

Reflections on a new year ... Music Director Steven Schick

The dilemma of this New Year, of every New Year, is staring me directly in the face. How will I fill the space in front of me? There is the dread of the blank page, of course, but also the problem of the year ahead.

But at least when it comes to 2016, options abound! Saturation seems to be my default personal strategy, but perhaps this year the temporal texture will have a looser weave. Maybe there will be surprises, reprises, or reprieves. Maybe the rhythm of the universe will be stimulated by an extra day in February.

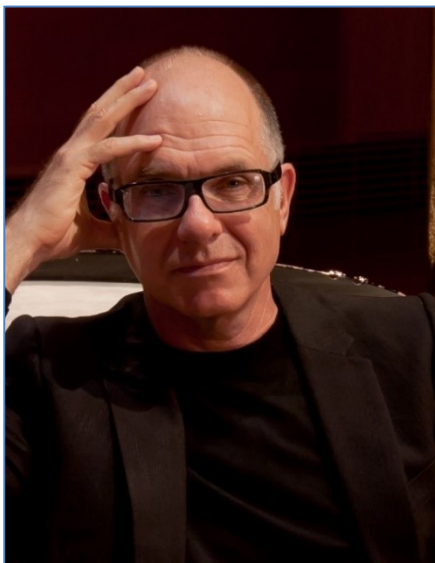
Who knows?

In spite of the enormity of the possibilities, I find myself making the same New Year's wish every year: a deeper connection between my non-musical life – what I think of as my *real* life – and the musical life I enact on concert stages. My real life has increasingly become tuned to the richness of the natural world – both to its bounty and to the trauma we are wreaking upon it. So, my wish this year is to find a way better to understand the big beautiful outside world through music.

In an act of optimism, I have called this season "Soundscape San Diego." I hoped it would pave the way for reflection, in the context of orchestral concerts, about the prospects for alliance between the sounds of the outside world and those inside a concert hall.

We'll anchor this concert with Debussy's glorious *La Mer*, an appropriate way to celebrate the natural world in a place like San Diego. This music takes its inspiration from the sea, and with a painterly approach to sonic color seeks to imitate it. Through Debussy's inventive orchestration you'll hear ocean waves and the grandeur of the sea; you'll imagine the glint of light off water, and even the distant sounds of wind and birds. It's gorgeous music, though it often feels as though Debussy is standing back from the ocean, viewing it with the eye of a landscape painter. Close enough for inspiration, but far enough away to stay dry.

But what he does capture – and magnificently – is the sense of both suddenness and simultaneity in a seascape. Many people don't know how rapidly the sea can shift moods or how many contradictory dispositions it can present at the same time. (I have sometimes tried to indicate this to tourists scampering across wet rocks at the La Jolla Cove.) But, clearly, Debussy did know this, judging by the quickly shifting tensions within the piece and the plethora of truly surprising moments it contains. Of course, you'll find long arcing sections of building intensity, as you would expect in



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Debussy's music, but there's also the unexpected change of color, the sudden punch of an accent, the mysterious calm, that those of us who live near the water's edge will certainly recognize.

The partner of *La Mer* on this concert is the world premiere performance of Erik Griswold's *Jeux à la fin du monde*, a work inspired by Debussy (as though Debussy had lived in the southern hemisphere.) Griswold has been living in Brisbane since he graduated from UC San Diego with a composition degree in the 1990s and is attuned to special antipodal qualities of light and sound. At the time of this writing – in preliminary rehearsals for the piece – the shifting moods, colors, and harmonies strike this ear as an exploded version of Debussy. What might have been a carefully massaged series of fluctuations in older music is presented in Griswold's new work as sharply contrasted and often precipitous shifts of musical intention. I am not sure if change is more shocking in the southern hemisphere, but its manifestation as musical texture and harmony in *Jeux à la fin du monde* seems to be.

The works of Griswold and Debussy, two composers indebted to the landscapes in which they live, are balanced by another pair of pieces, which are, at their root, imaginations of landscapes that their composers could not have known. György Ligeti's rightfully famous *Atmosphères* is the exploration, through the lens of a very large orchestra, of an exotic harmonic landscape. When it was premiered it must have seemed like an extra-terrestrial experience to listeners, an impression only furthered by its inclusion in Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey." In an eerie similarity, the Mars Voyager mission transmitted recordings of charged particles (translated as sound by earthling engineers), which sound remarkably similar to Ligeti's music.

Philip Glass probably never blazed a western trail, so his *Piano Concerto #2 (After Lewis and Clark)* is also a work of imagination of, rather than inspiration by, the natural world. In a commission by the University of Nebraska for their celebration of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial, Glass employs the sounds of a native flute, plentiful percussion, and some beautiful and spacious moments for the piano, all of which are plausible musical reflections of Lewis and Clark's experiences. But the overriding quality of this music is pure Glass: repetitive rhythms and textures that are enlivened by harmonically charged points of arrival.

Does this music help me fulfill my New Year's resolution better to understand our natural world at a time when so much seems dry and out of kilter? Does it give us leverage on the thorniest problem of our day: the tension between a full human experience of planet earth and protecting it as a sustainable home for human beings far into the future? I am not sure. But as Pierre Boulez, the great conductor and composer we lost on January 5, once said, "Music should be collective magic."

Maybe it *can* help.

Or maybe it will be as another musical giant of our time has said: "Planet earth is blue and there's nothing I can do."

Let's listen and imagine the answers together.



Contributors:

Barbara Peisch, Ed.

Evon Carpenter, Asst. Ed.

David Chase

Walt Desmond

Tom Peisch

Diane Salisbury

Steven Schick

Mary Ellen Walther

Amee Wood



Note from the Executive Director ... Diane Salisbury

STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION: It's a New Year, and also the mid-point of our current season and fiscal year (July 1-June 30). I'd like to use my "Note" to give a state of the association update. The first half of the season has seen some wonderful artistic successes, beginning with our kick-off event, *Sila: The Breath of the World* in Balboa Park, and having John Luther Adams in residence with us twice this fall for performances of his works. We received excellent press coverage on fall events and concerts, and our performance of *Sila* was selected as one of the Best Classical Events of the Year by the SD Union-Tribune's Jim Chute. On the financial side, we've had more challenges, mostly due to the October 17 Gala having lower than usual attendance, which contributed to the Gala falling short by more than \$20,000. We've made up for much of that income shortfall, however, with a strong Annual Fund drive. We also came within 4% of meeting our subscription goal for the season, ending up with 633 subscribers.

The Endowment campaign, *Sostenuto*, had a strong year-end surge. We received several new gifts as well as substantial increases to existing gifts since November. These donations have put our Endowment over the \$918,000 mark, on our way to reaching our final goal of \$1.5 million by June 2017. Thank you to all who have made a significant commitment to this critical effort, and who help LJS&C in being a success in many ways.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Fun events to put on your calendar:

- **February 28** – Young Artists Winners Recital, 2:00 pm
- **April 9 & 17** – "Sacred Voices" concerts
- **May 14** – Annual Wine Tasting (Que Syrah, Shiraz!), 2:00 pm
- **October 1** – 2016 Gala, The Westgate Hotel, 6:00 pm



Meet Celeste Oram ... Evon Carpenter

One of the great things about our ensembles is the opportunity for volunteer community musicians and student musicians to come together and share the experience of preparing and performing unique and meaningful repertoire. Celeste Oram is one of the student members in the chorus. She has been in the chorus since September, 2014 when she began in the graduate program at UCSD. She is from Auckland, New Zealand, where she has been living since age seven. Celeste sings First Soprano and is the production assistant for the orchestra. The following answers to my interview questions give a good sense of what talent and diversity our students like Celeste contribute to the group.

Q: Where did you attend college and what degrees do you hold? Do you work a job?



A: I'm in the graduate music program at UCSD, pursuing a Ph.D. in music composition. I did my undergraduate work at the University of Auckland, in New Zealand, where I studied composition as well as flute performance (don't play so much anymore), theater and German. I started composing in high school, and really liked it. People told me I was good at it, so I opted to study composition at university, although without any intention of being a composer; I didn't really know what being a composer meant anyway. Once I got to university and began to discover just how

vibrant, rich and infinitely imaginative the landscape of contemporary music is, I very quickly realized I had to be a part of that world. As for my "job" as a grad student, besides composing, I am also TA for the department, which I love;

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www.lajollasympphony.com

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this year I'm teaching the history of Western music to a super bright crop of undergrad music majors.

Q: How long have you been involved in music and what caused you to become involved in music?

A: My pathway is a pretty standard one, I think. I remember my mum teaching me to plunk out tunes on the piano when I was about four or five years old. I started learning recorder when I was about seven and quickly graduated to flute. I was fortunate to have an amazing music program in my high school. As well as studying music for A levels, I sang in choirs and played in orchestras, concert bands, jazz bands, rock bands, even hand bell choirs, in addition to doing musical theater and other musical productions. So, having been steeped in so much music through so many formative years, I couldn't imagine abandoning that upon leaving high school, and so kept studying music at university. My composition teachers at the University of Auckland, Eve de Castro-Robinson and John Elmsly, were very influential, and I'm happy to say I still keep in touch with them.

Q: Why did you choose to audition for the chorus?

A: As soon as I moved to San Diego I knew I had to find a choir to be a part of. I've been in choirs since I was ten and couldn't imagine not having a choir in my life!

Q: What do you like about being a part of La Jolla Symphony and Chorus?

A: It's not often that one gets to sing the kind of repertoire that the chorus tackles. For example, it was a huge adventure to premiere Nathan Davis' new work with red fish blue fish last year. I've also never been in a dedicated symphonic chorus before, and I'm finding it's quite a different discipline and undertaking from singing in the chamber choirs I'm used to.

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: My folks are back home in New Zealand, although I do have family here in the States on my mum's side. My grandad lives in Little Rock, Arkansas, so I go there to visit him quite often. My mum's side of the family is very musical: my grandparents met singing in the church choir; my uncle was a composer; and my mum performed professionally in musical theater for decades. Recently, amongst the piles of stuff at my grandad's house, we rediscovered my great-grandfather's old ukulele songbooks!

Q: What hobbies to you enjoy?

A: I enjoy camping, hiking, cycling, ballet, and going to the theater and art galleries.

Q: What other information about you would you like ensemble members to know?

A: I would love to visit every state park in California before I leave San Diego. That might actually be just a little too ambitious, but I'd like to cross as many off the list as I can. Maybe I'll start with every state park in San Diego County.

Emeritus Mentor Program for our student musicians

Juggling academic demands with La Jolla Symphony & Chorus rehearsals and performances can be a challenge for student musicians. With the help of LJS&C Board member Mark Appelbaum, we are tapping into UCSD Emeritus Mentors – retired faculty who are willing to share their insight, and advise students on managing academics and co-curricular activities for mutual benefit. We hope to get this program in the works during the March concert cycle for interested students. More information to come.

Need to contact the LJS&C?

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www.lajollasympphony.com

Diane Salisbury,
Executive Director



Two "Sacred Voices" concerts

The Chorus will be giving two "Sacred Voices" concerts this year:

David Chase, conducting
Jared Jacobsen, organist

Sat. April 9, 2016	7:00 PM	St Paul's Cathedral, San Diego
Sun, April 17, 2016	4:00 PM	Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe

Program

Walton	<i>Coronation Te Deum</i> (with organ)
Di Lasso	<i>Prophetiae Sibyllarum</i>
Davis	<i>Bell of Silence</i> (Chamber chorus and handbells)
A. Parker	<i>An American Kedushah</i> (Rebecca Ramirez and Myles Mayfield, soloists)
R. Vaughan Williams	<i>A Vision of Aeroplanes</i> (with organ)

Did you know ... *Tutti*'s 20!

This newsletter, *Tutti*, will be 20 years old at the end of this season? *Tutti* was started by Soprano Sharon Jones (who is no longer with us), and the first issue appeared in September, 1996. It wasn't originally called *Tutti*. The name was selected from suggestions submitted by the Ensemble, and appeared on the second issue.



All the old issues are available online from the LJS&C website at www.lajollasympphony.com. Click on the link at the far right of the main page. (See the graphic, above.) When you get to the archive page, scroll all the way to the bottom for a link to Sharon's original issues.

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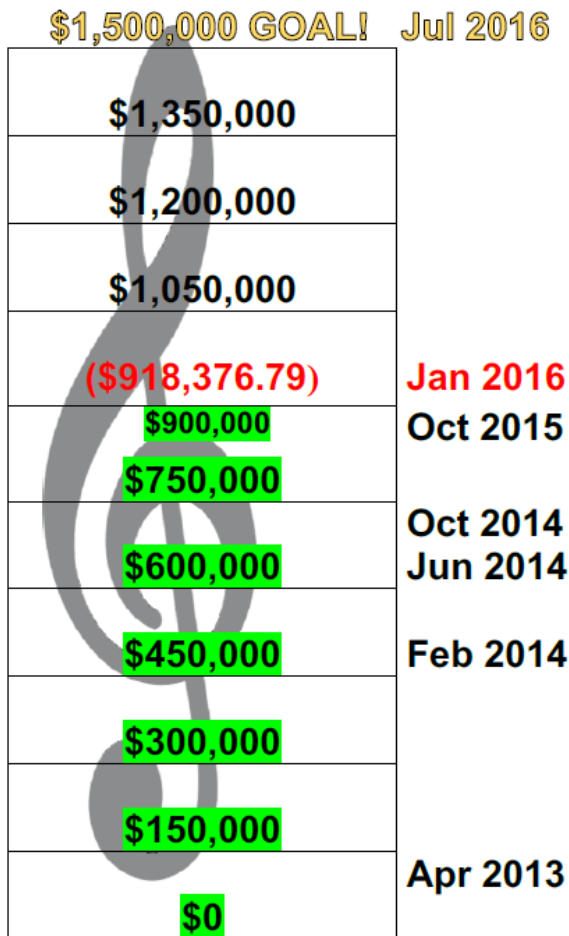
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EX-OFFICIO

David Chase
Diane Salisbury
Steven Schick



Sostenuto campaign making progress ... chart from Walt Desmond
Sostenuto, the LJS&C Endowment campaign is coming along nicely. See the chart below.



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!)

Article Watch

From Amee Wood:
Youtube.com, October 17, 2015
 'Bach out of the Box - "Quietly Performing Miracles"'

By Curt Fouts

Through excerpts from Bach's B Minor Mass, Joe Erwin, pianist, conductor and composer (and Amee's High School music teacher), brings together community musicians and a panel of listeners unfamiliar with classical music to illuminate Bach's universality and humanity. The music is beautifully moving and the listeners' reactions are fascinating. We sang one of Joe's compositions several years ago.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFN0I3vqf_g&feature=youtu.be



From Diane Salisbury:

San Diego Union-Tribune, December 6, 2015

"La Jolla Symphony & Chorus living in the present"

By James Chute

A review of our last concert:

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/dec/06/la-jolla-symphony-adams-review/>



From Mary Ellen Walther:

Youtube.com, October 28, 2014

"A flash mob of child prodigies"

A flash mob of children perform "Les Toreadors" from Bizet's *Carmen*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=eee4-d7FUis



From Tom Peisch:

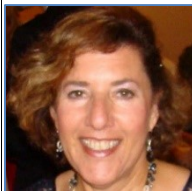
Los Angeles Times, January 13, 2016

"Mark Swed hits the road for a weekend of SoCal orchestra listening"

By Mark Swed

This article talks about the abundance of orchestras that can be found in Southern California. Although the article mentions La Jolla, unfortunately, it doesn't mention LJS&C.

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-so-cal-orchestras-notebook-20160113-column.html>



If you find an interesting, music-related article or web site, send the information about it to Barbara at barbara@peisch.com or Evon at evon.carpenter@gmail.com. For web sites, send us a link to the site and include "Tutti" in the subject. 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 we can find it online. Or you can bring it to rehearsal and hand it to one of us or snail mail it to Barbara at:

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