



La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

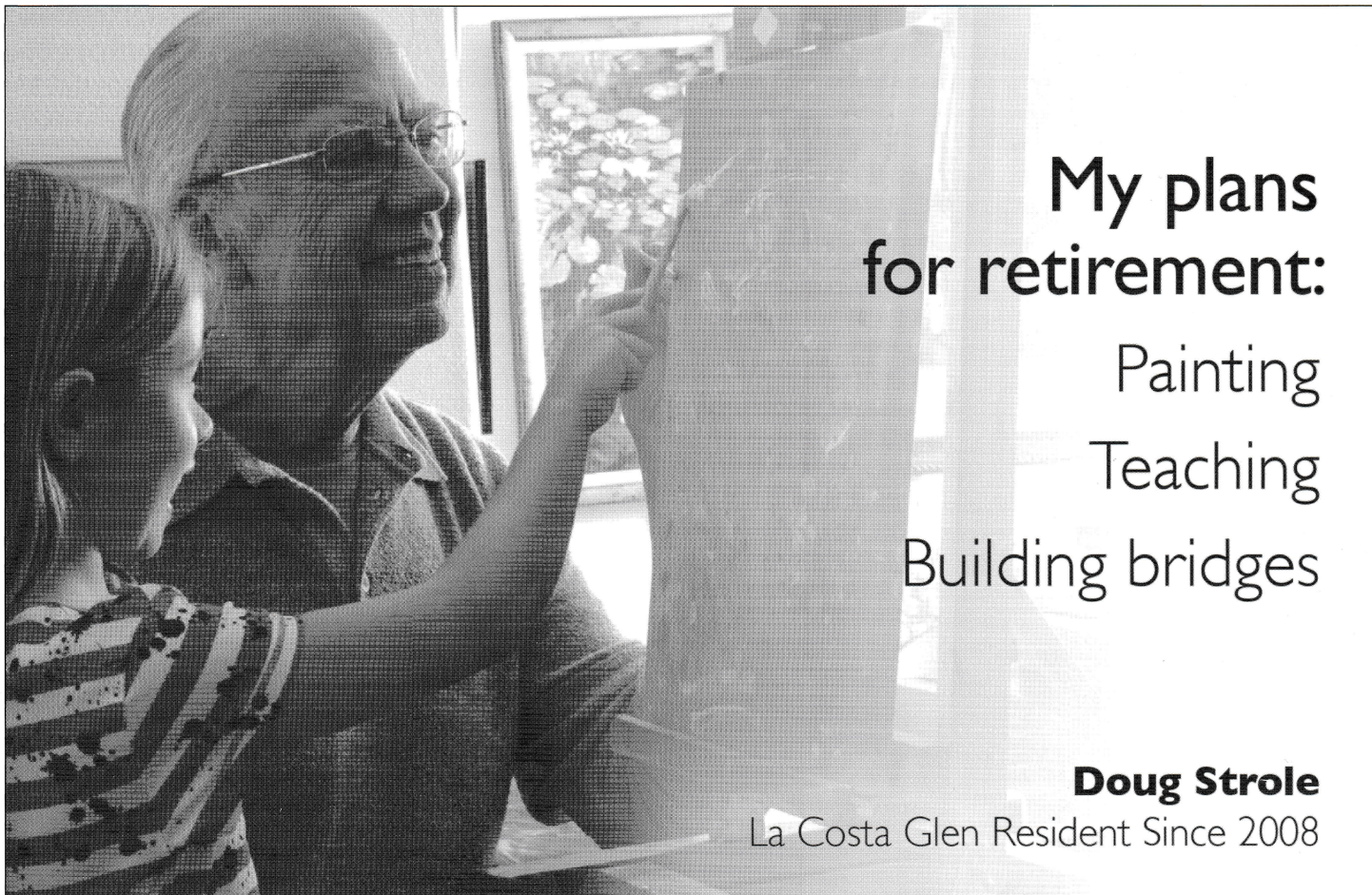
60th Anniversary Season
2014-2015

The Nature of Things

February 7-8, 2015
Mandeville Auditorium

Steven Schick
Music Director

David Chase
Choral Director



My plans for retirement:

Painting
Teaching
Building bridges

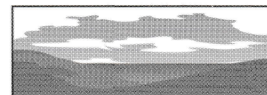
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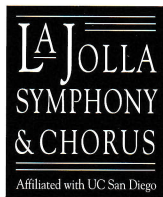
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Steven Schick
Music Director



David Chase
Choral Director

...on the nature of reflection

Saturday, February 7, 2015, 7:30pm

Sunday, February 8, 2015, 2:00pm

Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

Steven Schick conducting

GOLIJOV

Azul

Paz Sulfurica

Silencio

Transit

Yrushalem

Maya Beiser, cello

Fiona Digney and Stephen Solook, solo percussion

Mark Danisovszky, hyper-accordion

UNG

Khse Buon

Maya Beiser, cello

INTERMISSION

NIELSEN

Symphony No. 4, Opus 29 "The Inextinguishable" FS76

Allegro

Poco allegretto

Poco adagio quasi andante

Allegro

*Unauthorized photography and audio/video recording are prohibited during this performance.
No texting or cell phone use of any kind allowed.*

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From the Conductor

by Steven Schick

When you strip away all the distractions of music—remove the striving for commercial success, the sidelights of personal celebrity and the illusions of historical legacy—what's left is something like an audible version of life force. At this level the energy of music is akin to a quest for survival, the fuel to surmount one's present situation and to connect to the future. Music itself cannot promise the future. After all, the sounds from which music is made disappear nearly as soon as they are created. But there is the comforting assurance of permanence that comes simply from imagining future audiences. Put in this way the creation of music is the most optimistic thing a culture can do, since it presupposes people of the future for whom music will be meaningful.

It is in this light that Chinary Ung's decision to stop composing makes sense. For nearly ten years, in the darkest days of his native Cambodia under Pol Pot, Chinary stopped composing his own music and turned his attention to transcribing traditional Cambodian music. He learned to play the native Cambodian xylophone, the *roneat-ek*, and taught himself to perform the precious music that was vanishing under the rule of the *Khmer Rouge*. So when we at the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus decided to dedicate this concert to a reflection upon the life force present in all music we chose to include the first piece that Chinary composed after his decade-long silence. His *Khse Buon* for cello solo is that piece and acts as a reliquary for all that was lost in Cambodia. The version you will hear in this concert, performed by the stunning Israeli-born cellist Maya Beiser, is searing.

Perhaps it's an odd choice to include a work for solo cello on an orchestral program, but to me *Khse Buon* is the heart of this program. It sheds light on Chinary Ung's realization that life may be short but the future of music is not. And perhaps it alludes to Maya's childhood on an Israeli kibbutz, practically within earshot of artillery on the Golan Heights. It also sets the stage for the two outer works on the program: Osvaldo Golijov's *Azul* and Nielsen's *Symphony No. 4*, subtitled by the composer, "The Inextinguishable."

On first listening, these latter two pieces seem very different from each other. Golijov's piece is a largely consonant, feel-good piece of music, appealing to the kind of contemporary musical taste that is informed by world music, drum circles, Astor Piazzola and personal play lists. It seems like the latest word in 21st century styles—it even features an odd seating chart and amplified accordion. But even as it seems very early 21st century it is also a throw-back to the Baroque with a concertino style group of soloists that serves as a back-up band to the cello.

It couldn't sound much more different from Nielsen's symphony, which features angular string writing, super-dense orchestrations and a rousing round of dueling timpani in the final movement. But what the pieces have in common is their relationship to their own historical periods. Golijov wrote *Azul* in a time of growing sectarian strife to remind us that the color blue (*azul* in Spanish) is the color of our common home on planet earth. I am writing these words in a week that saw tragedy played out

Steven Schick conductor

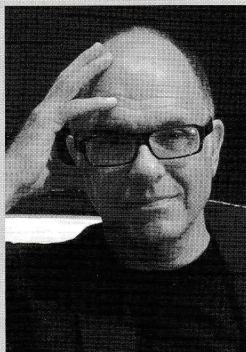


Photo: Bill Dean

Percussionist, conductor, and author Steven Schick was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For forty years he has championed contemporary music by commissioning or

premiering more than one hundred-fifty new works. He was the founding percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars (1992-2002) and served as Artistic Director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève (2000-2005). Schick is founder and Artistic Director of the percussion group, "red fish blue fish." Currently he is Music Director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus and Artistic Director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In 2012 he became the first Artist-in-Residence with the International Contemporary Ensemble

(ICE). Schick founded and is currently Artistic Director of "Roots and Rhizomes," a summer course on contemporary percussion music held at the Banff Centre for the Arts. He maintains a lively schedule of guest conducting including appearances in this season with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Nova Chamber Ensemble and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble. Schick will be music director of the 2015 Ojai Festival. Among his acclaimed publications are a book, "The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams," and numerous recordings of contemporary percussion music including a 3 CD set of the complete percussion music of Iannis Xenakis (Mode). Mode released a companion recording on DVD of the early percussion music of Karlheinz Stockhausen in September of 2014. Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego.

on the streets of Paris. Perhaps this is a good time to be reminded that there is more that binds us than separates us. The easy cohabitation of instruments and styles from around the world in *Azul* should help us realize that violence and strife are not inevitable.

Nous sommes azul.

Carl Nielsen turns the equation on its head. His highly idiosyncratic musical language does not create a world in which we can all find a place. It does the reverse. Created during the horrors of World War I, "The Inextinguishable" creates a personal space of refuge, a way for the individual to opt out of the craziness. For me the Nielsen is a musical version of Günter Grass's powerful novel, *The Tin Drum*, a paean to the right to be odd, to be different from the mold.

So, now we have three versions of survival, three testaments to the unique power of music to move us forward. Let me add to that a fourth. I have admired our soloist, Maya Beiser, since I met her in the first rehearsal of the Bang on a Can All-Stars in 1992. I always thought she was a great cellist. And she has become a very good friend, though that perhaps does not quite do justice. I am the godfather of Maya and her husband Rami's two children and have been a part of their family for better than two decades. Over that time I have seen her create a career that was not simply a response to opportunities presented, but rather has become a personal quest to explore the unexplored. When she first toured the United States as a teen-aged protégée of Isaac Stern, all the doors to the world of classical music success seemed wide open. But for Maya, stripping away the distractions of classical music, the promises of fame and legacy, has put her in touch with music as life force. I have watched her commune with this force for nearly 25 years. The results have been nothing short of magical. ■

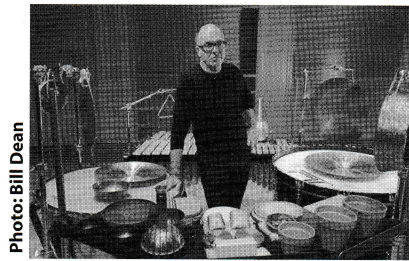


Photo: Bill Dean

Steven Schick inducted into Percussion Hall of Fame

Percussionist, LJS&C music director, conductor, relentless new music advocate, and UC San Diego Music Professor Steven Schick was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society's Hall of Fame in November. Inducted along with Schick in 2014 were Glen Velez, a master of frame drums, and Art Blakey, best known as the leader of the Jazz Messengers.

Congratulations, Steven. We look forward to the many surprising artistic twists and turns sure to come in the road ahead.

SAVE THE DATE!

LJS&C Annual Wine Tasting

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Rooted in San Diego for over 50 years, the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus enriches our lives through affordable concerts of ground-breaking, traditional and contemporary classical music.

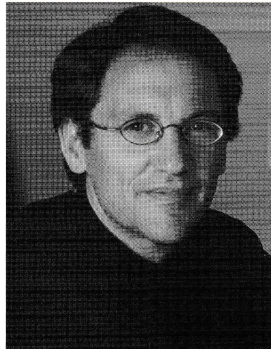
Program Notes

 by Eric Bromberger

Azul

OSVALDO GOLIJOV

Born December 5, 1960, La Plata, Argentina



Azul has become one of Osvaldo Golijov's most successful recent compositions, but it went through a difficult genesis, eventually becoming something far different from what the composer had planned when he set to work. The initial

impulse for this music came from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which commissioned a piece from Golijov in 2006. As a young man, Golijov had been a composing fellow at Tanglewood, the Boston Symphony's summer home, and now his thoughts returned to Tanglewood and to memories of relaxing on the vast lawn there, listening to concerts, and staring up at the summer sky. His first impulse was to capture that relaxed experience in music, and he composed a work for cellist Yo-Yo Ma and the Boston Symphony

that would project a sense of calm and transcendence. He titled the piece *Azul* ("Blue") after the color of that summer sky.

Ma and the Boston Symphony gave the premiere of *Azul* at Tanglewood on August 4, 2006, but Golijov was not happy with it. He felt it incomplete—too innocent—in this state, and so he rewrote it, expanding the music and changing its character completely in the process. The composer has identified many of the forces that helped transform *Azul*. Principal among these was his reading of Pablo Neruda's *The Heights of Macchu Picchu*, a long meditation that is both a painful history of the native peoples of the Western Hemisphere and the poet's own internal journey. Other influences were diverse: baroque music (both in its conception of form and sound), the wrenching violence that has been so much a part of our lives over the last several decades, and what might almost be called "the music of the spheres"—the composer's sense of the larger order and beauty that run through the universe. The revised version was premiered on July 31, 2007, at the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York City with Alicia Weilerstein as soloist. Both she and Ma have performed the final version of *Azul* repeatedly since then.



Maya Beiser

 cello

Maya Beiser has captivated audiences worldwide with her virtuosity, eclectic repertoire, and relentless quest to redefine her instrument's boundaries. *The Boston Globe* declares, "With virtuosic chops, rock-star

charisma, and an appetite for pushing her instrument to the edge of avant-garde adventurousness, Maya Beiser is the post-modern diva of the cello."

Over the past decade, she has created new repertoire for the cello, commissioning and performing many works written for her by today's leading composers. She has collaborated with composers Tan Dun, Brian Eno, Philip Glass, Osvaldo Golijov, Steve Reich, David Lang, Louis Andriessen, and Mark O'Connor, among many others. A featured performer on the world's most prestigious stages, Ms. Beiser has appeared as soloist at the Sydney Opera House, New York's Lincoln Center, London's Barbican and the World Expo in Nagoya, Japan and was a featured speaker and performer at the 2011 TED conference; her TEDTalk has since garnered over half a million views online.

Highlights of Maya Beiser's recent US tours include performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, Royce Hall in Los Angeles, Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, Mondavi Performing Arts Center, Ravinia Festival in Chicago, Celebrity Series in Boston and International Festival of Arts and Ideas in New Haven.

Her latest recording, *Provenance*, has been a top selling classical and world music CD since its release in 2010. Her performance of Steve Reich's *Cello Counterpoint*, a piece written for her, is featured on the Nonesuch disc *You Are*, which was chosen by *The New York Times* as one of the top albums of the year. She is also the soloist on the Sony Classical CD release of Tan Dun's *Water Passion*, and has performed his Academy Award-winning score *Crouching Tiger Concerto* with orchestras around the globe. She has released four solo CDs on Koch (now E1) including *Oblivion*, *Kinship*, *World To Come*, and *Almost Human*. She also has been a featured soloist on several film soundtracks.

Raised on a kibbutz in Israel by her French mother and Argentinean father, Ms. Beiser is a graduate of Yale University. Her major teachers were Aldo Parisot, Uzi Weizel, Alexander Schneider, and Isaac Stern. She was the founding cellist of the new music ensemble, the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

In its revised form, *Azul* is in four sections, played without pause, that span about 25 minutes. Golijov scores *Azul* for unusual forces and then deploys them in unexpected ways. He writes for a large orchestra, but one that lacks oboes, though it does include a basset horn and a huge range of percussion instruments. Many of these are instruments of the native peoples of the Western Hemisphere, and even a sample of their names suggests some of the flavor they help create: caxixi, conga, dumbek, goat's nail, gourd, kanjira, seed rattles, surdo, waterphone, and many more. The baroque influence may be felt in Golijov's deployment of his forces. Along with the cello soloist and orchestra, he includes a small ensemble that functions somewhat like the concertino in a baroque concerto: a body of soloists who play in contrast to the larger orchestra. Here that ensemble consists of a hyper-accordion (an accordion whose range has been extended electronically) and two percussionists. The composer refers to this ensemble as "a twenty-first century continuo" or "obligato group" and asks that both it and the cello soloist be amplified electronically.

The opening section, titled *Paz Sulfurica* ("Sulfuric Peace"), is derived from *Azul* in its original form. The cello rises over the quiet orchestra, and the "obligato group" gradually weaves into this rendering of the earth below and the sky above. The music grows more dramatic before proceeding directly into *Silencio*, which brings a sharp change of mood. This movement is cast as a chaconne, a baroque variation form: above a repeating ground, the cello sings a series of slow and meditative variations. *Transit* takes the form of a lengthy cadenza for cello, accompanied subtly by percussion instruments.

Longest by far of the four movements, *Yrushalem* ("Jerusalem") deserves special discussion, because it brings *Azul* to a conclusion that not only resolves the music's tensions but also makes a philosophical statement. Golijov based this movement on one of his own earlier compositions, *Tenebrae* ("Shadows") for string quartet (or quartet and soprano). The composer described the creation of *Tenebrae*, and his description also applies to *Yrushalem*:

I wrote *Tenebrae* as a consequence of witnessing two contrasting realities in a short period of time in September 2000. I was in Israel at the start of the new wave of violence that is still continuing today, and a week later I took my son to the new planetarium in New York, where we could see the Earth as a beautiful blue dot in space. I wanted to write a piece that could be listened to from different perspectives. That is, if one chooses to listen to it "from afar," the music would probably offer a "beautiful" surface but, from a metaphorically closer distance, one could hear that, beneath that surface, the music is full of pain.

Those two perspectives shape the final movement, which fuses tension with transcendence. At the start of *Yrushalem*, the music returns to the somber opening of the first movement and then expands from there. It is a long meditation, and eventually it rises to a soaring climax. The world may be full of pain, but "this pale blue dot" (to use Carl Sagan's phrase) is part of a vast and beautiful universe, and across the span of *Azul* we have moved from relaxing beneath the tranquil blue sky at Tanglewood to embrace earth's place in the starry heavens. Golijov concludes *Azul* with two codas, both of whose titles make cosmic connections: *Pulsar* and *Shooting Stars*. ■

Mark Danisovszky

hyper-accordion

Mark Danisovszky is a musical director, composer, pianist and accordionist in diverse settings. As solo accordionist, Mark's recent credits include *The Lord of the Rings Symphony* with Howard Shore and the Atlanta Symphony; *Vanessa* by Samuel Barber (San Diego Opera); *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyaaam* by Alan Hovhaness (Hilton Head Orchestra) and *Tango* by Robert Xavier Rodriguez (San Diego Symphony). Theatrical credits include the Pianist in *Luck, Pluck, and Virtue* and Oronte/Accordionist in *The School for Wives* at La Jolla Playhouse, as well as Mark Blitzstein/Pianist in *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Red Noses*, *The Dybbuk* and *Six Women With Brain Death* at San Diego Rep. Mr. Danisovszky has also composed scores for productions of *Three Sisters*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Odyssey* and *Fern Street Circus*, and he performs with many world music groups.

Percussion Soloists

Fiona Digney is an Australian-born percussionist, recently relocated from The Netherlands to San Diego. She holds performance and education degrees from Australia, a Master from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and is currently pursuing her doctoral degree at UCSD. Most recently, Ms. Digney has enjoyed freelance theatre work in The Netherlands (Diamantfabriek and Het Zuiderlijk Toneel) and London, England (Almeida Theatre), and has also had the pleasure of performing in Australia, China, Canada, Sweden, and Belgium in various orchestral, percussion ensemble, theatre, and new music settings.

Stephen Solook is currently finishing his DMA at UCSD. He is co-founder of Aurora Borealis duo (soprano and percussion), which encourages compositions for this combination. As a member of Cultures in Harmony, he has traveled to teach and perform in Cameroon, Egypt, Mexico, and Papua New Guinea. He has performed with Bang on a Can All-Stars, Eighth Blackbird, Lucy Shelton, Glen Velez, and Jose Limon Dance Company. Mr. Solook can be heard on Bridge, Vortex, and Mode labels.

Congratulations Young Artists Winners!

Twenty-seven contestants from San Diego County and Baja California competed for cash prizes on January 17th at the LJS&C Young Artists Competition. Award winners will perform at the Winners Recital on February 15th. Additionally, first-place winners will have an opportunity to perform with the LJS&C in a future subscription concert.

Instrumental Division

Carlos Aguilar, flute (1st) • Jonathan Sussman, flute (2nd)
Hazel Friedman, piano (3rd) • Haley Schricker, violin (Most Promising)
Kana Shiotsu, violin (Encouragement award)

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You may wonder: Why an endowment campaign? Why now? Who gives to endowment? How will the money be used? Good questions! And they are just a few of the ones we hear from patrons interested in learning more about our \$1.5 million endowment campaign, *Sostenuto*.

To address these questions and more, the endowment committee has created several documents and also a video. A good place to start is on the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus website: www.lajollasymphony.com. For example, on the "Endowment" page (under "Support LJS&C"), you will find a link titled "Endowment FAQs" (frequently asked questions). This document is designed to answer questions about endowments in general and about our campaign in particular. Another link takes you to our endowment's "Spending Policy." This document spells out the guidelines that govern how the endowment can and cannot be used, and includes restrictions that ensure preservation of the principal for continued growth.

There is also a link to a 7-minute **Sostenuto Video**, featuring interviews with Steven Schick and David Chase, orchestra and chorus members, and audience members. You may be able to identify with their reasons for donating to *Sostenuto*.

If you are interested in learning more about the endowment campaign, I hope you will explore some of the informational tools we've provided on the web. As always, you can contact Diane Salisbury (dsalisbury@lajollasymphony.com), Wendy Matalon (wmatalon@lajollasymphony.com) or me to discuss giving options or to receive a brochure of our case statement for endowment.

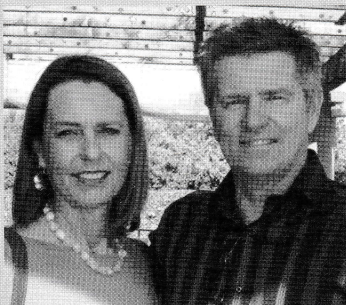
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"The dedication and talent of everyone, from ensemble to artistic directors to staff and the board of directors, is impressive. Our respect and appreciation for this amazing organization has grown over the years, and our commitment to support them through annual donations and gifts to the endowment is grounded in the belief that their contribution to our community is profoundly important. And fun!"



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"We're both great lovers of classical music and have experienced a number of orchestras throughout the country. We started attending La Jolla Symphony & Chorus when Thomas Nee was music director, then on to Harvey Sollberger, and now with Steve Schick. We've never been disappointed. The quality is extremely high. We love the fact that the musicians are volunteers—though you'd never know it listening to them.

"It's important that we have a community orchestra, to offer a place where musicians who are not professionals can perform, and to maintain availability to everyone. It's important to us to be a part of supporting the orchestra, at the level we can, because we want it to continue to exist for years to come, which an endowment helps. We decided on an amount we'd be willing to give and divided it over five years, contributing equal amounts each year. We hope we can even go beyond that."

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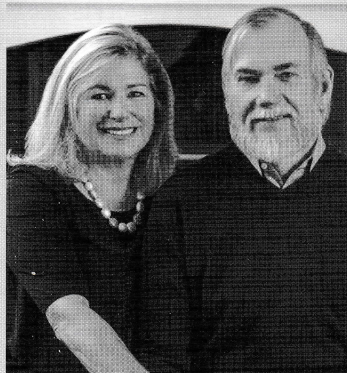
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"Music enriches our lives, and having a symphony orchestra and chorus on campus enables members of the campus—students, staff and faculty—to interact and give something to the larger community."

Sandy Timmons and Rick Sandstrom have a long history with choral music and the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus. When Rick was a student in the physics department one of his professors was an orchestra member. They remember when Mandeville Hall was built and probably were at the inaugural concert (but that was over 40 years ago so it is hard to remember.) Sandy says they became more consistent attendees 10 years ago when their daughter Jenna joined the chorus. Jenna had sung for 10 years with the San Diego Children's Choir, and when she started college she wanted to continue her choral singing. La Jolla Symphony & Chorus was the perfect opportunity. It is an opportunity that Sandy and Rick want to see available long into the future, which is why they contributed to the endowment fund.

Chinary Ung, D.M.A

Dr. Chinary Ung is a Distinguished Professor at UCSD in the department of music. He was the first American to win the highly coveted international Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition (1989), perhaps the most prestigious prize. Ung has received dozens of awards including The Kennedy Center (Friedheim award), two American Academy of Arts and Letters, The Guggenheim Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts. He was honored by the Asian Cultural Council during its 50th anniversary for The 2013 John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award. In January 1, 2015, he will be a Chancellor Fellow: Senior Composer in Residence at Chapman University.

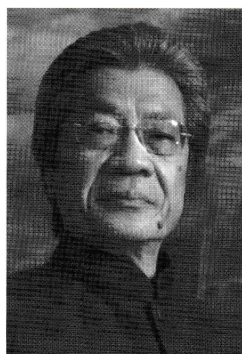
Dr. Ung has received many commissions, including those from the Philadelphia Orchestra, Meet the Composer, three Koussevitsky Music Foundations at the Library of Congress, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, The Los Angeles Master Chorale, The La Jolla Summerfest/Santa Fe Summer Music Festivals, The Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University. His music is published exclusively by C.F.Peters Corporation and is a member of Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI).

His music is recorded on New World Records, Cambria, London Records (Argo), Other Minds, Oodiscs, Nami Records, Kojima Records, Albany Records, Norton Recordings, Composer Recording Incorporated (CRI), Koch International, Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), Naxos, Mark Custom, ALM Records, Altoll Records, Klein Records, and three volumes on Bridge Records; volume 1 was cited by *The New York Times* to be in the top 10 classical music recorded in 2009; volume 2 was recorded by Da Capo Chamber Players, cited to be the top 5 CD's by National Public Radio.

Khse Buon

CHINARY UNG

Born November 24, 1942, Takeo Province, Cambodia.



The following note has been provided by the composer.

The Cambodian term *Khse Buon* translates directly as "strings four." Traditional (folk) music for solo instruments in this region is titled simply by the name of the instrument which plays it. In Cambodia, the cello or the viola would simply be called "four-stringed" instrument, as would any music it plays. Composed in 1980, *Khse Buon* was the only work written during an eleven year period between 1974-1985, in which Chinary Ung was taking part in an effort to preserve his native culture

after the Cambodian holocaust. Ung became deeply involved in learning, performing and transcribing much of the Cambodian court music, which accompanies traditional Cambodian ballet. He learned to play the *roneat ek*, the lead xylophone in the *pinpeat* gamelan ensemble. Ung also became involved in group improvisation, an activity that sparked new compositional directions. In *Khse Buon*, an interest in the specific idiomatic styles of various stringed instruments from Asia became the new way forward.

This work was Ung's first attempt to integrate string sounds from the East into Western string playing. *Khse Buon* was commissioned by Marc Johnson, then NIU professor of cello and member of the Vermeer Quartet. From the outset, however, it was a work written for both solo cello and solo viola. Ung worked in close collaboration with both Marc Johnson and Susan Ung during its construction, searching for new possibilities in western instrumental technique. There are numerous references to stringed instruments from Asia in *Khse Buon*; at the opening of the work, in particular, one can hear the Indian *sarangi*. There are also references to the Japanese *koto*, the Southeast Asian *rebab*, and the two-stringed Cambodian *tro*.

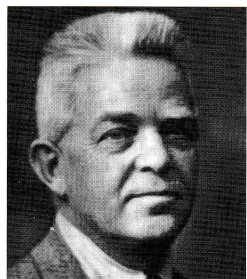
In this work one hears extensive droning offset by certain "explosive" interjections, rests and silences. Such a texture is generated through a blending of cultural elements which Ung describes in painter's terms: "If one can imagine Western cultural elements as blue watercolor paint and Eastern cultural elements as yellow watercolor paint, as one drips the yellow into the blue, what emerges are various shades of green." It is the green which Ung seeks. ■

Symphony No. 4, Opus 29 "The Inextinguishable" FS76

CARL NIELSEN

Born June 9, 1865, Norre-Lyndelse

Died October 2, 1931, Copenhagen



It was Nielsen himself who gave this symphony its unique nickname. The Danish *Det Uudslukkelige* translates broadly as "that which cannot be extinguished," and the "subject of this symphony is that sort of indomitable spirit, that sort of force. Certainly "force" is a word we instinctively use with this powerful

symphony. Full of violence and conflict, the music finally smashes through this discord to a triumphant close.

In a note in the published score, Nielsen tried to direct listeners' understanding of the nickname *Inextinguishable*, and in the process he gave it a sharper meaning: "Under this title the composer has endeavored to indicate in one word what the music alone is capable of expressing to the full: *The elemental Will of Life*. Music is Life and, like it, is inextinguishable... [I have] employed the word in order to underline the strictly musical character of [the] subject. It is not a programme, but only a suggestion as to the right approach to the music."

And so the subject of this violent symphony seems to be both life and music. However risky, it is tempting to look for extra-musical inspiration for this symphony. Nielsen began planning it in 1914, just as World War I exploded across Europe, and he did most of the actual composition in 1915. Denmark was spared the physical destruction other European countries suffered, but no sensitive observer—however detached—could fail to sense the threat to all of civilization that such a war posed. At a personal level, Nielsen separated from his sculptress-wife while composing this symphony—they had been

married for 24 years, had three grown children, and would remain separated for seven years. It may be no surprise that a symphony written under these conditions should confront violent and destructive forces and transcend them or that its composer should wish to believe in both life and music at such a point.

While the symphony is in the traditional four movements, these are played without pause, and the music seems to flow in one great arc across its 37-minute span. The *Fourth*, however, lacks the clear tonal landscape of the nineteenth-century symphony, and among the many sources of tension in this music is its harmonic uncertainty. The music often seems to be trapped between keys and straining for a resolution that seldom comes. It begins in D minor, but even this key is compromised within seconds, and the music veers abruptly between unexpected tonal bases before the conclusion in (unequivocal) E major, itself far removed from the opening D minor. Further, listeners will need to adjust their sense of how long a theme should be. Nielsen's themes are not so much discrete units as they are organic beings that seem to grow and change even as they are being presented—so fertile are these ideas that it is difficult to tell where some of these themes actually end.

The first instant of the opening *Allegro* makes clear that this will be a symphony full of violence: this opening theme grinds along the collision of triplets and dotted rhythms as the timpani punctuates its spiky progress. This violence subsides, and a second theme arrives, so different that it appears to have come from a different planet altogether. A pair of clarinets in thirds sings this long theme, another of those ideas that seem to have no end. Nielsen marks it *espressivo*, and this gentle idea—which grows calmly out of the violence around it—will prove to be the most important in the symphony. A third subject, this one full of grace notes and snappy energy, closes out the exposition, and the development begins with the sound of lonely flute strokes above a desolate landscape. Quickly this builds to a great climax, but the ending resolves very little of this movement's tensions, and it glides to an eerie, almost silent close: muted violins float like wisps of smoke above quiet timpani strokes, and the music proceeds without pause into the second movement.

Everyone notes the "pastoral" quality of the brief *Poco allegretto*, a feeling intensified by the fact that it is scored almost exclusively for woodwinds—the strings, which had been so dynamic a part of the first movement, almost vanish here. Except for one brief passage for solo cello, Nielsen allows no bow to touch a string in this movement—the entire string section plays only pizzicato here. This movement, an island of calm in so seething a symphony, is stanzaic: the opening woodwind choir recurs four times, slightly varied on each reappearance.

Nielsen allows only the slightest pause for breath before plunging into the *Poco adagio quasi andante*. The pace may be slow here, but the atmosphere is intense as the opening idea for violins burns and surges along its extended path. Easily overlooked here is Nielsen's subtle control of instrumental color: after the woodwind-dominated second movement, the opening four minutes of this movement belong exclusively to strings and timpani. There are further surprises along the way, including a chamber-music episode for solo strings and an extended fugato that builds a whirling climax. As a transition to the finale Nielsen writes a blazing, cadenza-like passage for the two violin sections in unison, which are joined along the way by the rest of the strings. (Is it possible that Shostakovich could have known

this symphony? His own *Fourth Symphony*, composed twenty years later, contains an extraordinarily similar outburst for strings in its first movement).

Nielsen's finale, marked simply *Allegro*, bursts to life with falling violin figures quite similar to the opening of the third movement (part of the pleasure of this symphony is its organic nature, the way themes seem to evolve effortlessly out of other ideas). The most famous (or notorious) feature of this symphony arrives very quickly. Nielsen writes a part for a second timpanist and asks to have the two timpanists set at opposite sides of the stage. From these strategic points, the two timpanists fight it out—Nielsen creates an abrasive duel for the two instruments, which salvo different rhythms and ideas back and forth across the stage. Their duel, while memorably noisy, is only one of the many sources of conflict in this violent movement. At the end, the calm clarinet duet from the opening movement, a theme that has spun off many subordinate ideas, returns in triumph. Now it is shouted out by the brass, and the symphony—its many conflicts resolved—hurries to a heroic conclusion on a shining E-major chord for full orchestra.

Nielsen worked on this symphony across 1915, finishing it on January 14, 1916, barely in time to have the parts copied and the symphony rehearsed for its premiere, which Nielsen led in Copenhagen on February 1, 1916. Reviews were positive, though some members of the audience were stunned by the violence of the music and particularly by the aggressive timpani parts in the finale. Perhaps the last word should be left to the composer. In another context he made a comment about art that may apply directly to his *Fourth Symphony*: "Beauty is a strange thing. Can't you see it is beautiful if I draw my sword and strike the rock—hard against hard—so that blue sparks fly?" ■



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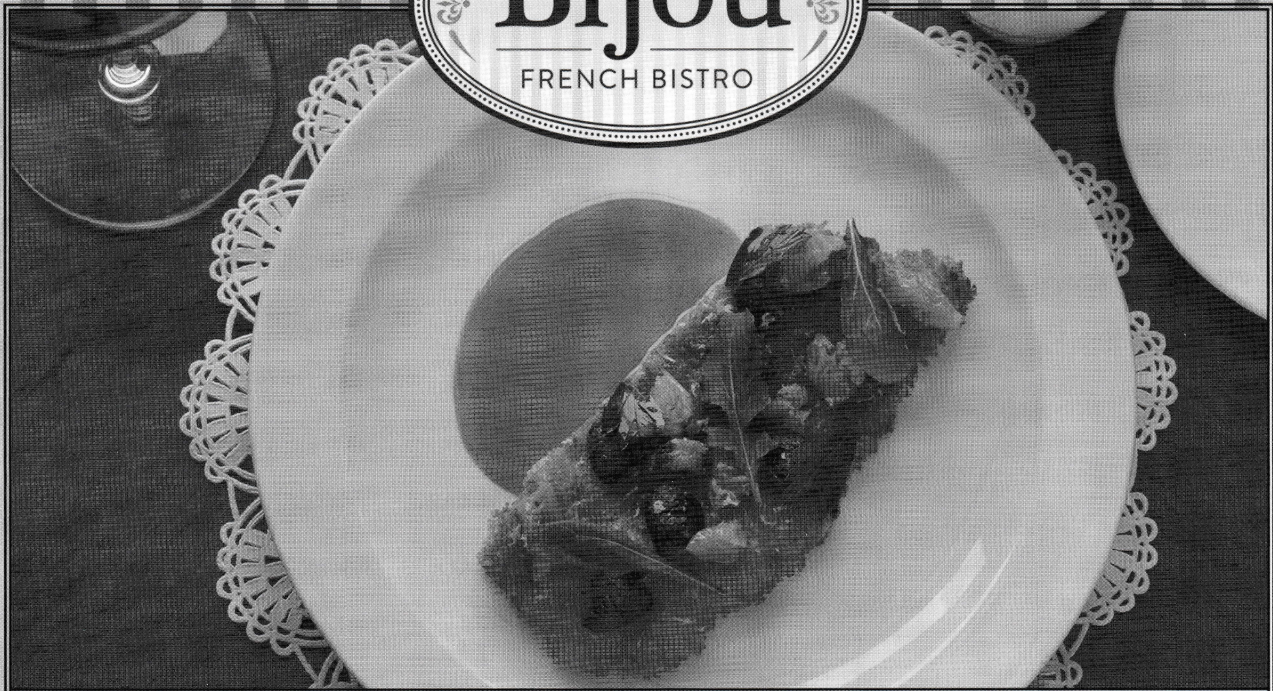
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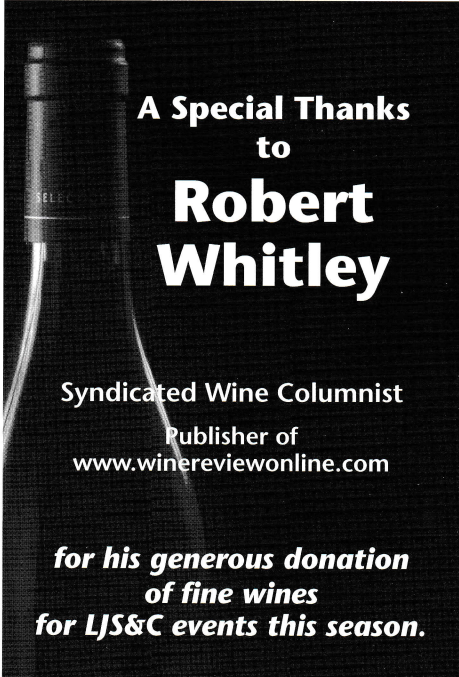
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