

Utterly ecstatic ... Music Director Steven Schick

Please forgive me for starting with a dictionary definition. But I was curious about the etymology of the word "ecstatic" and looked it up. It turns out it didn't originally mean "really, really happy" in the way we often use it. Ecstatic comes from the Greek word *ekstasis* and means, literally, unstable. So, why, you might ask, are we calling our concert "utterly ecstatic?" Are we in fact celebrating the joys to be found in instability, in becoming unmoored to reality?

Well, yes, I guess we are. OMG! And my yoga teacher tells me to be as grounded and stable as possible!

It could be that perfect balance is an overrated virtue, in music as in life. The composer Stuart Smith is fond of saying that a balanced system creates no heat. His phrase is a modern reformulation of William Blake's famous adage – the motto of every crazy artist I've ever known – that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom."

With this concert we'll sketch three essays in defiance of stasis and normalcy. Aaron Jay Kernis's *Musica Celestis* lives up to its name and seems to this listener to be utterly untethered to earthly reality. It floats more serenely, glows with more incandescence, and sings with greater joy than nearly any recent work for string orchestra that I know. And as the opening work for this concert it starts us thinking about the fickle chemistry of joy.

The heart of our celebration of ecstasy comes with two works composed for exactly the same instrumentation. Paul Hembree's *Ikarus-Azur* is this year's Nee commission. The fact that Paul eagerly accepted the challenge I posed to him of creating a work for the same scoring as Ravel's masterpiece *Daphnis et Chloe* speaks to the fearless inventiveness of this young composer. Offering a new take on a classic and revered piece is not for the faint of heart, and Hembree's piece succeeds beautifully. By treating the Icarus myth he underlines the relationship between ecstasy and risk. Icarus, as I'm sure you'll recall, tried to fly so high that he came too close to the sun and the wax with which he fashioned his wings melted. He plummeted into the sea. The story is usually told as a cautionary tale about the risks of hubris. Only through extreme arrogance, we are led to believe, would a human pretend to be a god. Flying that high was simply tempting fate. Judging by the number of sayings in many languages, from "cortar las alas" (clipping someone's wings in Spanish) or our taking someone "down a notch" to the colorfully Australian "cutting down tall poppies," it isn't really the gods but we humans who are suspicious of those who stand out. But Hembree's piece makes me think that Icarus's exceptionalism was not his weakness but his path to joy, indeed to ecstasy. How delicious must it have been to be so far from earth, so completely unbound by human convention, as was Icarus as he approached the sun.



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Ravel shows another side of the seductive dance of ecstasy and risk. The most abbreviated version of Ravel's story is that the path towards true love is full of obstacles. And, the greater the number of obstacles and the longer the path, the sweeter its reward will be. In Ravel's music, ecstasy is epitomized by motion. Ravel's is archetypically keyboard music. Even in this rich orchestral score there is the constant sweep from high to low, dark to bright, melodic to chordal, as though a pianist's hands were running across a keyboard. Performing Ravel requires an understanding that these sweeps across the orchestral "keyboard" are metaphors for the transitory joys of life. They represent impermanence and instability. Like the elusive play of light on water, the search for great passion trades in the ineffable. It is both ultimately desirable and ultimately ungraspable. So it's the allure of the quest that draws us in. Through *Daphnis* we understand that one doesn't risk everything because finding a great love is a sure bet for eternal happiness, one risks everything because at the very heights of love eternity has no meaning.

Returning to earth: there is a lot of talk in the orchestral world that the future of the orchestra as an institution requires that music be made as accessible as possible by rooting its repertoire in the common experiences of its listeners. There are lots of ways to make music approachable, and some of them seem worthy to me. But ultimately this project rings false. We need music not to confirm our flatfooted quotidian selves but to shake them up. We need music to illuminate the inaccessible, the improbable and the unstable. The ecstatic! We crave a little taste, just a peek at ecstasy. And through music we can get pretty close.

As we perform, imagine the sweet ecstasy of Icarus for yourself: you're flying higher and higher; the sun is ever warmer on your back and the melting wax smells like perfumed oil as it drips from your wilting wings. For the briefest moment, even as the sea below rushes towards you, there's no difference between falling and flying.

News from the Executive Director ... Diane Salisbury

Weekend Opener

The season-opener was a terrific success by all accounts – including the account of the many 3- and 4-year olds attending the Friday night free children's concert! The Friday night event saw approximately 600 attendees of all ages, many bedecked in wild and wondrous costumes (as was the orchestra), to hear Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Steven Schick held the rapt attention of young and old with audience participation suggestions and even a Q&A between one of the movements. The weekend's concert followed, with strong attendance and exemplary performances by our orchestra members and guest artists Claire Chase and ICE. Congratulations to all!

LJS&C Receives Award for Balboa Park Centennial

LJS&C is one of nine organizations awarded funding from the City of San Diego Commission for Arts & Culture to participate in the Balboa Park Centennial Celebration in 2015. The award was based on our submission of a proposal to perform a new work by composer John Luther Adams, *Sila: The Breath of the World*, scored for 40 to 80 musicians (chorus and orchestra). The work, currently under development, will be a site-determined piece, performed outdoors in Balboa Park, with audience members free to move around the performance space. Many of you may remember two other works by John Luther Adams that the orchestra performed on Steve Schick's inaugural season – *The Light That Fills the World* and *Dark Waves*.

Choral Outreach Grant

For the third year in a row, the LJS&C has received a grant from the Betty Scalice Foundation, administered by the North Coast Community Foundation, to present our choral education outreach program – SING – in local schools. The program, which will commence after the New Year, is administered with the assistance of chorus volunteer Mary Ellen Walther under the direction of Ken Bell.

Contributors:

Barbara Peisch, Ed.

Evon Carpenter, Asst Ed.

Walt Desmond

Bill Eadie

Tom Peisch

Diane Salisbury

Carolyn Sechrist

Steven Schick

Susan Taggart



Remember to YELP About It.

Review LJS&C concerts on Yelp and encourage family and friends, too. Don't have a Yelp account? Sign up at www.yelp.com.



Meet Carolyn Sechrist ... Assistant Editor Evon Carpenter

Carolyn, a Los Angeles, California native, is beginning her third season in the cello section of the orchestra. She is a talented musician and teacher and was introduced to the cello in fourth grade through the public school music program. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Southern California, studied with Gabor Rejto and Gregor Piatigorsky and served as principal cellist and soloist with the University Symphony. She spent two of her college summers at the Music Academy of the West carrying out the role of principal cellist with the Debut Orchestra. Chamber music continues to play a large part in Carolyn's life and during her time at USC she was cellist with a string quartet that won the Intermediate Division of the prestigious Coleman Chamber Music competition. She also was a member of the Carmel Bach Festival orchestra for two seasons. When she graduated she was engaged as principal cellist and soloist with the Peter Britt Festival in Jacksonville, Oregon.



She married her college sweetheart, Bill, and they moved to the Imperial Valley to farm. She says, "Imagine what my parents thought about that!" She actually began an illustrious teaching career there and became the instrumental and vocal instructor for the Calipatria School District. She later taught vocal music at the middle school level and implemented a string program in El Centro. At one time she taught at eleven schools, and when she retired, there were over two hundred students in the El Centro program. During this time Carolyn earned her Master's Degree in Educational Administration from the University of Redlands with her eye on doing some counseling but ended up deciding that teaching was more appealing to her than administration. She always encouraged her top performing students to participate in the San Diego Youth Symphony and several of her students held principal roles in the orchestra. Carolyn has been active in the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association over the years and was the recipient of the association's veteran teacher and gold award.

In time Carolyn and Bill sold the farm, Bill eventually became Vice President in charge of finance and operations at Imperial Valley College, and they had two wonderful sons, who now are engineers in the aerospace industry. She lives in Carlsbad where she enjoys teaching private cello students, being with two grandchildren, and doing volunteer work as the community assistance chair for the Assistance League North Coast. Sunday mornings find her singing with the San Dieguito United Methodist church choir.

About our orchestra Carolyn says, "I am most grateful to include my participation in the La Jolla Symphony in my weekly fare. Two of my ex-concertmasters and other former students have performed in this orchestra as students at the university. As a cellist, I look forward to the camaraderie, challenge and musical adventures that await each season."

We are so fortunate to have Carolyn as a member of our group. Thank you for so generously sharing your talent, Carolyn!



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Planned gift received from Kempton family

LJS&C received a \$15,000 gift last month from the Kempton Family Charitable Remainder Trust. The Trust, set up by Janet and Lawrence Kempton, parents of former chorus member David Kempton, named 18 organizations as recipients. Executive Director Diane Salisbury met David and his wife Gail at the November concert and learned that David had served as co-executor of the Trust until his parents' passing. He and Gail were glad to be a part of helping so many worthy organizations that were meaningful to his parents. They also noted that the Trust provided a good income to David's parents during their lifetime, enabling them to create a legacy without impacting their lifestyle. We are extremely grateful to the Kempton family for this bequest, and their gift will be recognized among donors to the Therese Hurst Society for Planned Giving. To learn more about making a planned gift to LJS&C, please contact Diane at dsalisbury@lajollasympphony.com or 858-822-3774.

Chorus member honored ... Assistant Editor Evon Carpenter

Congratulations to chorus member, Cinda Peck, who received the 2013 Profiles in Music Education Award from the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory. The award honors dedicated music educators and she was recognized at the 18th Celebration of Music Education on November 10 at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido. Cinda is a very dedicated music teacher for the Del Mar Union School District and an all-around class act. Way to go, Cinda! We are very proud that you are a member of the La Jolla Symphony Chorus.



Ten Facts about Music Education ... Assistant Editor Evon Carpenter

1. Children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music lessons.
2. Children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies, work better in teams, have enhanced critical thinking skills, stay in school, and pursue further education.
3. A study from Columbia University revealed that students who study arts are more cooperative with their teachers and peers, have higher levels of self-confidence, and are more equipped to express themselves and their ideas.
4. Studying music primes the brain to comprehend speech in a noisy background. Children with learning disabilities or dyslexia who tend to lose focus with more noise could benefit greatly from music lessons.
5. Research shows that music is to the brain what physical exercise is to the human body. Music tones the brain for auditory fitness and allows it to decipher between tone and pitch.
6. In the past, secondary students who participated in a music group at school reported the lowest lifetime and current use of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs.
7. Schools with music programs have an estimated 90.2 percent graduation rate and 93.9 percent attendance rate compared to schools without music education which average 72.9 percent graduation and 84.9 percent attendance.
8. Regardless of socioeconomic status or school district, students who participate in high-quality music programs score 22 percent better on English and 20 percent better on math standardized exams.

Need to contact the LJS&C?

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9. Elementary age children who are involved in music lessons show greater brain development and memory improvement within a year than children who receive no musical training.
10. Learning and mastering a musical instrument improves the way the brain breaks down and understands human language, making music students more apt to pick up a second language.

Sources: Natural News, VH1 Save The Music, Music Ed, NAMM



“Another Reason Why I Don’t Keep a Gun in the House”

The neighbors’ dog will not stop barking.
He is barking the same high, rhythmic bark
that he barks every time they leave the house.
They must switch him on on their way out.

The neighbors’ dog will not stop barking.
I close all the windows in the house
and put on a Beethoven symphony full blast
but I can still hear him muffled under the music,
barking, barking, barking,

and now I can see him sitting in the orchestra,
his head raised confidently as if Beethoven
had included a part for barking dog.

When the record finally ends he is still barking,
sitting there in the oboe section barking,
his eyes fixed on the conductor who is
entreating him with his baton

while the other musicians listen in respectful
silence to the famous barking dog solo,
that endless coda that first established
Beethoven as an innovative genius.

Billy Collins

Submitted by Assistant Editor Evon Carpenter

[Editor’s note: Billy Collins was the Poet Laureate of the USA in 2003 – 2004]



LJS&C Gala 2013: “Cool Night-Cool Jazz” photo album

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/La-Jolla-Symphony-and-Chorus/122280958909#!/media/set/?set=a.10151966894518910.1073741827.122280958909&type=1>



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Article Watch

From Tom Peisch:

U-T San Diego, November 13, 2013

"Tiny shop king of harp strings"

"Manufacturer, tucked away in Mount Laguna since 1967, has loyal customers from around the world"

By J. Harry Jones

<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/nov/13/tp-tiny-shop-king-of-harp-strings/all/?print>



From Susan Taggart:

60 minutes, November 17, 2013

"The Recyclers: From trash comes triumph"

"The residents of Cateura, Paraguay, don't just make a living from the massive garbage heap in their town. They also make music - crafting ingenious instruments from the trash. Bob Simon reports."

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=50159349n>



From Walt Desmond:

Gramophone, May 13, 2013

"What happens when audiences are encouraged to talk during concerts?"

By Rebecca Hutter

<http://www.gramophone.co.uk/blog/concerts-and-events/what-happens-when-audiences-are-encouraged-to-talk-during-concerts>



Have some news
to report?

Let the editor
know!

barbara@peisch.com

(Be sure to mention *Tutti* in
the subject so I know it's not
spam!)



Celebrating the 100th birthday of Benjamin Britten:

From Bill Eadie:

The New York Times, November 22, 2013

"Heart in Mouth, for a Taxing Rarity - New York Philharmonic Presents a Britten Program"

By Anthony Tommasini

One of the pieces on this program was Britten's Spring Symphony.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/23/arts/music/new-york-philharmonic-presents-a-britten-program.html?emc=eta1&r=0>



From Tom Peisch:

LA Times, November 24, 2013

"'War Requiem': Classical act of defiance in the name of peace"

By Richard S. Ginell

<http://www.online-services-news.us/war-requiem-classical-act-of-defiance-in-the-name-of-peace-entertainment-latimes-com/>



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