

Conductor's note ... Steven Schick



Any chance to conduct an orchestra of the quality, vitality and community importance of the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra must be savored. Having played as a percussion soloist with the orchestra on three occasions, and having listened to and admired the group for many years, the task of choosing a program for this concert was not an easy one. First and foremost I wanted to choose repertoire that would take advantage of and highlight the orchestra's many fine qualities. Beyond that there were pieces I had always loved and imagined conducting. Finally, in three decades of touring as a percussionist I have met and worked with many interesting musicians outside of the La Jolla area. Perhaps I should bring some of those people and that music to this concert. I was stricken with "option anxiety:" there were too many possibilities, and all of them were tempting.

Eventually I decided to try to represent all of my goals. To complement the fine sense of color and texture that I have long admired in the playing of the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra, I chose a program that was full of vivid timbres and sweeping gestures. All three pieces are brilliant and include evocative sketches that make full use of the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra's well developed repertory of sounds, colors and musical shapes. I could not resist the chance to conduct Igor Stravinsky's suite from "The Firebird." This was very nearly the first piece of music that I fell in love with and in so many ways has confirmed my choice of a life in music. Several valued friends and collaborators will join us for this weekend's concerts: the percussion group "red fish blue fish," heard just a few years ago in a performance of Takemitsu's "...from me flows that which you call time," will act as an ensemble of soloists in Tan Dun's "Crouching Tiger Concerto." I am also very pleased to introduce David Lang to LJSO audiences. A former classmate of mine, who since our days together as students at the University of Iowa has become an internationally important composer as well as the founder of the maverick Bang on a Can Festival in New York, David is the composer of our opening work, "International Business Machine," which he wrote for the Boston Symphony. Wendy Sutter, the cello soloist in Tan Dun's "Crouching Tiger Concerto" is a good friend and an extraordinary musician. We played together as members of the Bang on a Can All-Stars. Wendy has been everywhere, from Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Project to Bang on a Can to the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. It is a particular pleasure to welcome her to La Jolla and to the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra.

Finally, a note of thanks to the musicians of the La Jolla Symphony Orchestra for the great privilege of intense and artistically rewarding work together on these three great pieces of music. Thank you all very much for your time, your energies, and your art.

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Update on Music Director search ... Ted Bietz

We currently have five finalists for the position of Music Director. They are:

- Karla Lemon - Former Stanford University Orchestra Director
- Susan Lavery - Assistant to Pacific Symphony and all USC performing ensembles
- David Aks - Opera Conductor at Cal State Northridge
- David Handel - Conductor of the Bolivia Philharmonic
- Steven Schick - Current faculty member of the UCSD Music Department

Steven Schick will be conducting our concert this weekend. All the others will be conducting concerts next season. More info soon!



Ben Sabey welcomes a new arrival!

On March 10th Ben Sabey and his wife Isa welcomed their new daughter, Lily Isabel, into the world. Mom and baby have been doing great. Lily Isabel is the Sabey's second daughter and Ben says, "With a toddler and a newborn, we are not sleeping much."



Baby Lily Isabel

Ben sings bass with the chorus but is currently on leave. He'll be returning in the fall.



Contributors:

Barbara Peisch, Ed.

Ted Bietz

Sue and Gary Brown

Beda Farrell

Joan Forrest

Karen Johns and Peter Jorgensen

Sharon Jones

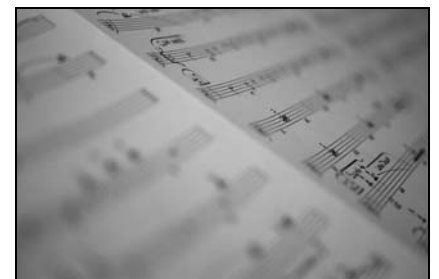
Sharon Kipfer

Anne Merkelson

Steven Schick

Burl Spiff

Amee Wood



Love in the symphony – Part 5

Sue and Gary Brown

Sue and Gary met one sultry Sunday afternoon on the fourth floor of the old Science library at San Diego State.

Sue was in graduate school studying Speech Pathology and Gary was studying there as well, though he was getting his degree at UCSD in Information and Computer Science. That particular afternoon Sue was falling asleep and thought she would open a window to help stay awake, but she couldn't budge it. Enter Sir Galahad (AKA Gary Brown), who came to her aid, opening the window and inviting her outside for a coffee break. As they played twenty questions by the coffee machine, Gary mentioned that he played violin in the La Jolla Symphony. Sue knew of that orchestra, as her brother Jim, a clarinetist, had also played in the group. Already that was a plus. Sue mentioned that she had an interest in music as well, which went over well with Gary.



Gary's parents played violin and cello, and introduced their children to music at a young age. Being a San Diego native, Gary is the product of the old San Diego Public School music program. He still remembers his elementary school orchestra conductor, Wendell Waterman, leading rehearsals every Wednesday afternoon. Gary has been in school orchestras ever since, including San Diego State before coming to UCSD. He joined the La Jolla Symphony in 1969.

Gary's devotion to the orchestra is legendary. He will never deliberately miss (or be late) for a rehearsal unless work sends him out of town. This was even true on the night Sue went into labor with their third child. It was a Monday night in November, 1982 and a concert was coming up the following weekend. Sue was having mild contractions that evening, and knew the baby was coming soon. Right at 6:15 Gary picked up his violin and started for the door. When Sue looked at him questioningly, he replied, "I'm going to rehearsal. Don't worry. I'll call you at the break." Well, Sue was worried and made him miss the second half of the rehearsal (Avi was born early the next morning). To assuage his conscience, and prove to Tom Nee that he hadn't been playing hooky, they brought the new-born to the concert that weekend. The baby enjoyed it very much.

Sue's love of music also came from her parents. Her mother loved to sing Broadway, popular tunes and folk music, and her dad loved classical music. They gave Sue and her brother lessons from an early age. Sue studied piano briefly and flute through middle school but what she really loved was singing. She picked up folk guitar, and would come home from summer camp with a folk repertoire that she never forgot. Children's music was always of interest to Sue, and she began teaching music in her children's preschools. In her work as a speech therapist, she started incorporating music into her practice. At first Sue did it to make therapy more interesting to herself, but as time went on she came to understand that it had relevance to the teaching of auditory skills, vocabulary, rhyming and articulation. This led her to Orff Music, and the three levels of training.

Tutti is online!

Thanks to Sean Peisert, you can download this and previous issues of *Tutti* from:

lajollasympphony.com/download/tutti



Sue's vocational interests changed with an early midlife crisis, when she decided to become a synagogue cantor. By this time, she and Gary had three children, and the logistics of going to New York and Israel to study were daunting. They decided that her studies would have to be San Diego based. Sue started studying voice, theory, sight singing, and Chazanut (cantorial arts) with a cantor in Los Angeles. This culminated in a Friday night cantorial soloist position, which she held for several years with a small military congregation. Though she no longer has a pulpit, Sue trains Bnai Mitzvah students in liturgical music and trope (the traditional motifs for chanting the Bible).

Music aside, Sue introduced Gary to the wonderful world of backpacking and his first (and almost last) trip was a three-day backpack down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back. Let it suffice to say that Sue almost left Gary down at the river. After they figured out the basics, like how to start one of those Svea white gas stoves, things improved dramatically and they had some great backpacking adventures. In fact part of their Honeymoon was a four day backpacking trip through Yellowstone. That's when they learned about where not to setup your backpacking tent during a thunderstorm.

Besides backpacking they also enjoy San Diego's great weather and take advantage of it when they can by cycling, hiking, and kayaking, but the high point of their adventures has to be the trip they took with the chorus to the Czech Republic and Poland.

Gary says, "Of course things have changed over the years. There isn't a cooler full of beer at the rehearsal break anymore (yes, we really did have one!), and everyone wears a tux now, but the same spirit of musical adventure that was there when Gary first joined 37 years ago is still present thanks to Tom Nee and Harvey Sollberger. I'm looking forward to another 37 (let's see, I'll only be 96 - that should work)."

Having both Sue and Gary in the LJS&C has allowed them to participate in music together. Singing and playing music, both in San Diego and especially on tour, are highlights of their life together. They are happy and grateful to be part of the LJS&C family.

Karen Johns and Peter Jorgensen



joined the chorus (1981). He was manager of the chorus when they took their premier tour to Europe in 1988.

It took the La Jolla Symphony Chorus to bring Midwesterners Peter Jorgensen and Karen Johns together. They both spent time in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (where Peter was born), Chicago, Illinois, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. But it was in good old B210 in La Jolla, California, where they finally met.

Peter sang on a float for the Encinitas Flower Fair and none other than David and Ann Chase were on the same float. Not long after that auspicious meeting Peter

Need to contact the LJS&CA?

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Anne Merkelson,
Executive Director
amerkelson@ucsd.edu



That was the year Karen joined. But it took Peter a while to finally notice her. They started dating in 1997. Former chorus manager and mutual friend Beda Farrell provided Peter with Karen's phone number.

Karen and Peter like to say they honeymooned with chorus friends during the second France tour. They even had the honeymoon suite at the chateau where the chorus stayed. One week after returning from the tour, they officially tied the knot at the San Diego County offices downtown.

Peter graduated as a Music major from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He had a stint with the Army as a jazz bassist.

From there he joined the ranks of IBM and had to make a choice between jazz and the corporate world. Earning a living for his family won out. But he kept his musical hand in by singing in church choirs--the acceptable form of musical expression according to IBM.

Karen graduated from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and taught high school English for two years before joining the corporate world with State Farm Insurance.

State Farm has helped her to see a lot of the United States both via transfers (Minneapolis to Bloomington, Illinois to San Diego), and on special assignments to handle catastrophe claims (Colorado, Texas, Florida, and Louisiana).

Since marrying, Peter has joined her on these assignments and their last tour of duty was 2 1/2 months in Hammond, Louisiana (north of New Orleans), after Hurricane Katrina hit last year.

Besides singing, Peter and Karen enjoy fishing and traveling.

They are grateful to the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus for providing many hours of excellent music, the fellowship of good friends, and the miracle of love.



A message from Sharon Kipfer

I enjoyed receiving the birthday cards with notes and well-wishes from my dearly missed choir friends! I've adjusted to life in Los Angeles and enjoy the diversity and opportunities. The time spent getting from point A to point B is unacceptable, but what can one do, except listen to good music? I spend my time in a good mix of paid contract work and volunteer activities. I have not yet joined a choir but am still researching and scoping out the choices. It is hard to stay clear of the movie business, LA being LA, and our loft downtown at 4th and Main is a prime location for filming. We were well compensated with many crisp 100-dollar bills for housing flood lights for several scenes of "Spiderman 3." But it was a disappointing when we learned we had to close our window blinds and not watch the action below. So how Spiderman spins his web will remain a mystery to me. Life here has yet to become dull. I do hope to see your June concert.

--Sharon Kipfer (sharon@kipfer.net)

[Editor's note: For newcomers or those of you who didn't know Sharon, she sang in the alto section of the chorus until last season. She recently had a birthday, and our own Chuck Carver (master of refreshments) made sure she received birthday cards from the chorus!]



Have some news to report?

Let the editor know!

barbara@peisch.com



Wine Tasting recap... Burl Spiff

Photos by Joan Forrest

On Saturday, April 1, the LJS&CA held its Fourth Annual Wine Tasting fundraiser, organized by LJS&CA Board member and violinist Joan Forrest. The gracious hosts, Judith and Walter Munk, opened their home and garden to approximately 75 guests, many of whom were LJS&C ensemble members. The guests gathered on the back terrace, sipping wine, grazing on cheese, crackers and fruit donated by the La Jolla Trader Joe's, sampling chocolates from Chuao and watching hanggliders soar by above the Pacific Ocean on this picture perfect day. In the background, Wendy Patrick, LJS&CA Board member and violinist, and her string quartet serenaded the group with a range of classical tunes. Could the event have been more elegant and convivial?



Hors d'oeuvres donated by Trader Joe's



Robert Whitley preparing for the tasting

Yes, as the following events proved. Robert Whitley, noted wine critic, and his wife, Diane, former LJS&CA Board member, marshaled an array of seven Meritage wines to be sampled and compared by the guests. Robert, in his erudite and comfortable style, explained the tasting with insightful and historical remarks about each of the wines. After all the guests had tasted and ranked each wine, a vote was taken. The favorite wine turned out to be the "2000 Magnificat" (not Bach's Magnificat) from the Franciscan Vineyards in Napa Valley. Surprisingly, this was also the least expensive wine sampled at \$29 a bottle.



Wendy Patrick and her string quartet



Robert Whitley explains Meritage wines to the guests

Following the tasting, Robert led a lively, somewhat raucous opportunity drawing for a wide variety of wines. Among the donors of these wines were former Board member Bob Engler, LJS&C Alto Susan Taggart and her husband Mark, and LJS&CA Board member and Bass Otto Sorensen. Many lucky participants left the party clutching bottles of future gustatory delight.



Wines offered for the opportunity drawing, most of which were donated by Robert Whitley



Guests hard at work tasting

The LJS&CA Board would like to express many thanks to Joan Forrest, Robert and Diane Whitley, Anne Merkelson, Veroniah Roolz and all of the indispensable volunteers - Satomi Saito, Peter Jorgensen, Karen Johns, Bev McGahey, Mona McGorvin and Marianne Schamp – for coordinating and working tirelessly on this event. Special thanks go to Judith and Walter Munk for welcoming the LJS&CA into their home, the perfect venue for this event.

Oh - in case you were wondering, the event netted approximately \$6000. Congratulations!

The Board of Directors proudly announces the promotion of Anne Merkelson to Executive Director

Anne Merkelson returned to the LJS&CA last year. This year she was promoted to Executive Director from Managing Director. What you may not know is that Anne also has a background in music!

"My interest in music began in earnest at my grandparents' summer camp in Idyllwild. Many of the counselors used to play Beatles' songs on the beat-up old piano next to the stage and I always marveled at their talent. I always played music by ear until I went to college and learned I had to read music to become a music major. What a shock! I earned my B.A. in Music from UC Santa Cruz where I studied piano as my main instrument. But my heart (or should I say ear?) was in Indonesian music and playing gamelan.

Right after graduating, I moved to San Francisco where I landed my first real job at a magazine publisher. I ended up staying in the publishing industry for ten years and eventually become the Director of the Production Department (production is the last stop before going to the printer.) I was laid off after the dot.com bust and decided to go back to school and get a teaching credential (I come from a long line of teachers.) I continued to play and sing in a Javanese gamelan ensemble called "Pusaka Sunda" (the name means heirloom) that performed all over the Bay Area and was featured on a PBS special.

After teaching in Los Angeles for two years, (and realizing that teaching 5th grade gifted and talented students requires more gifts and talents than I have!) I decided to move to San Diego to live with my fiancé, Billy. I quickly landed a job as Membership Director at XLNC1 Radio in Chula Vista and was responsible for producing the membership drives as well as managing the 2,000 members. I worked closely with Jean Oelrich (who used to be on the LJS&CA board) who mentioned to me that LJS&CA had an opening for an Operations Manager. I had already heard about the reputation of the UCSD Department of Music and really wanted to make the leap to performing arts management.

I find the job as Executive Director to be a perfect match for my administrative experience and musical interests. I am just thrilled to be involved with such a top-notch organization and feel I have truly found my niche.

I'm looking forward to the next season and am confident it will be a wonderful year for LJS&C!"

Article Watch

From Sharon Jones:

This Week @UCSD, March 13, 2006

"New CD Highlights Graduate Composition and Performance Work"

http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/thisweek/2006/mar/03_13_musiccd.asp

by Dirk Sutro

[*Editor's note: The CD discussed includes all acoustic instruments and is available free of charge by sending your e-mail and mailing address to publicity@music.ucsd.edu.]*



From Barbara Peisch:

San Diego Union-Tribune, April 5, 2006

"Guggenheim grants fellowship to UCSD music professor Davis"

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/features/20060405-9999-1c05davis.html>

by George Varga, Pop Music Critic



If you find an interesting, music-related article, send the information about it to me at barbara@peisch.com. You may either send a link to the article or just the name and date of the publication, along with the title of the article, and I can find it online. You may also hand me the article during rehearsal or mail it to me at:

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"All music is what awakes from you when you are reminded by the instruments, it is not the violins and the cornets, it is not the oboe nor the beating drums, nor the score of the baritone singer singing his sweet romanza, nor that of the men's chorus, nor that of the women's chorus, it is nearer and farther than they."

--Walt Whitman
Leaves of Grass

