spiritual Schumann. There are many similarities: Neither piece represents an easily defined musical orthodoxy, and both lead musicians and listeners alike through layers of introspective encounters with sound and idea.

More metaphysical music follows in John Adams's *Harmonium*. Starting with his slowly unfolding setting of John Donne's "Negative Love," both text and music are seemingly more defined by what they are not, than what they are. The chorus first intones the word "No" then "Never." As the instrumental texture gradually thickens, a listener is so aware of the act of *becoming* that the arrival of actual text—"I Never stoop'd so low..."—comes as a true shock. The lover in Donne's poem is not so ordinary as to be attracted by mere physical beauty or even moral uprightness. True love exists beyond any measurable dimension and perhaps in its highest form is expressible only as a negative.

The inward gaze of the Donne text and the tightly-held privacy of two Emily Dickinson poems that form the basis of the final two movements might seem at odds with the ebullient musical language of John Adams. In fact, *Harmonium* was his "break-out piece," a strange juxtaposition with texts that are in essence trying to break in, toward the dimly lit center of the human psyche.

Here we understand that fueling Adams's extraordinary music is a deep connection between a private experience of great emotion and the shared experiences of communal importance. I think that every great piece of music finds this conduit between private and public. And when we look at what music lovers love about music, the oppositional qualities of

personal and communal figure prominently—that music should simultaneously be intimate and cosmic; comforting and epic. This reconciliation of the large and small finds its ultimate expression in Emily Dickinson's portrayal of death. So, in Adams's moving setting of Dickinson's justly famous words, "Because I could not stop for Death, He kindly stopped for me," the image of a slow ride with death toward an unavoidable destination is rendered by an unfolding of harmonies so patient that when the moment of finality arrives we say about the music, as we will undoubtedly say about life itself: how sad that we are finished so soon.

This mournful sense of death's inevitably contrasts starkly with the aura of fevered eroticism in *Harmonium's* third movement, "Wild Nights." This is music that speaks for the fragile human heart. For Dickinson, the longed-for wild night was indeed a luxury, as the text indicates—the intensity of her desire matched only by the

hopelessness of its realization. Casting sexual passion as a wind-whipped sea, Dickinson confesses to having her "Heart in port." It's all just imagination then, and the musical rhyming of this moment with rhythms from the first movement shows that Adams sees this, too, as a version of Donne's negative love.

In *Harmonium*, the most private sentiments are rendered by the most public music. It's ironic: I can't think of a sadder use of the subjunctive than Emily Dickson's "...were I with thee..." against Adams's cyclonic rhythms as the hectoring counterpoint of unattainable sexual love. And, I can't think of a more achingly sensual line than "Might I but moor—Tonight—in thee!" Love is cast here as a safe harbor. But by the end of the piece, I feel anything but safe.

It's all so cosmic and romantic; so personal, so strange. These are the things we love about music. But we could also be talking about life. ■

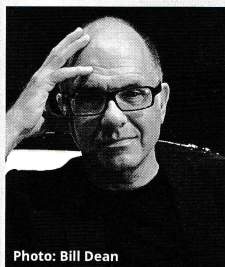


Photo: Bill Dean

STEVEN SCHICK

music director

Percussionist, conductor, and author Steven Schick was born in Iowa and raised

in a farming family. Hailed by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* as "one of our supreme living virtuosos, not just of percussion but of any instrument," he has championed contemporary percussion music by commissioning or premiering more than 150 new works. The most important of these have become core repertory for solo percussion. In 2014 he was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame.

Schick is in his 13th season as artistic director and conductor of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus. He is also co-artistic director of the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity Summer Music Program and artistic director and conductor of the Breckenridge Music Festival.

As a guest conductor he has appeared with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Milwaukee Symphony, Ensemble Modern, the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble.

Schick's publications include a book, "The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams," and many articles. He has released numerous recordings including the 2010 "Percussion Works of Iannis Xenakis," and its companion, "The Complete Early Percussion Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen" in 2014 (both on Mode). He received the "Diapason d'Or" as conductor (Xenakis Ensemble Music with ICE) and the Deutscheschallplattenkritikpreis, as percussionist (Stockhausen), each for the best new music release of 2015.

Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music and holds the Reed Family Presidential Chair at the University of California, San Diego.

Program Notes by Eric Bromberger

a loose affiliation of alleluias

concerto for violin and three voices

CELESTE ORAM

Born 1990, Manhattan

The composer has supplied a program note:

*I will press your hand now and there it is—life—
it comes in waves,*

*it will disappear, it has not disappeared,
accept destruction, accept*

[...]

The canary singing in your mind is in mine.

— Jorie Graham, *fast* (2017)

If there are affiliations between this violin concerto and Robert Schumann's, perhaps the closest is with respect to the second movement of the latter, whose theme also appears in Schumann's Ghost Variations WoO 24, and was dictated to Schumann by a choir of angels. Perhaps this concerto's pop song structure (into, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, bridge, chorus, outro, fade) also pays tribute to a composer who, even when tasked with

writing a violin concerto, couldn't help but (do what he did best and) write a song.

This piece is an invitation to listen to and through familiar strains accumulated into a disorienting density.

CREDITS

Some of the generative musical material comes from:

- the song "redemption" by serpentwithfeet (2016)
- the song "Boy in the Bubble" by Paul Simon (1986)
- an anonymous 2-voice hymn from the Codex Calixtinus, a 12thC pilgrim's guide to the Camino di Santiago;
- three excerpts from Giovanni Gabrieli's "Exaudi me Domine" (1615) (figurations setting the words "quando caeli", "movendi sunt", & "et terra")

In many foundational ways, this piece has been informed and emboldened by Cassandra Miller's "Duo for Cello & Orchestra", written for Charles Curtis, and by the singularity of these two artists. Other sine-qua-nons: Carolyn Chen, Bobbi Jene Smith, Lauren Jones, Barbara Byers, Steven Schick, Keir GoGwilt. ■

Save these dates!

Young Artists Competition

January 25, Conrad Prebys Music Center, UCSD

Young Artists Winner Recital

February 23, Private Residence, La Jolla

More information at lajollasympphony.com





CELESTE ORAM

**Thomas Nee
Commission
Composer**

Celeste Oram (b. 1990, Manhattan) is a

composer and musician who grew up in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and is now living in San Diego.

Celeste's works are scenarios which prompt performers and listeners to confront sonic and social histories, utopias, and quotidian. Encompassing instrumental writing, song & speech, electronics, visual media, theatre, and improvisation, Celeste's work has been recognised by the 2017 CANZ Trust Fund Award, a nomination for the 2014 SOUNZ Contemporary Award, and the 2016 Kranichstein Composition Prize from the Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music, whose jury described her work as 'strangely entertaining...engaging with history in a striking manner' and 'utterly relevant'.

Celeste's works have been made with the support and partnership of musicians & ensembles including the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra (NZ), NZSO National Youth Orchestra, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (UK), NZTrio, the American Modern Opera Company, Fonema Consort (NY), Arcus Collective (NY), Stroma (NZ), Longleash (NY), wasteLAnd (LA), Autoduplicity (LA), Steven Schick (CA), Stephen de Pledge (NZ), Callithumpian Consort (Boston), Song Company (Sydney), Sydney Piano Trio, Karlheinz Company (Auckland), Intrepid Music Project (Auckland); and presented in programmes including the San Diego Symphony's Hearing the Future Festival, the Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music, the New Zealand International Arts Festival, SICPP at the New England Conservatory, soundSCAPE festival (Maccagno, Italy), and the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

An ongoing project, Tautitoto, works with cherished collaborators (including Keir GoGwilt, Alex Taylor, Rob Thorne, Madison Greenstone) to address and redress legacies of settler-colonial cultures of music and listening. A live, long-form performance of Tautitoto was commissioned for the 2018 Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music, and described 'a highlight', whose 'full ambition, challenge, and delight of this alternative genealogy was brilliantly realized'.

In a similar vein, another ongoing activity revolves around Vera Wyse Munro (1897-1966), a pioneering amateur radio operator and experimental violinist, including the reconstruction of her early-20thC radio equipment and the re-enactment of her telematic musical broadcasts.

As a conductor and lifelong choral musician, Celeste serves as Assistant Director of the San Diego Women's Chorus, and has worked as musical director for several community & student performances of opera and musical theatre. As a writer, Celeste has contributed feature music programmes to Radio New Zealand Concert, and articles to *Tempo* (Cambridge University Press), *The Pantograph Punch*, and *Minarets Poetry Journal*.

Celeste is a PhD candidate in music composition at the University of California San Diego, where she completed an MA in 2016. She completed a BMusBA with first-class Honours at the University of Auckland in 2012, studying with Eve de Castro-Robinson, John Elmsly, and Leonie Holmes.

The **Thomas Nee Commission** annually commissions original compositions written by talented young composers.

The commission's focus on original compositions pays tribute to promoting new music through the **La Jolla Symphony & Chorus Association** and its former **Music Director Emeritus Thomas Nee**. Your support of the Thomas Nee Commission helps to keep our commitment to living composers and their music alive for years to come.

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Mission Statement

Rooted in San Diego for over 60 years, the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus enriches our lives through affordable concerts of ground-breaking, traditional and contemporary classical music.

Violin Concerto in D Minor

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Born June 8, 1810, Zwickau

Died July 29, 1856, Eendenich



Robert Schumann's final years were wretched. Schumann was a manic

personality who pitched between emotional extremes. When he was healthy and functional, music could pour out of him at white heat, but he could just as quickly plunge into paralyzing depression. These extremes became more intense with time. Early in 1852, when he was only 42, Schumann began to suffer from a hesitancy of speech, a ringing in his ears, sleeplessness, and partial paralysis, and he developed a fascination with what he called "magnetic experiments," or table-tapping. And then suddenly he could emerge from this darkness and compose at a furious rate. One of these periods of activity came at the end of the summer of 1853 when Schumann became interested in writing for violin and orchestra, a combination that had never attracted him before. Very quickly (September 2-7) he sketched a *Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra* and then composed a *Violin Concerto in D Minor* between September 21 and October 3 (it was while he was at work on this concerto that the twenty-year-old Brahms knocked on

the Schumanns' door in Düsseldorf and introduced himself). The following February, after a series of terrifying dreams, Schumann threw himself in the Rhine in an apparent suicide attempt. Fishermen pulled him out and brought him home, but the composer was committed to a mental asylum, where he died two years later.

The subsequent history of the *Violin Concerto* is particularly complex. Schumann had heard the young violinist Joseph Joachim give it a private reading with an orchestra in the fall of 1853, but that performance was apparently not very satisfactory, and after the composer's death the concerto drifted into obscurity. Brahms, Joachim, and Robert's widow Clara all agreed that it was not a fully worthy example of Schumann's work, and they excluded it from the complete edition of his works when that was published later in the nineteenth century. Various violinists knew of the existence of the *Violin Concerto* and wished to perform it, but Joachim controlled access, and he stipulated that it should not be published until the hundredth anniversary of Schumann's death (which would have been 1956). Joachim died in 1907, and calmer heads eventually prevailed: the first public performances of Schumann's *Violin Concerto* finally took place almost simultaneously in Germany and the United States in 1937. Since then the concerto has made its way into the established repertory, and the current feeling is that the

judgment of Brahms, Joachim, and Clara Schumann had been much too harsh. Over the last decades, Schumann's *Violin Concerto* has been championed by such violinists as Yehudi Menuhin, Henryk Szeryng, Jelly d'Aranyi, Christian Tetzlaff, Thomas Zehetmair, Gidon Kremer, Joshua Bell, and Isabelle Faust.

The first movement ("In a strong but not too fast tempo") gets off to a firm beginning with the orchestra's powerful opening statement in D minor. Strings announce the singing second subject, marked *dolce*, before the solo violin's dramatic entrance on the principal theme. Schumann treats both his main themes throughout this movement, alternating stormy episodes with more lyric interludes. There is no cadenza here (or anywhere in this concerto), and the movement drives to an impassioned conclusion.

After all this storminess, the second movement brings a world of calm. Divided cellos sing the

gentle main theme before the soloist takes it up. This movement is one long flow of expressive melody, but its gentle atmosphere is tricky to bring off because so much of Schumann's writing is syncopated: the principal theme is always an eighth-note off the beat of the accompaniment. Benjamin Britten particularly admired this movement, and in 1957—at a time when this concerto was little known—he arranged it for string orchestra as a memorial piece when hornist Dennis Brain was killed in an automobile accident.

In Schumann's concerto, the tempo at the end of this movement suddenly accelerates into the finale, marked "Lively, but not fast." Gone is the D-minor storminess of the first movement, and now we are firmly in "the violinist's key" of D major. There is a dancing, whimsical quality to Schumann's expression here, though he challenges his soloist with some particularly thorny writing for the violin before the concerto drives to a grand close. ■



KEIR GOGWILT

violin

Keir Gogwilt is a violinist, scholar, and poet. He is at home in creative, collaborative, and often

interdisciplinary work.

As a violinist he has been described as a "formidable performer" (*New York Times*) noted for his "evocative sound" (*London Jazz News*) and "finger-busting virtuosity" (*San Diego Union Tribune*). He has soloed with groups including the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Chinese National Symphony, the Orquesta Filarmonica de Santiago, the Bowdoin International Music Festival Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Manhattan School of Music Chamber Sinfonia, and the La Jolla Symphony. He is a core member of AMOC, a collective of dancers, instrumentalists, composers, writers, and singers, committed to the long-term creation and performance of an original music—and dance—theater

repertory. Additionally, he co-composes, improvises, and performs music with bassist Kyle Motl as part of their duo, Treesearch.

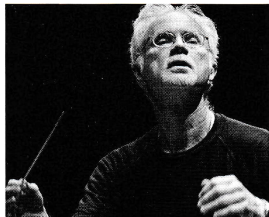
His duet with dancer Bobbi Jene Smith, "A Study on Effort," has been featured at the Luminato Festival, PS 122's COIL Festival, the ODC Theater, UCSD Dance&Theater, the American Repertory Theater, and Carolina Performing Arts. Their quartet with dancer Or Schraiber and violinist Miranda Cuckson, "With Care," investigates the domestic politics of empathy and apathy. He is part of the cast and creative team for Bobbi Jene's acclaimed show, "Lost Mountain," premiered at La Mama in May 2019.

Long-time collaborators include composers Matthew Aucoin, Celeste Oram, and Carolyn Chen. Aucoin has written numerous pieces for him, including "Poem" and "Its Own Accord." They perform together frequently, and have appeared at the Spoleto Festival in Italy, Rockport Chamber Music, Music Academy of the West, the LA Opera, Dumbarton Oaks, the San Diego Symphony's "Hearing the Future" festival, among others.

Harmonium

JOHN ADAMS

Born February 15, 1947, Worcester, MA



In 1979 John Adams became composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Symphony. At 32, he had achieved

some success with works such as *Shaker Loops* and *Grand Pianola Music*, based on the techniques of minimalism, but he was still searching for an authentic voice of his own. Adams admired certain features of minimalism, such as its pulsing energy and shimmering textures, but he was frustrated by that music's inability to "go" somewhere, and when Edo de Waart, music director of the San Francisco Symphony, commissioned a work from him, Adams was ready to pursue new paths as a composer. Central to this new direction would be harmony—and harmonic modulation—as a way of creating tension and motion, and the new work's title, *Harmonium*, reflects this interest.

In his own introduction to this music, Adams wrote "*Harmonium* began with a simple, totally formed mental image: that of a single tone emerging out of a vast empty space and, by means of a gentle unfolding, evolving into a rich, pulsating fabric of sound." But that "pulsating fabric of sound" should create a sense of motion, and Adams said "A successful performance of any one of these pieces should give the feeling of traveling—sometimes soaring, sometimes barely crawling, but nonetheless always moving forward over vast stretches of imaginary terrain." Adams at first planned to compose a purely orchestral score, but then he discovered three poems that captured his imagination—John Donne's "Negative Love" and Emily Dickinson's "Because I could not stop for Death" and "Wild Nights"—and he set them for chorus and orchestra. *Harmonium* was composed between February and October 1980, and de Waart led the premiere on April 15, 1981. Since then, *Harmonium* has been widely performed and has been

recorded several times—it is regarded as the work through which Adams achieved a new compositional voice, the voice that led him over the next decade to compose such distinctive works as *Harmonielehre*, the operas *Nixon in China* and *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and the *Violin Concerto*.

Adams has recognized two different kinds of harmonic modulation: one so gradual that the changes are almost unapparent at first, the other so abrupt that the changes have sudden, dramatic force. His setting of Donne's "Negative Love" makes use of the first kind of modulation. Donne (1572-1631) was one of the greatest metaphysical poets, that school of poets who made use of complex, even contradictory imagery to advance their argument. Adams suggests that "Negative Love" is "about the humility of love, and my response was to see it as a kind of vector, an arrow pointing heavenward. Thus the opening of 'Negative Love' with its rippling waves of orchestral and choral sound sets in motion a musical structure that builds continuously and inexorably to a harmonic culmination point some ten minutes later." Certainly the beginning sounds understated, simple in the extreme: altos sing the syllable "No" that repeats on quarter-note D's, gradually accelerating as they proceed. Donne's text begins over a shimmering, sparkling accompaniment, and the music swells to a climax on the words "Let him teach me that nothing," a climax that seems to embrace both the conflict and varying meaning of negativity in Donne's poem. From this height, the music winds down and draws the poem to its close as Donne's final two lines fade into silence.

The two Dickinson poems are given quite different settings. "Because I could not stop" embodies Adams' second approach to modulation. Though much of his setting is subdued, this movement can move suddenly between quite different keys, and those modulations—even when made quietly—can bring a sudden jolt, as if a scene had been suddenly lit in different ways. Dickinson's eerie account of a symbolic carriage ride provides the structure for Adams' music. The text concludes quietly, and without pause

Adams begins the transition to the final movement. Quiet at first, this bridge gathers energy and flings itself into the final movement. "Wild Nights" exalts sexual love, and Adams' setting bursts to life with an explosion of Dionysian sound, then celebrates that wildness to the sound of joyfully pealing bells. Its energy spent—and Eden achieved—the music relaxes into a quiet calm, and the long coda begins as the chorus constantly repeats the two syllables of the word "rowing." Solo trumpet sings a final benediction, Dickinson's poem reaches fulfillment in its embrace of the sea, and the music slowly fades into nothingness. ■

Because I could not stop for Death

Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed a school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Negative Love or The Nothing

John Donne

I never stoop'd so low, as they
Which on an eye, cheek, lip, can prey.
Seldom to them, which soar no higher
Than virtue or the mind to admire.
For sense, and understanding may
Know what gives fuel to their fire:
My love, though silly, is more brave,
For may I miss, whene'er I crave,
If I know yet, what I would have.

If that be simply perfectest
Which can by no way be express'd
But Negatives, my love is so.
To All, which all love, I say no.
If any who decipher best,
What we know not, our selves, can know,
Let him teach me that nothing; this
As yet my ease and comfort is,
Though I speed not, I cannot miss.

Wild Nights—Wild Nights!

Emily Dickinson

Wild Nights—Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our Luxury!

Futile—the winds—
To a Heart in port—
Done with the Compass—
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden—
Ah, the sea!
Might I but moor—Tonight—
In thee!

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Concert Video Educational Fund

Thanks to a generous gift by the **Family of Joan Forrest, in her memory**, La Jolla Symphony & Chorus has funding to videotape each concert this season. These videos will be posted on our YouTube channel for educators and the public to access free of charge as part of our music education and outreach effort. The videos also will be broadcast by UCSD-TV to all of the UC campuses and by satellite and cable to over 100,000 viewers.

With ongoing support, we can turn LJS&C's unique commitment to performing new music and lesser-known works into an invaluable educational resource through videotaping and archiving of our concerts. If you are interested in joining the Family of Joan Forrest in supporting this effort, please contact Stephanie Weaver at sweaver@lajollasympphony.com for details.

La Jolla Symphony Chorus

Founded in 1965 by Patricia Smith

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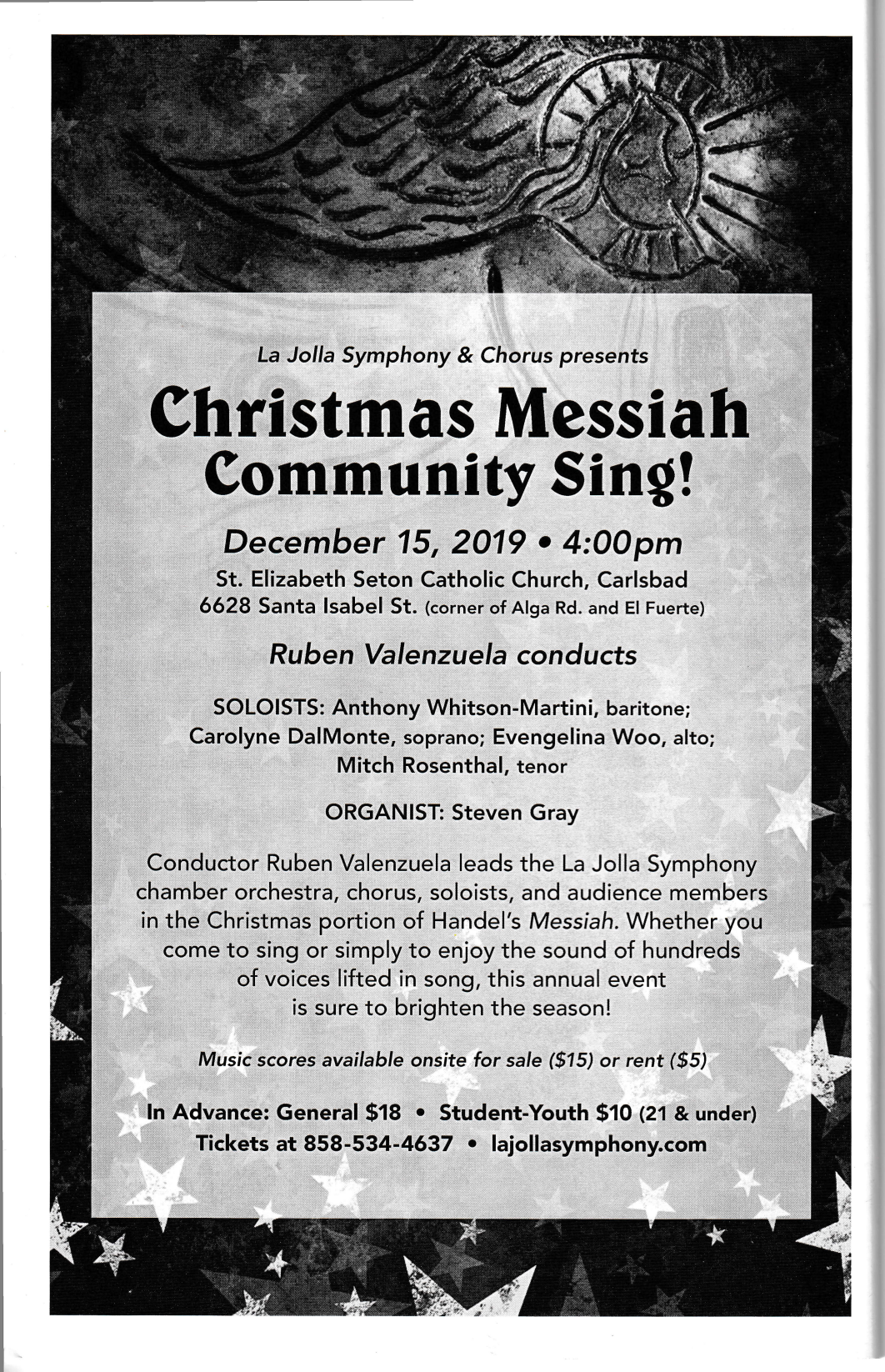
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Ruben Valenzuela conducts

SOLOISTS: Anthony Whitson-Martini, baritone;
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