

War Requiem ... Music Director Steven Schick



The poet Jerome Stern once told me that he defined poetry as “a rifle loaded with the future.” We hadn’t been talking about Wilfred Owen, the British poet and soldier whose verse depicted the horrors of gas attacks and trench warfare in World War I, but perhaps we ought to have been. Owen, from ordinary beginnings to his enlistment in “Artists’ Rifles Officers’ Corps” in 1915 to his death just a week before the signing of the armistice (his mother received the telegram just as church bells began to toll news of the ceasefire) has become a metaphor, played out in a single man’s life, of the loss of innocence in an entire generation. A rifle loaded with the future indeed. Owen’s poetry has lived on for nearly a hundred years partly

thanks to the savage beauty of Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*, which we are honored to present to you here in its first San Diego performances.

Britten sets nine of Owen’s poems for two male soloists accompanied by a small chamber orchestra, interspersing them with a setting of the traditional Latin requiem text for full orchestra, chorus and soprano soloist. Comforting the living was a primary function of the traditional mass. And even in largely Anglican England, Benjamin Britten could reasonably have expected the words of the Requiem Mass, a text intoned for centuries, to have been understood as the voice of continuity, the promise of survival. In an ironic twist the *War Requiem* was premiered just six months before the convocation of the Second Vatican Council, a far-reaching rethinking of Roman Catholic liturgical practice that heralded among other things the gradual disappearance of Latin in everyday celebrations of the mass. So the Latin mass, what for the *War Requiem*’s first audience was a known and comforting counterbalance to the harrowing images of Owen’s poetry, has become for us in early 21st century America, an alien aspect of the piece. In the 48 years since the premiere of the *War Requiem* we have become nearly the exact inverse of the audience gathered that day at Coventry Cathedral. Many of those listeners had seen war rain down on their front steps; those of us living comfortable lives far from Iraq and Afghanistan see it in films and on the news. They looked to the Latin mass for comfort; we think of it as a relic – that is when we think of it at all.

So what exchange do we make with the *War Requiem*, we who have become inured to images of horror and unfamiliar with the tropes of religious comfort? What do we as listeners take from it, and what as musicians do we offer to it in interpretation? Perhaps through listening to the *War Requiem* we can regain a healthy capacity to be shocked. As our current wars play out, now no longer as headlines but as postscripts buried in the back pages of newspapers, we might well remind ourselves that the suffering Wilfred Owen saw still exists. And perhaps in return we might tap the deep aquifer of optimism that still runs through life in the American West, and offer tonalities of hope even in the darkest parts of this masterpiece.

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Indeed, confronting darkness is only a part of the experience of listening to *War Requiem*. Anyone who has spent time in Great Britain has seen dark scudding clouds momentarily break apart to reveal dazzling sunbursts. If you haven't seen this for yourself, listen for it in the sudden, blinding brass chords in major keys that break through dark intonations of "Dies Irae" in the second movement. And for those who feel trapped by life's circumstances, take heart from the last movement. The Latin text "libera me" ("set me free") first circles itself in tightly chromatic melodies – creating phrases that seem literally imprisoned by their harmony – only to break through and blossom in one of the most stunning upward sweeps in all of Western music, proof again that hope is the primary message of a Requiem Mass. "Hosanna!" "Sanctus!" "Requiescant in pacem." We may not use the old words much anymore, but they still bring the promise of sanctity and peace.

But what are we to make of Owen's spare poetry? Doesn't it seem too small a thing to counterbalance the enormous tragedy of war? We'll leave it to you to judge how small it is after you hear it in the context of Britten's masterful setting. But Owen must have felt his own powerlessness as the culture of Europe blew itself to smithereens before his very eyes. His poignant words, serving as the epigraph to the full score of the *War Requiem*, speak of an artist's plight.

"All a poet can do today is warn."



The Therese Hurst chronicles, part two ... Choral Director David Chase

As part of the campaign to launch the Therese Hurst Musical Legacy Society, I've taken it upon myself to re-introduce the fascinating Therese, who died in 1983 and left her Del Mar house to create an endowment for our organization. This story is about a piano that stands in the music studio of our Leucadia home.

In 1981, Ann and I and our two very young kids returned from a year sabbatical at University of Michigan to find that Therese was losing her battle with leukemia. She visited rehearsals and attended concerts, but she was clearly failing. With her at all times was her devoted companion, Anne Cohu, the decidedly eccentric, estranged daughter of the founder of Cohu Aviation (as I discovered only after she died!).

Back at the Chase house, my Ann set up shop again, teaching voice lessons in our home, using a broken down spinet piano. Therese often said that she wanted to replace our clunker with a Steinway. (She always wanted the best!) But, with her health care costs spiraling out of control, this was no time to continue that discussion.



When Therese died, her Anne was despondent. But one day, she called in a manically chipper mood and said, "Kids, Therese is going to buy you that Steinway!" And, not knowing whether to believe it possible or not, we went shopping, if only to humor Anne. She insisted we look for a new Steinway, because that was Therese's wish. But the new Steinways were very expensive and not as well made as the old ones. And we ran into a 1917 model O that – like the old used car salesman would say – had been owned by a voice teacher in LA who had seldom played it. It had a sweet, singing sound that spoke to my Ann immediately, and just like that, we were both in love with it. But we were still sure it was too expensive.

Anne Cohu said "Therese will take care of it," disappeared to haggle with the salesman, and came back with a bill of sale. How she did it all, we never knew—though it clearly made their estate lawyer very nervous!—but what was clear then, as now, was that Therese's legendary big heart had beaten the system once again, even posthumously.

Contributors:

Barbara Peisch, Ed.

David Chase

Mea Daum

Walt Desmond

Victoria Eicher

Beda Farrell

Susanna Han

Diane Salisbury

Steven Schick

Lyn Stimer

Mary Ellen Walther



The Steinway has remained at the center of our lives all these years, a prized possession that reminds us continually of a friend who is dear to us and to LJS&C. When we're gone, the piano will be part of the gift we'll leave to LJS&C, and the Therese legacy will close another loving loop.



News from the Executive Director ... Diane Salisbury

It's hard to believe the season finale is upon us! And, from all reports, I hear the concert's going to be spectacular. We will have ads in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and *La Jolla Light*, and radio spots on XLNC1 in addition to publicity about the concert.



In the last issue of *Tutti* and at our May concert, we formally launched the Therese Hurst Musical Heritage Society. In this issue of *Tutti*, David Chase offers the second installment in his series about our chief benefactress for whom the Society is named. Her estate gift to LJS&C 25 years ago has helped keep us afloat through lean years and it seeded our endowment. Since that article appeared, the Society has welcomed three new members who have remembered LJS&C in their wills or made an endowment gift: Sue and James Collado, Colin and Maxine Bloor, and Richard and Glenda Rosenblatt. A brochure about planned giving is available through the office. Please contact me to receive a copy if you are interested in learning more.

Video challenge grant update

We did it! I had immediate response to my email regarding the \$1500 video challenge grant offered by patron David Smith, and I'm pleased to report that we have funded videotaping of the season-opening concert. In addition to having our concerts broadcast by UCSD-TV through this collaboration, interview footage with visiting artists, composers and our music director is edited into vignettes and used for educational outreach, marketing, publicity, and grant requests. Thank you to David Smith, Don Diehl, Walt and Ann Desmond, Dave Buckley, Ina Page, Paul and Clare Friedman and Ken Fitzgerald for contributing to this effort.

Subscription update

Early subscription sales are looking good for next season. As of Friday, May 21, we've sold 304 subscriptions and are ahead of year-to-date sales. Deadline reminder: Early Bird rates end June 11.



Gala 2010—October 16 ... Diane Salisbury

"Let's Face the Music and Dance"

The 2010 Gala Committee, co-chaired by Julie Croom (mother of former LJS&C flutist Kathryn Peisert) and Liza Perkins-Cohen (former board member), has announced the theme for next season's Gala. Taking its cue from the 2010-2011 Season title—Face the Music—the Gala theme is "Let's Face the Music and Dance," from the Irving Berlin standard. True to its name, the October 16th Gala will feature music and dancing to the 16-piece swing band Big Band Express as well as elegant dining, sparkling wine reception and auction. The Gala will be held at the Del Mar Marriott. Mark your calendars for our biggest fundraiser of the season!



You can view *Tutti* online!

You can download this and previous issues of *Tutti* from:

www.peisch.com/tutti



Member Spotlight

Susanna Han, violin

I am of Manchurian descent on my father's side. He has often told me this is the reason I like rainstorms and horseback riding. My mother was born and raised in Ashland, Kentucky, and the family tree on her side goes all the way back to King Arthur. (Yes, there is actually a piece of paper somewhere in my mother's closet stating this as fact.)

My mother first introduced me to the violin when I was six years old, and I began my studies with Sister Marguerite Tornovich in Denver, Colorado. Sister Marguerite was a



Suzuki pioneer, and we always remained in close contact until her passing about two years ago. After my father completed his medical studies in Denver, our family moved to San Diego, and I enjoyed the SDSU Monday night classes with local Suzuki teachers Shirley Stafford, Steve Luchs, and Mary Manaster.

The violin was always important to me, but became central to my life after I completed my sophomore year at the University of San Diego. At that time, I was very unhappy, and could sense that my life was not going as it should. After some soul-searching, I

realized that it was time for me to change the course of my life. I left USD, and the next September I began my studies with Shinichi Suzuki in Matsumoto, Japan (Nagano) at his Talent Education Institute. I remained there for two years. He completely transformed my life.

After graduating from TEI, I returned home to set up my studio and complete my BA at the University of San Diego. I studied Philosophy and History, and also received my M.Ed in Leadership. While at USD, I always took violin lessons, and loved playing in the orchestra. For several years I was blessed and fortunate to have Navroj Mehta as teacher and conductor. One summer, I was also invited by Angela Yeung to play chamber music in Orvieto, Italy. It was during that time that I fell in love with Italy and have returned many times since. Several regions of Umbria, especially Assisi, hold a very special place in my heart. (Coincidentally and very happily for me, my sister married an Italian, and now resides in the Dolomite mountains. I have a beautiful niece, Valentina, and a nephew on the way!)

Today I teach about forty violin students at Suzuki Heritage Center. I love my career and am thankful for each day that I have with my students. Professionally, I belong to the Suzuki Music Association of California, the Music Teachers' Association of California, and serve on the Executive Board for the Musical Merit Foundation of Greater San Diego as Program Chair. I also work with Ann Chase in a new school outreach program sponsored by Musical Merit called CLOSE ENCOUNTERS. During summers I enjoy teaching at Strings By the Sea music camp co-directed by San Diego Symphony cellists Glen Campbell and Karla Holland-Moritz. I also enjoy playing weddings and Mass under Annette Welsh (music director of Founder's Chapel Choir, USD) with flutist Jessie Huang Reveron. For my own musical growth, I attend the Starling - DeLay Symposium held biennially at the Juilliard School in NY.

I was first introduced to LJS&C by my conducting professor Harvey Solberger. He took us to listen to a rehearsal one night, and the group was preparing Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*. I was absolutely mesmerized by the piece and the group. I joined LJS&C the following season. Since that time, LJS&C has been my main source of musical growth. It is more than just loving the group and playing great music. I would say that it has become an integral part of me—helping define the person that I am today and helping prepare the person that I will become tomorrow.

Need to contact the LJS&CA?

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Diane Salisbury,
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Goodbye, Sue

Our longtime woodwind first chair, Sue Collado, is retiring at the end of this season. Goodbye Sue! We all wish you well in whatever you decide to take on next!



Wines of Spain

Our April 24th Wine Tasting at the home of patrons Bob Engler and Julie Ruedi was fabulous—and fabulously successful! We had a capacity crowd, the one day of good weather in an otherwise cold and windy week, and it was our most successful wine tasting fundraiser yet, raising \$8,500 for LJS&C. The wine and tapas reception was accompanied by a string ensemble from our orchestra: Loie Flood, Serena Cohen, and Judy Gaukel. Robert Whitley led the blind tasting of six Spanish wines that ranged in price from \$17.99 a bottle to \$80. The blind tasting was followed by a raffle of over 40 premium and rare wines and several auction items including a wine tasting party for 30 at The Wine Bank in downtown San Diego that sold for \$1,300.

Special thanks go to our hosts Bob and Julie, to committee chairs Joan Forrest and Michael Latz, to our incredible volunteers, to Chefs de Cuisine for donating magnificent tapas platters, and food purveyors Ralphs, Vons, Henry's, Jimbo's, and Trader Joe's for their contributions to the reception. Wine donations were from Robert Whitley, Susan and Mark Taggart, Bob Engler, Gary Parker, and Ron Neely.

Some photos from the event are included below. More photos can be found on our web site at <http://gallery.me.com/mikel72#100191>.



Our hosts, Julie and Bob



Serena Cohen, Judy Gaukel and Loie Flood

The LJS&CA Board

(Board representatives to the ensemble in bold)

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Otto Sorensen and Robert Whitley

Have some news to report?

Let the editor know!

barbara@peisch.com



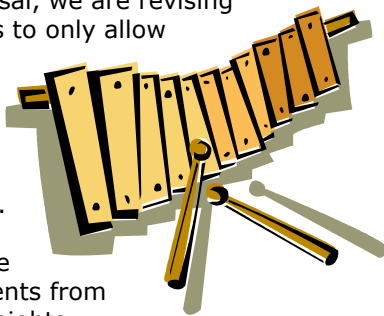
Outreach ... Victoria Eicher

The outreach committee welcomes Soprano Renee Calvo to the Latin American Music Project (outreach in City Heights) as a much-needed voice instructor. Renee is a previous Young Artist Competition winner and a frequent soloist with the LJS&C.

The Mariachi and Afro-Cuban classes are going strong—the outreach web pages are undergoing revision at this time and will soon feature many more pictures and videos of the kids.

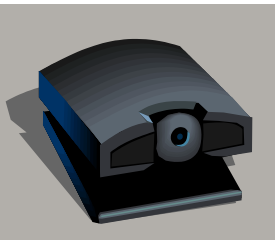
We received a \$5000 grant from Qualcomm and will use it to fund the instruction in City Heights and outreach performances at selected San Diego schools. The plan is to create PowerPoint previews for each of our season concerts next year to have available for LJS&C musicians to present at schools and community centers. Please let us know if you would like to be on the list of outreach musicians or if you have a request for such a presentation at your school.

After a few episodes of noisy audience members being asked to leave our last dress rehearsal, we are revising the dress rehearsal guidelines to only allow 'children over 5' and have an updated etiquette sheet available at the sign in table. My apologies to Maestro Schick and the musicians for the distractions.



We have had the good fortune of receiving donated instruments from Bertrand Music for the City Heights outreach. I got up the gumption to ask Jeff Bertrand for a keyboard last week and he came through for us! We now have a Casio Privia PX-130 (full size keyboard!) available for voice training at the City Heights Rec Center on Saturdays. Yay!

Thank you to W. Robert Peters of the Chorus for his contribution of an Epson Multimedia projector to the outreach program!"



Our PowerPoint slideshow was a hit at the 50th Young Artists Competition concert. Chorus member and outreach volunteer Mary Ellen Walther also created a PowerPoint preview for the most recent season concert. It is a

wonderful replacement to the displays I used to create for the East Room, and much more portable! We are excited to offer some 'notes and quotes' about each season concert next year for students of all ages (in their classrooms and at our dress rehearsals). For additional information regarding outreach, contact Victoria Eicher – (858) 442-0237.



Claire Chase performance reviews

As many of you know, Claire Chase, daughter of David and Ann Chase, is quite an accomplished flutist. She recently performed at Weill Hall in Carnegie Hall and at Le Poisson Rouge.

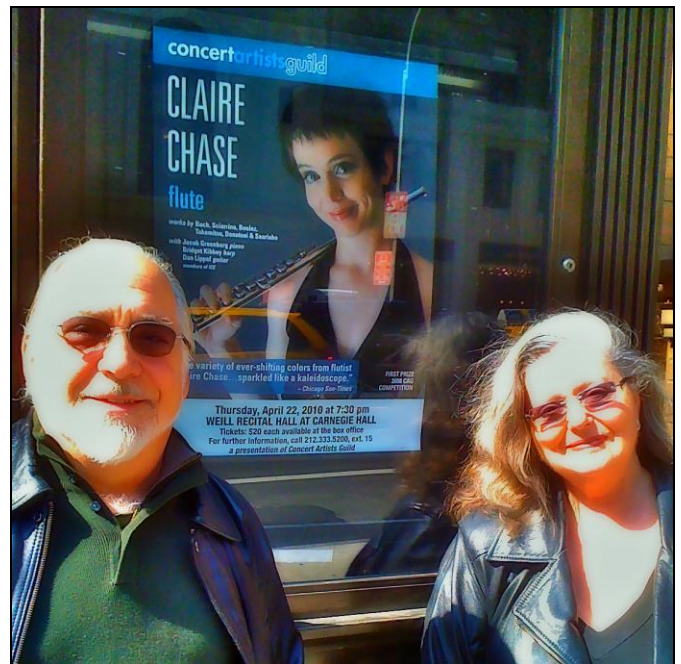
The review for Weill Hall can be found here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/arts/music/24claire.html?scp=1&sq=claire%20chase%20flute&st=cse>

The review for Le Poisson Rouge can be found here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/29/arts/music/29ice.html?scp=1&sq=ICE%20Poisson%20Rouge&st=cse>

And below is a photo of David and Ann in front of a poster advertising the Weill Hall concert. (Do you think they could be any more proud?)



Article watch

From Mary Ellen Walther:

The Wall Street Journal, April 27, 2010

"Out of Chopin's shadow"

By Stuart Isacoff

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703709804575202031754653948.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTSeco&ndBucket

An article about how Polish pianist Piotr Anderszewski is on a mission to change the perception of Szymanowski as being second to Chopin as the greatest Polish composer.



From Mea Daum:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCTbF7NYAzg&feature=PlayList&p=FEE4B895D02611D7&playnext_from=PL&index=12&playnext=11

An informational video about Britten's *War Requiem*.



From Walt Desmond:

The Los Angeles Times, April 29, 2010

"The Supreme Court could use an oboist—Judge Diane P. Wood plays the oboe. What better quality can there be in a potential nominee to the Supreme Court?"

By LA Times columnist (and oboist, herself), Meghan Daum.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/apr/29/opinion/la-oe-daum-20100429>



From Lyn Stimer (my mother):

The Los Angeles Times, April 18, 2010

"Beating the drum for Phoenix's musical instrument museum"

By Randy Lewis

<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/apr/18/entertainment/la-ca-musicmuseum18-2010apr18>

Make sure you scroll down for the full article. There's a lot of blank space in the middle.



If you find an interesting, music-related article or Web site, send the information about it to me at barbara@peisch.com. For Web sites, send me a link to the site. For articles, 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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