

Conductor's Note ... David Chase

The subject of art is the history of the human experience. The music of our upcoming program represents the first two-thirds of a century that we are now able to look back upon, a period that our generation is still growing to understand. Our music for this concert sees this period through the lens of the Jewish experience, to be sure, but it is nonetheless a universal picture when we look at its totality.



Bloch's *Sacred Service*, written before the Second World War, draws upon all the traditional sensibilities of its time. The form is rooted in rites of the synagogue, with a "Cantor" leading the chorus through a service of ancient texts. But the modal harmonies that surround this call-and-response are mostly indicative of a post-romantic music that could be heard throughout European culture at the beginning of the century. Only in Part V, when the chorus joins in the chant *Tzur Yisroel*, do the ancient scales of the texts' Middle Eastern origin prevail. But this is the very section in which Bloch introduces the most universal of elements: A "minister" praying, in English (*Sprechstimme*), "may all men ... be forever united..."

In retrospect, *Sacred Service* seems to embody a moment in time both modern and traditional, when one might see a world of continuity and progress.

This world is shattered by the horror that Schoenberg so concisely depicts in *A Survivor From Warsaw*. In six minutes' time the Narrator, with the support of the expressionistic orchestration, takes us directly into the heart of the unspeakable, and then somehow redeems our hope with the men's chorus singing defiantly Judaism's "credo," *She'mah Yisroel*. This is a miniature masterpiece, and it serves in our program to represent not only a wrenching fault-line in twentieth-century history but also the artistic reaction to it; *i.e.*, Schoenberg's modernism, channeled to serve our need to bear witness.

Finally, Leonard Bernstein gives us a perfect example of the cultural ebullience of the mid-1960s. *Chichester Psalms* integrates the Hebraic tradition and dissonant modernism with the openness and affirmation of this time and Bernstein's own comfort in crossing stylistic borders. Its infectious enthusiasm and shameless romanticism seem to represent that turbulent but hopeful time as profoundly as the first two works represent their eras.

What works might continue this chronological summary? I'm not sure, and I'm relieved to leave it at the hopeful juncture, two-thirds through the century. In my heart, however, I wonder what art will represent our present culture when performed at the end of the twenty-first century.

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Featured Soloist – Martin Wright ... From the SD Master Chorale's

Web Site

One of the soloists for our upcoming concert is Martin Wright. Martin will be singing the part of the "Cantor" in Bloch's *Sacred Service*. Most of us know Martin as the director of the San Diego Master Chorale, but Martin has an extensive musical background that many of us don't know about.



Martin Wright's musical career has taken him all over the world, performing in over 20 countries as vocalist, pianist, conductor, coach, chorus master, teacher and adjudicator. In taking over directorship of the San Diego Master Chorale in 2002, Wright returned to assume a leadership position in San Diego's choral music scene. As Chorus Master at San Diego Opera for thirteen years, from 1984 to 1997, Wright received critical praise for numerous productions. During that same time, he served one summer on the faculty of the Music Academy of the West, in Santa Barbara, and twice did chorus preparations for the Los Angeles Music Center Opera in productions of *Otello* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, both starring Placido Domingo. For five years, he was also Director of Music at La Jolla Presbyterian Church.

From 1993 to 2002, Wright was Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Choir in Amsterdam, collaborating with many of Europe's greatest orchestras, and such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Chailly, Simon Rattle, Edo de Waart, Kenneth Montgomery, Bernard Haitink, John Eliot Gardiner, Colin Davis, and Valery Gergiev. His work with that choir is documented in a number of CD recordings, and he returns to Europe frequently as guest conductor for a number of professional choirs and opera companies.

As Principal Guest Conductor for Lyric Opera San Diego, Martin has conducted highly praised productions of *Candide*, *The Barber of Seville*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, and *Die Fledermaus*, and in 2006 he will conduct *La Cenerentola* for that company.

In October 2001, Wright conducted a performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio *St. Paul* for PACEM, the Pacific Academy of Ecclesiastical Music, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in San Diego. Writing of that performance, *The Reader's* classical music critic Jonathan Saville cited Wright for his "authoritative direction" and "polished and powerful reading." Saville praised Wright as "a musician very much in the tradition of the late Robert Shaw: an expert in choral music, yet at the same time an all-round conductor of deep musical understanding. He conducted *St. Paul* with intense conviction, as though it were the greatest oratorio in the world."

Martin Wright has also been active as a conductor for Nevada Opera in Reno, Nevada, leading productions of *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen* and *Die Fledermaus*.

Winner of 10 district and regional vocal competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Wright has sung over 35 operatic roles, and has appeared in classical and pops concerts with many major symphonies, both in the United States and in Europe. Before taking the helm at the San Diego Master Chorale, he performed with them many times as baritone soloist, most recently in performances of the Mozart *Requiem* with the San Diego Chamber Orchestra.

Wright holds degrees in music from the University of Arizona and from Brigham Young University, where his choral mentors included Ralph Woodward, John Halliday and Clayne Robison. He maintains a very active vocal studio in San Diego, and frequently leads master classes for opera companies and training programs.

Contributors:

Barbara Peisch, Ed.

David Chase

Ted Bietz

Uli Burgin

Helene Sahlsten

Beda Farrell

Our Multi-National Association (Part 3)

Uli Burgin - Orchestra Cello



My husband and I came to La Jolla in 1962, so when I tell you about my musical experiences in Switzerland, we are talking about the Fifties. Basel, at that time a city of less than 300,000 inhabitants, had - and it still has - an immensely rich musical life: the Basel Symphony, Paul Sacher's Kammerorchester, two subscription series with guest soloists and ensembles, a theater and opera house, two large choruses, many local chamber music groups, and a conservatory, which put on frequent recitals. As transplants to California we liked the ocean and the weather, but culturally we felt we had landed in almost a desert. As Tom Nee once put it, coming from Minneapolis: "Everybody has a good suntan, but the music is not very good." Of course, things have changed!

What I did find here, through a colleague of my husband from work, was a group of very good amateur musicians, who invited me to play chamber music with them. I was impressed with how well they were sight reading, something that had not been emphasized in my training. During my first summer I even briefly played with Peter Nicoloff's group at his home in La Jolla. However, with my new life here and a new baby I got too busy and stopped playing the cello altogether for several years.

In 1968 I took a chamber music class at UCSD extension from Tom Nee, and then joined the newly formed "La Jolla Civic/University Orchestra" for the spring concert of their first season. Bach, Beethoven and Stravinsky were on the program. A new world opened up for me. In Switzerland I had played only in trios, quartets and small chamber orchestras; now, excited to be in a big orchestra, I went around to the different players, asking them about their instruments, the harp, timpani, trombone, and I got recordings and scores of the pieces we rehearsed, whenever I could find them.

I've tried to imagine an orchestra like ours in Switzerland. It would not work! We have players coming from as far away as Bonita, Jamul, Lakeside, Vista, Escondido, even Temecula and Trabuco Canyon. Transfer these distances on a Swiss map, and you cover the major part of the German-speaking industrialized lowlands of Switzerland. Not only do many Swiss people not like to travel so far, we are also known to be a people who love their local "Verein" (club): every town is proud of its own distinct identity and dialect, and wants to have its own performing group, even though it may only be a men's chorus or a wind ensemble. Last summer, at a youth festival in Aarau, where my son lives, I was amazed to see that just about every one of the surrounding villages had sent their own marching band, complete with uniforms and banners. My sister, a very good violist, now plays in a typical community orchestra, probably about what "La Jolla Civic" was when they merged with UCSD, giving two or three concerts a year.

When I grew up, my parents listened almost exclusively to Mozart and Haydn. In my junior high orchestra we got to play "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik", but my seemingly unattainable dream was to play in a late Mozart symphony, with all those fabulous wind sounds. As a teen I discovered Dvorak, Brahms, Debussy, Stravinsky, and never dreamed that some day I would be playing works by all these composers, and more, in a "real" symphony orchestra. Let's all appreciate the unique opportunity we have here!

Tutti is online!

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

lajollasympphony.com/download/tutti

Helene Sahlsten -Chorus Soprano

My name is Helene Sahlsten and I sing first soprano in LJSC. I'm originally from Sweden but I have been living in San Diego for over four years now. Sweden, not to be confused with Switzerland, is a beautiful country in northern Europe. It's about the same size as California and has nine million inhabitants.



Did you know that Sweden is the country that has most choir singers per capita in the world! Next to soccer, choir is the most popular leisure activity. The world famous choir director Eric Ericsson is Swedish and I actually met him once some years ago in a TV studio at 6 am. Guess I was nervous. It's hard to be a soprano that early in the morning©.... My chorus was in the finals for the Swedish national choir competition and the morning show had invited us to sing. Eric Ericsson was being interviewed since he's the jury president. Our performance went well, though we did end second place later in the final.

Sweden has a great choral tradition and the Swedes sing a lot, especially drinking songs i.e. "Snapsvisor", which are deeply rooted in Swedish culture. It's a tradition to sing at special dinner parties such as Midsummer, Christmas and the Crayfish celebration. However, Swedes tends to forget the words, so guests at parties will often find a song sheet by their plate. The songs are sung before toasting with snaps i.e. Vodka. You sing first, and then you drink! That's the tradition. There is even an annual national lyrics competition for snaps songs.

There are many beautiful choral pieces written by Swedes. My favorite Swedish composer is Knut Nystedt. To sing great choral music is one of my passions, and I enjoy singing in LJSC. Even though I miss Sweden I love San Diego and I want to stay here for many more years. Maybe we will have opportunity to sing some Scandinavian music in LJSC later on sometime? I think that would be fun.

My professor in Strategic Management always compared a company with a choir and the CEO as being the director when picturing a business structure. I think that is a good comparison. When all parts are put together something bigger is created that people alone would never manage to do. Right now I'm in a transition period in my life. I recently graduated with an MBA and I'm currently looking for a job. It takes time to find a good job but hopefully I will find something soon that will enable me to stay here in San Diego. I look forward to the upcoming concerts this year.

Need to contact the LJS&CA?

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(858) 534-4637

www.lajollasympphony.com

Sylvia Grace,
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The La Jolla Symphony & Chorus has established a memorial fund to honor Paula and Roosevelt. Donations will fund a prize for the Young Artists Competition. Donations are very much appreciated and may be sent to:

La Jolla Symphony & Chorus
UCSD 0361
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, CA 92093-0361

The LJS&CA extends its sympathies to the family of David and Thelma Parris on the passing of their daughter, Paula Parris, and son-in-law, Roosevelt Arevalo.

Previously Featured Members

You may have been wondering how you can recognize some of the members previously featured in "Our Multi-National Association." Well, here are some pictures to help you out.



Erdis Maxhelakli (left) and Eliane Garo (right) were featured in the October 27, 2004 issue.



Lerina Barczys (left) and Michael Schaffer (right) were featured in the November 29, 2004 issue.



More Pictures Online!

Perry Mack has posted more pictures of her twins, Jimmy and Katie, plus the entire family at

http://bluewiz.dynip.com/gallery/view_album.php?set_albumName=fallpics

ICE Takes the Cake!

Congratulations to the *International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)* for winning First Place in the *Chamber Music America/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming for the 2003-04 season*. David and Ann Chase's daughter Claire is the Executive Director of *ICE* and is a performing flutist in the ensemble. Based in Chicago and New York City, *The International Contemporary Ensemble* is a chamber group comprised of dynamic, versatile young performers and composers. Through innovative programming, commissions by young composers, multimedia collaborations, and performances in non-traditional venues, *ICE* redefines classical music as it brings together new work and new listeners.



Photo of Claire Chase by Michael Chipman

Celebrating the Lunar New Year ... Beda Farrell

Year of the Rooster - 2005

For our friends celebrating Chinese Lunar New Year on Feb. 9, we wish you "Gung Hey Fat Choy"

For our friends celebrating Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, we wish you "Chuc Mung Nam Moi"

For our friends celebrating Seol, the Korean New Year we wish you "say hay boke-mahn he pah du say oh"

For our friends celebrating Losar, the Bhutanese New Year of the Wood Rooster, we wish you "Tashi delek"



MUSIC AT FOUNDERS HALL

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Concert Series*

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7:30 PM, Friday, January 28, 2005

Music for flute, voice and piano featuring

Claire Chase, *flute*,
Amy Dissanayake, *piano*
Ann Chase, *soprano*

UUF San Dieguito
1036 Solana Drive, Solana Beach

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Turn right, and follow Marine View to Solana Drive. Church is on the
left, immediately after the Montessori school.

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