

# From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

As we begin 2025 in the midst of the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus' 70th anniversary season, I want to take a moment to share my gratitude and excitement with you. This incredible celebration — "LJS&C: 70 Years of Exploration and Excellence" — is truly special, and we wouldn't be here without your support.

This milestone season reflects what makes this organization so unique: the unwavering dedication of our patrons, the commitment of our community of volunteer musicians, and our cherished partnership with UC San Diego's Music Department. Together, we've built something extraordinary—a collaboration that brings people together, inspires transformation, and fills our lives with beauty and meaning.

As we celebrate 70 years, we honor the visionaries who started it all, the supporters who nurtured it, and everyone who has contributed to this remarkable journey. Most importantly, we celebrate you—your support and encouragement light the way for an exciting future.

Thank you for being part of this joyous season and for helping us continue to make music that unites and uplifts.

With gratitude,

Stephanie Weaver Yankee, DMA

Stephanie Weaver Yankee

**Executive Director** 

Major Sponsor Support for the 2024-2025 Season:













Saturday, March 15, 2025, 7:30 PM Sunday, March 16, 2025, 2:00 PM Mandeville Auditorium

# **Transmigration**

Generously sponsored by The Riford Foundation Season Sponsors: Cathy & Bill Funke

La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

Michael Gerdes, Guest Conductor

**ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR** 

**METACOSMOS** 

**GEORGE WALKER** 

Lyric for Strings

**MARGARET BONDS** 

The Montgomery Variations

Decision
Prayer Meeting
March
Dawn in Dixie

One Sunday in the South Lament

Benediction

INTERMISSION

**JOHN ADAMS** 

On the Transmigration of Souls
San Diego Children's Choir

# **About the Conductor**



Minnesota-born
Michael Gerdes
works each
season with the
next generation of
musicians and
music teachers at
San Diego State
University as
Director of

Orchestral Studies, A conductor, performer, and educator, Gerdes has spent the last decade of his life working to build the program at San Diego State University into a thriving community of orchestral music and musicians. Under his direction, that program has doubled in size and expanded the number of orchestral ensembles and performances. His alumni teach and perform across the world from the Los Angeles Philharmonic to the Armenian National Opera. His performances have been hailed as "highly sensitive and thoughtfully layered" and his conducting proclaimed "refined, dynamically nuanced" and "restrained but unmistakably lucid" by the San Diego Story.

Gerdes served as Assistant Conductor of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus and held positions with the Los Angeles Conducting Institute, San Diego Pro Arte Voices, and BRAVO International Music Academy. An enthusiastic advocate for the continued evolution of orchestral repertoire, Michael's performances have included premieres of major works by Vivian Fung, Richard Thompson, Jocelyn

Hagen, Alex Stephenson, Gabriel DeGuzman, John Hilliard, Brent Dutton, Liviu Marinescu, Jason Haney, Joseph Waters, Carl Holmquist, and Cory Hibbs.

Winner of the 2022 Richard Levin Orchestra Educator Award, he is fortunate to work with young musicians all over the United States and recently led over 1,000 student musicians (in a professional hockey stadium) at the South Dakota All-State Orchestra and Chorus. He was honored to lead the California Orchestra Director's All-State Orchestra and he has directed the honor orchestras of San Marcos, Capistrano, Alpine Valley, Grossmont, Sweetwater along with groups sponsored by the California Music Educators Association, Southern California Band and Orchestra Directors Association All-Southern, and San Diego Unified. Gerdes has conducted orchestras from Shanghai, China to Fairfax, Virginia.

Off the podium, Gerdes serves on the Board of the Musical Merit Foundation, working to provide scholarships to students that demonstrate exceptional achievement in musical performance. He also is a consistent lecturer to audiences at the La Jolla Music Society and Summerfest guest orchestra, piano, and chamber music performances. Although Gerdes has worked with orchestras in Asia, Europe, and across the United States, he is happiest when making music in his adopted home of San Diego where he can spend time with his wife Abbie, his daughter Cecilia, and his dog Wally.

# Program Notes by Eric Bromberger

#### **METACOSMOS**

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR Born July 11, 1977, Borgarnes, Iceland



Anna Thorvaldsdottir's rise as a composer has been swift. She studied cello as a child, earned her bachelor's degree from the Iceland Academy of the Arts,

and then came to UCSD, where she earned her master's and doctorate. Thorvaldsdottir has found success in every way. Her music has been performed widely, and she has had works commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestra de Paris, and many others. She has been composer-in-residence with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, and in 2012 she received the Nordic Council Music Prize.

In 2015 Thorvaldssdottir received the New York Philharmonic's Kravis Emerging Composer award. As part of her residency with the orchestra, she composed *METACOSMOS*, and Esa-Pekka Salonen led its first performance with the New York Philharmonic on April 4, 2018.

# The composer has written a program note for METACOSMOS:

METACOSMOS is constructed around the natural balance between beauty and chaos—how elements can come together in (seemingly) utter chaos to create a unified, structured whole. The idea and inspiration behind the piece,

which is connected as much to the human experience as to the universe, is the speculative metaphor of falling into a black hole—the unknown—with endless constellations and layers of opposing forces connecting and communicating with each other, expanding and contracting, projecting a struggle for power as the different sources pull on you and you realize that you are being drawn into a force that is beyond your control.

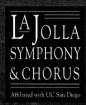
As with my music generally, the inspiration behind *METACOSMOS* is not something I am trying to describe through the piece—to me, the qualities of the music are first and foremost musical. When I am inspired by a particular element or quality, it is because I perceive it as musically interesting, and the qualities I tend to be inspired by are often structural, like proportion and flow, as well as relationships of balance between details within a larger structure, and how to move in perspective between the two—the details and the unity of the whole.

The piece is in one movement and is approximately 14 minutes in duration. (*Anna Thorvaldsdottir*) ■

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## Lyric for Strings

**GEORGE WALKER** 

Born June 27, 1922, Washington, D.C. August 23, 2018, Montclair, New Jersey

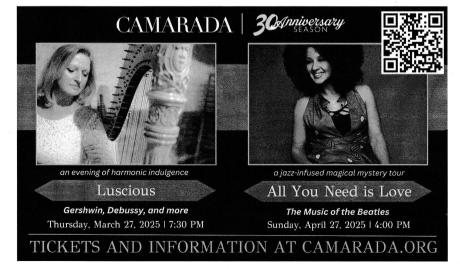


George Walker learned to play the piano as a boy and quickly developed into a virtuoso. At age 14 he entered the Oberlin Conservatory, and while there he

served as the organist of the School of Theology. Walker continued his studies at the Curtis Institute, where he was a piano student of Rudolf Serkin, and in 1945 he performed Rachmaninoff's *Third Piano Concerto* with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, becoming the first African-American instrumentalist to appear as soloist with that orchestra. Walker taught at a number of American universities, including Rutgers, where he was on the faculty from 1969 until 1992. A composition student of Rosario Scalero and Nadia Boulanger, he composed orchestral, chamber, keyboard, and vocal

music, and much of this has been recorded. In 1996 Walker became the first African-American composer to win a Pulitzer Prize for music when he received that award for his *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra*, premiered by Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Walker composed his String Quartet No. 1 in 1946, shortly after the 24-year-old composer had graduated from Curtis. As Walker began the second movement of his quartet, he learned that his grandmother had died, and this Molto adagio was written in her memory. The movement may be thought of as a lament, but this is a loving rather than a grieving lament, and it is exceptionally beautiful music. From a subdued beginning, the music rises to an intense climax, then falls away to conclude quietly. After the quartet was complete, Walker arranged this movement for string orchestra, adding a part for doublebasses, and under the title Lyric for Strings it has become his most frequently performed work. It is, in fact, one of the most frequently performed works by any American composer.



# The Montgomery Variations

MARGARET BONDS Born March 3, 1913, Chicago Died April 26, 1972, Los Angeles



When Margaret
Bonds set out to
become a composer,
she faced two
formidable
obstacles—she was
African-American,
and she was a

woman — but she overcame both obstacles and went on to a successful career as both composer and activist. Her family background helped her. Her father was Monroe Alpheus Majors, a physician and militant civil rights pioneer. and her mother was a pianist and music teacher. Her parents divorced when she was 4, and her mother gave Margaret her own maiden name Bonds. Margaret's mother taught her to play the piano, and the girl began composing at age 5. Margaret quickly developed into an excellent pianist, so accomplished that in 1933, at age 20, she became the first African-American to perform as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. As a young woman in Chicago, she also gave piano lessons to 10-year-old Ned Rorem, who spoke fondly of her across the span of his long life. Bonds earned both her bachelors and masters at Northwestern, then went on to continue her studies at luilliard: her teachers included Florence Price, William Dawson, Robert Starer, and Roy Harris. Bonds composed over 200 works, and while there are a few orchestral and instrument compositions, most of her music is for voice, either solo or choral.

Bonds also arranged a number of spirituals for piano and voice; the most famous of these is the arrangement she made of *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands* for Leontyne Price, who recorded it.

Bonds' The Montgomery Variations was written in response to the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham in September 1963, a terrorist act that killed four young girls. This was the height of the civil rights movement — Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech had taken place just three weeks before the bombing — and Bonds composed her Montgomery Variations as a statement of faith in King and in the entire civil rights movement.

# Bonds herself contributed a program note for this music:

"The Montgomery Variations" is a group of freestyle variations based on the Negro Spiritual theme, "I want Jesus to Walk with Me." The treatment suggests the manner in which Bach constructed his partitas—a bold statement of the theme, followed by variations of the theme in the same key—major and minor. The words are as follows:

I want Jesus to walk with me. I want Jesus to walk with me. All along my pilgrim journey, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me. In my trials, Lord, walk with me. When my heart is almost breaking, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me. When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me. When my head is bowed in sorrow, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

#### Decision

Under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. and SCLC, Negroes in Montgomery decided to boycott the bus company and to fight for their rights as citizens.

#### **Prayer Meeting**

True to custom, prayer meetings precede their action. Prayer meetings start quietly with humble petitions to God. During the course of the meeting, members seized with religious fervor shout and dance. Oblivious to their fellow worshippers they exhibit their love of God and their Faith in Deliverance by gesticulation, clapping and beating their feet.

#### March

The Spirit of the Nazarene marching with them, the Negroes of Montgomery walked to their work rather than be segregated on the buses. The entire world, symbolically with them, marches.

#### **Dawn in Dixie**

Dixie, the home of the Camellias known as "pink perfection," magnolias, jasmine and Spanish moss, awakened to the fact that something new was happening in the South.

#### One Sunday in the South

Children were in Sunday School learning about Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Southern "die-hards" planted a bomb and several children were killed.

#### Lament

The world was shaken by the cruelty of the Sunday School bombing. Negroes, as usual, leaned on their Jesus to carry them through this crisis of grief and humiliation.

#### **Benediction**

A benign God, Father and Mother to all people, pours forth Love to His children—the good and the bad alike.

(Margaret Bonds)

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#### **How To Reach Us**

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#### **Contact Us**

(858) 534-4637 boxoffice@ljsc.org marketing@ljsc.org

#### **Open Hours**

Mon-Fri: 9am – 5pm Sat & Sun: Closed Hours subject to change

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus Association is to enrich and inspire the diverse communities of San Diego by bringing together committed and passionate musicians to perform an imaginative mix of contemporary and traditional music at a high level of excellence.

#### La Jolla Symphony & Chorus 2024-2025

Stephanie Weaver Yankee Executive Director

Arian Khaefi Sally & Einar Gall Music Director and Chorus Conductor

Sameer Patel Music Director and Orchestra Conductor

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# On the Transmigration of Souls

JOHN ADAMS

Born February 15, 1947, Worcester, MA



In the months following the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the New York Philharmonic asked John Adams to compose a new work that would

respond to the events of that catastrophic day. That piece would be premiered at a memorial concert on the first anniversary of those attacks, a concert that would also include Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Adams was at first unsure how to proceed. He did not want to write a descriptive piece, a tone poem that "told" the events of that day. Nor did he want to write a requiem in memory of the victims. Instead, he created what he described as "a memory space. It's a place where you can go and be alone with your thoughts and emotions." On the Transmigration of Souls responds not to the cataclysmic events of 9/11, but instead to their aftermath: to the sense of tragedy and loss, both individual and collective.

Adams went about this in a wholly original way. On the Transmigration of Souls is a "layered" composition, somewhat in the manner of a collage. The work consists of quite different layers, several of them pre-recorded. The work begins with a recording of urban sounds: traffic, voices, sirens. Overlaid on this is another recording, this time of voices saying the names of individual victims and also intoning the word "Missing." The next

layer is a large chorus that sings excerpts from the many messages posted on the streets in the days following the attack. messages left by families or individuals searching for loved ones. To this, Adams adds a children's choir, the silvery sound of their voices standing in sharp contrast to the voices of the adult choir. The final layer is a very large orchestra that rises to several strident climaxes across the course of On the Transmigration of Souls. Interwoven into the orchestra's part are fragmentary quotations from Charles Ives' The Unanswered Question, particularly its ethereal string lines and its questioning solo trumpet.

Of his choice of title, Adams said: "I mean it to imply the movement of the soul from one state to another. And I don't just mean the transition from living to dead, but also the change that takes place within the souls of those who stay behind, of those who suffer pain and loss and then themselves come away from that experience transformed."

On the Transmigration of Souls was premiered by the New York Philharmonic, New York Choral Artists, and Brooklyn Youth Chorus on September 19-24, 2002. almost a year to the day after the 9/11 attacks. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music the following year. Hearing this work can be cathartic, but it can also be lacerating emotionally, as it returns us to our memories of those painful days. Adams, though, hoped that On the Transmigration of Souls would have a different effect on audiences, and perhaps the final word should be left to the composer: "My desire in writing this piece is to achieve in musical terms the same sort of feeling one gets upon entering one of those old, majestic cathedrals in France or Italy... an immediate sense of something otherworldly. You feel you are in the presence of many souls, generations upon generations of them, and you sense their collected energy as if they were all congregated or clustered in that one spot."■

## LJS&C Honors Local Composer, Wu Man

The La Jolla Symphony & Chorus is excited to award the inaugural Steven Schick Prize for Acts of Musical Imagination and Excellence to local composer and pipa player Wu Man!

This new prize celebrates an individual or organization that enriches and continues LJS&C Music Director Emeritus Steven Schick's innovative and unique musical legacy. Ms. Wu has premiered hundreds of new works for the pipa, while spearheading multimedia projects to both preserve and raise awareness of China's ancient musical traditions. Ms. Wu will join LJS&C onstage to perform Lei Liang's *Five Seasons* for "Echoes of Time" on May 3 and 4, 2025.

# On the Transmigration of Souls by John Adams

"Missing..."

"Remember me. Please don't ever forget me."

"It was a beautiful day."

"Missing: Jennifer de Jesus."

"Missing: Manuel Damotta."

"I see water and buildings..."

"We will miss you. We all love you. I'll miss you, my brother."

"Jeff was my uncle."

"You will never be forgotten."

"Looking for Isaias Rivera."

"Windows on the World"

"She looks so full of life in that picture."

"It feels like yesterday that I saw your beautiful face..."

"I loved him from the start."

"You will never be forgotten."

"I miss his gentleness, his intelligence, his loyalty, his love."

"Shalom"

"Remember"

The daughter says: "He was the apple of my father's eye."

The father says: "I am so full of grief. My heart is absolutely shattered." The young man says: "...he was tall, extremely good-looking, and girls never talked to me when he was around."

The neighbor says: "She had a voice like an angel, and she shared it with everyone, in good times and bad."

The mother says: "He used to call me every day. I'm just waiting."

The lover says: "Tomorrow will be three months, yet it feels like yesterday since I saw your beautiful face, saying, 'Love you to the moon and back, forever."

The man's wife says: "I loved him from the start... I wanted to dig him out. I know just where he is."

"Louis Anthony Williams. One World Trade Center. Port Authority, 66th Floor. 'We love you, Louis. Come home"

"Charlie Murphy. Cantor Fitzgerald. 105th Floor. Tower One North. Weight: 180 pounds. Height: 5"11". Eye color: hazel. Hair color: brown." Date of birth: July ninth, 1963. Please call... 'We love you, Chuck."

"My sister"

"My brother"

"My daughter"

"My son"

"Best friend to many..."

"I love you"

# San Diego Children's Choir



Since 1990, the San Diego Children's Choir (SDCC) has been a leader in choral training for young voices, serving over 2,000 children annually. As the region's oldest and largest choral music education program, SDCC nurtures artistic and personal growth through high-quality instruction and transformative performance opportunities.

Our programs include introductory music classes for children ages 1-6 and an ensemble program for choristers in grades 1-12. Choristers progress through age- and skill-based levels, exploring a diverse repertoire that spans cultures, languages, and historical periods — from medieval to modern, classical to folk, and spirituals.

SDCC is committed to making music education accessible to all children. We provide scholarships to qualifying families and offer programs at multiple locations throughout San Diego County. Through our donor-funded school outreach program, we bring free, high-quality music instruction to underserved schools, ensuring every child experiences the joy and benefits of singing.

Beyond the classroom, SDCC enriches the community by providing professionally trained young voices for high-caliber performances and collaborations. Our choristers perform for diverse audiences, from symphony and ballet patrons to sports fans at Padres games. Through unique partnerships, community engagement, and inspiring performances, we foster connection and cultural enrichment.

At SDCC, we unite children from all backgrounds through song, fostering confidence, teamwork, accountability, and a lifelong love of music in a supportive and inspiring environment.

## **CONCERT VIDEO EDUCATIONAL FUND**

Thanks to a generous gift by the Family of Joan Forrest, in her memory,
La Jolla Symphony & Chorus will be videotaping each of the concerts this season.
Selected videos will be posted on our YouTube channel and on UCSD-TV
as part of our ongoing music education and outreach efforts.

With ongoing support, we can turn LJS&C's unique commitment to performing new music and lesser-known works into an invaluable educational resource.

If you are interested in joining the Family of Joan Forrest in supporting this effort, please contact Stephanie Weaver Yankee at sweaver@ljsc.org for details.

# La Jolla Symphony Chorus

Founded in 1965 by Patricia Smith

Arian Khaefi, Sally and Einar Gall Music Director and Chorus Conductor

Lukas Schulze, Assistant Choral Conductor Justin Hansen, Accompanist Marianne Schamp, Chorus Manager Marianne & Dennis Schamp, Chorus Librarians Jesse Wu, Facilities Manager

#### Soprano

Nicole Avakvan

Marcia Banks\*\* Sonja Blumenstock Frances Castle\* Jill Chagnon Dariela Cruz Sydney Doidge Zoey Graziano Lauren Gripenstraw Caroline Hall-Sherr Marty Hambright Ida Houby Inessa Hrebianiuk Supriva laiswal Hima Joshi lin-Soo Kim Kathryn Kinslow Kiyomi Kishaba Anke Klueter Maria Kotsaftis Rachael Lapidis Rianna Last Vivian Liu Florence Losay Asona Lui Sanjana Mánivannan Amelia Mardesich Katherine Ng Hannah Park Erin Partridge Rohini Prabhakar

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Parsa Farnad
Michael Kaehr
Justin Kehr
Kenneth Lee
Anthony Leonard
Jim Macemon
Apolo Madrigal
Gabriel Marcano
Steve Mishek
Ching Wang
William Ziefle

#### Bass

Aiden Afshar

lack Beresford\* Nathan Carlton Christian Durini Lowell Gaspar Peter Gourevitch Bryan Heard Shannon Johnson Alexander Kourjanski David Leatherberry Steve Marsh William Miller Rav Park Dennis Schamp Luke Schulze Otto Sorensen Richard Tilles Tim Whipple Mark Zickel

\*Section Leader \*\*Asst. Section Leader

# La Jolla Symphony Orchestra

Founded in 1954 by Peter Nicoloff

#### Michael Gerdes, Guest Conductor

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#### Violin I

Peter Clarke Concertmaster Andrew Helgerson Asst. Concertmaster David Bracher Melinda Call Yi Fu Robert Gleiser Wendy Patrick Nikhil Rao

#### Violin II

Jacey Yang

Jennifer Khoe Principal Catherine Chvi Asst. Principal Gary Brown **David Cooksley** Savanna Dunaway Igor Korneitchouk Claire Lee Dejana Roth lames Villareal

#### Viola

Principal Roark Miller Asst. Principal Loie Flood Gero-Stillwell Clémence Groget Clara Oberle Julia Vazquez

Nancy Swanberg

#### Cello

Peter Ko Principal **Emily Kao** Asst. Principal Gabrielle Carr Rebekkah Good Curtis Chan Jordan Kuspa Eric Lu Nobuki Nakanishi Courtney Yu Phylicia Wang Hannah Zhou

#### Contrabass

Christine Allen Principal Darrell Cheng Asst. Principal Bill Childs Dharma Dorazio Lance Gucwa Bryan Lowe

#### Flute

Joey Payton Principal Erica Gamble Julianna Han Jacqueline Speiser

#### Piccolo

Erica Gamble Julianna Han Jacqueline Speiser

#### Alto Flute Erica Gamble

#### Oboe

Zing Li Principal Heather Marks Soady Briana Mossman

## **English Horn**

Heather Marks Soady

#### Clarinet

**Denexxel Domingo** Principal Jenny Smerud Claire Wang Gabriel Merton

#### **Bass Clarinet** Gabriel Merton

**Contrabass** Clarinet Steven Shields

#### **Bassoon**

Tom Schubert Principal Arnold Barron William Propp Jim Swift

#### Contrabassoon Cullen Blain

#### French Horn

Ryan Beard Principal Audrey Freeman **Buddy Gibbs** Kennan Langsford

#### Trumpet

Tristan Shin Principal Kai Mow Oscar Ramirez Adam Smith

#### **Trombone** lacob Raffee

Principal Steven Nguyen

#### Bass Trombone

Ronald Scipio

#### Tuba

Joey Ortiz Principal Derek Lee

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# **OUR 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON**



MAY 3-4
Echoes of Time

Julia Perry A Short Piece for Orchestra
Lei Liang Five Seasons, for Pipa and String Orchestra
Arnold Schoenberg Accompaniment to a
Cinematographic Scene
Alexander von Zemlinsky Prelude to Es War Einmal
Robert Schumann Symphony No. 4, Op. 120



JUNE 7-8 **Elijah's Triumph Felix Mendelssohn** *Elijah* 

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LJS&C is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, making your donation tax-deductible.

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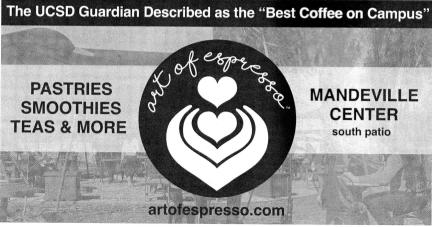
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