

# La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

2017-2018 Season



November 4-5, 2017  
*Mandeville Auditorium*

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Molli & Arthur Wagner  
Music Director

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**Steven Schick**  
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## *Crossing the rue St. Paul*

Saturday, November 4, 2017, 7:30pm  
Sunday, November 5, 2017, 2:00pm  
Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

**Steven Schick conducting**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>GEORGE GERSHWIN</b>    | An American in Paris  |
| <b>DUKE ELLINGTON</b>     | Mood Indigo (arr. A.T. Chodos)<br><i>Cecil Lytle, piano</i>   |
| <b>ASHER TOBIN CHODOS</b> | Concertino for Two Pianos and Orchestra <i>PREMIERE</i><br><i>Cecil Lytle and Asher Tobin Chodos, piano</i> |
| <b>INTERMISSION</b>       |   |
| <b>AARON COPLAND</b>      | Quiet City<br><i>Stephanie Richards, trumpet</i><br><i>Carol Rothrock, oboe</i>                             |
| <b>DUKE ELLINGTON</b>     | Solitude (arr. A.T. Chodos)<br><i>Cecil Lytle, piano</i>  |
| <b>GEORGE GERSHWIN</b>    | Rhapsody in Blue<br><i>Cecil Lytle, piano</i>   |

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No texting or cell phone use of any kind allowed.*

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# From the Conductor

The next time you find yourself cueing up "The Blues Brothers" to pass a sleepless night, pay special attention to the scene in which John Belushi's character moves in with Dan Akyord on a noisy El line in Chicago. After the first train roars by, Belushi asks, "How often does that happen?" Akroyd's answer is: "So often you won't even notice."

That's what happens when something is always there. We often fail to notice the omnipresent. But the power of the unnoticed norm is extraordinary. In fact you could say that an historical moment is less identified by what is contended (those nodes of debate and strife that attract our attention) and more by what it takes for granted (the unnoticeably normal part of the texture of our lives.) The crash of an airliner makes big news today, but future historians won't talk about that nearly as much as they'll talk about our increasing mobility—with all of its enormous, economic, social and cultural ramifications—thanks to normal, boring air travel.

Music works the same way. The established composers on this program are so established—so often heard and referenced—that we barely notice them. How many times have we heard music in the style of Aaron Copland used to sell a pick-up truck, hype a football game, or elect a political candidate? Ironically Copland's music keeps showing up in the campaigns of far right politicians, recently in Texas governor Rick Perry's anti-gay ad in 2011—ironic, given that Copland was a New York-based, communist-leaning, gay, Jewish, intellectual activist. Oh well. The fine print gets you every time!

And speaking of air travel, I am approaching 2,000,000 miles with United Airlines, which means I must have heard their theme, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, thousands of times. So often I don't even notice it.

But our goal in this concert is to ask you to notice again these staples of American cultural life: to hear Copland with fresh ears, and to allow his subtle but poignant shifts of harmony and texture to register as the sharp, well-crafted musical gestures they are. And we'll listen into Gershwin's standards, *American in Paris* and *Rhapsody in Blue*, not as sure-fire crowd pleasers, but as concise and beautifully framed musical essays that combine genres across a racial divide that was practically unbridgeable at the time. Let's not fail to notice.

Part of our strategy here is to pair these well-used master works with new music. We asked Asher Tobin Chodos to compose a work for two improvising pianists and orchestra—which he will perform today with the great Cecil Lytle. In addition he has made two arrangements of the music of Duke Ellington, actually arrangements of Thelonious Monk's arrangements of Ellington. This act of translation—of removing music from its original context and repurposing it for our contemporary ears—is what gives us freshness. We sense the tension between how this music may have sounded at a first listening and how it sounds to us now. *Solitude*, once a comment on a romantic situation, could develop new resonance to those of us who live in the overcrowded corridors of coastal California. The social implications of *Mood Indigo*, a dreamy blues tune featured in dozens of movies and

Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Milwaukee Symphony, Ensemble Modern, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble.

Schick's publications include a book, "The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams," and many articles. He has released numerous recordings including the 2010 "Percussion Works of Iannis Xenakis," and its companion, "The Complete Early Percussion Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen" in 2014 (both on Mode). He received the "Diapason d'Or" as conductor (Xenakis Ensemble Music with ICE) and the Deutscheschallplattenkritikpreis, as percussionist (Stockhausen), each for the best new music release of 2015.

Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music and holds the Reed Family Presidential Chair at the University of California, San Diego. He was music director of the 2015 Ojai Festival, and in 2017 became co-artistic director, with Claire Chase, of the Summer Music Program at the Banff Centre.

## Steven Schick Conductor & Music Director

Percussionist, conductor, and author Steven Schick was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. Hailed by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* as, "one of our supreme living virtuosos, not just of percussion but of any instrument," he has championed contemporary percussion music by commissioning or premiering more than 150 new works. The most important of these have become core repertory for solo percussion. Schick was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame in 2014.

Steven Schick is artistic director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus. As a conductor, he has appeared with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Saint



Photo: Bill Dean

television shows, from The Cotton Club to The Sopranos, might tap deep reaches of our psyches in an age marked by African-American protests against violence.

By placing these works together in late 2017, we do not instruct you how to listen to them, but instead invite you to hear them as you wish. Each person's individual and personal relationship with the act of listening is one of the least alienable of all our rights. We hope only that you do listen. However often you may have heard the clarinet *glissando* at the opening of *Rhapsody in Blue*, however familiar the taxi horns in *American in Paris* may be, we ask you not to take them for granted.

We might be forgiven for taking things—music, ideas and even people—for granted. It's easy to do. But we do so to our own detriment, because there is no guarantee of permanency, even with what is most familiar.

I'm thinking now of a good friend of all of ours, Ryoko Goguen, who attended practically every Music Department recital there was and who was at every La Jolla Symphony and Chorus performance. She was even present for most of the rehearsals, greeting me afterwards with a smile and a predictable, "Sounding good, Steve-san!" Ryoko was always stylishly dressed. Always covering her quick laugh with a gloved hand. Always open, sunny and kind. She was simply always there. Ryoko did that rarest and most valuable of things: she showed up.

I suppose that I did take her for granted a little bit. I took for granted seeing her more or less every day and in every concert. I took for granted her words of encouragement about our orchestra and our little conversations in support of my infantile Japanese. So when I got the e-mail at the end of August that she had died suddenly after a private illness, it was like a punch in the gut. How could she simply not be there anymore? How could we do without her constancy, her pervasive optimism?

I'm not yet sure how we will do without Ryoko. But I can say that we're not ready to give her up just yet. We dedicate this performance to Ryoko Amadee Goguen. And as we play, we'll imagine her there with us one more time, out in the audience, looking up from under a big hat, and smiling. Always smiling. ■

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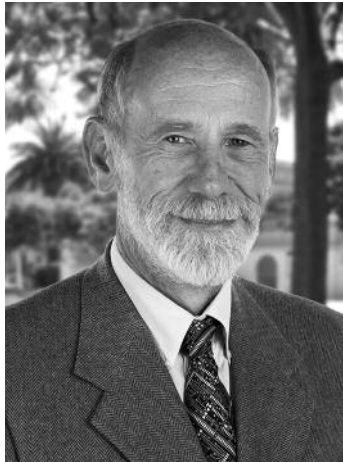
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f i DUALY NOTED

## Meet Our Musicians by Pat Finn

*La Jolla Symphony & Chorus provides the opportunity for volunteer community musicians and student musicians to come together and share in preparing and performing unique and meaningful repertoire. Bassoonist Tom Schubert is an example of the talent and diversity of our membership.*



**Tom Schubert** takes his music very seriously.

As a child growing up in Arcadia, Tom attended public schools, where he was introduced to the plastic recorder called a Tonette. Most elementary schools offered this unbreakable, simple instrument to music beginners. To his delight (and his parents' surprise)

Tom turned out to be good at it. He eagerly moved on to the clarinet and added the tenor sax in junior high. He soon discovered he liked orchestra better than band and large instruments better than smaller ones. The bassoon was the right fit, and within a year he was principal bassoon in the All Southern California High School Honor Orchestra.

At one time Tom hoped to be able to make a living playing his bassoon professionally, but, he notes, "Careers in the arts were unacceptable in my family, and I was turned toward the technical world. Fortunately, I went to small (at the time) schools and was basically the only competent bassoonist around."

The school was UC Irvine (not so small today). Tom became Irvine's first student to become a triple-degree engineering

conferee (BS, MS, PhD). With that resume he naturally landed in aerospace. His employment at Hughes Aircraft allowed him to purchase the instrument he plays today, a Heckel bassoon.

When his marriage dissolved, he packed up the Heckel and moved to Oregon to see if he could make a go of his first love, music. He got a job with what he calls "a minor professional orchestra" and did a bit of free-lancing. But finally it wasn't enough to pay the bills, so it was back to the technical world. Tom became associate professor of engineering at the University of San Diego in 1987, the university's second engineering faculty member.

His success at USD has been remarkable. He served as director of engineering programs for six years, wrote several textbooks, won the 2012 Robert G. Quinn award of the American Society of Engineering Education, was named faculty mentor of the year, and this year was honored by USD with the Engineering Spotlight Award for his 30 years of service.

When Tom moved to San Diego, he joined the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus in 1990 as a bassoonist. But he never gave up on the clarinet or saxophone. He says, "My return to saxophone and bass clarinet (has) been fueled by a joy for playing in the orchestra pit (ballet, opera, and musicals)."

And by the way, he plays contrabassoon as well.

## Program Notes by Eric Bromberger

**An American in Paris**  
**GEORGE GERSHWIN**  
**Born September 28, 1898, Brooklyn**  
**Died July 11, 1937, Beverly Hills**



The acclaim that greeted *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and the *Concerto in F* (1925) made Gershwin more anxious to be taken seriously as the composer of "concert" music, and he resolved to write a work for

orchestra alone, without the starring role for piano that had helped make the earlier two works so popular. The composition of this music took place in the spring of 1928, when Gershwin, his sister Frances, his brother Ira, and Ira's wife Leonore took an extended family vacation to Paris. Happily ensconced in the Hotel Majestic, Gershwin composed what he called a "Tone Poem for Orchestra"—a musical portrait of an American visitor to the City of Light—between March and June 1928, and it was first performed by Walter Damrosch and the New York Philharmonic on December 13 of that year.

This is *fun* music, and from the moment of that premiere it has always been one of Gershwin's most popular scores, winning audiences over with its great tunes, breezy charm, and Gershwin's obvious affection for Paris. Musically, *An American in Paris* is a series of impressions strung together with great skill. Gershwin— anxious to insist on his abilities as a classical composer—tried to argue that the piece was in sonata-form, and he pointed to such general areas as exposition, development, and recapitulation. But such arguments protest too much. It is far better to take *An American in Paris* as a set of polished episodes—a collection of sunny postcards from Paris—than to search too rigorously for resemblances to classical forms.

For the New York premiere, Gershwin and Deems Taylor prepared elaborate

program notes, explaining what was "happening" at each moment in the music. These were probably written with tongue slightly in cheek (in fact, Gershwin had made sketches for this piece several years before going to Paris), and they should not be taken too seriously. But it is worth noting that Gershwin structured the music around the idea of an American walking through the streets of Paris, and he included three of what he called "walking themes." That program note describes the very beginning: "You are to imagine, then, an American visiting Paris, swinging down the Champs-Élysées on a mild, sunny morning in May or June. Being what he is, he starts without preliminaries and is off at full speed at once to the tune of The First Walking Theme, a straightforward diatonic air designed to convey an impression of Gallic freedom and gaiety."

Along his way come piquant moments: a snatch of a Parisian popular song in the trombones and the strident squawk of Paris taxi horns—Gershwin had four of these imported for the premiere in New York. One moment—Gershwin called it "an unhallowed episode"—is rarely mentioned: the American is approached by a streetwalker, who bats her eyes at him seductively in a violin solo marked *espressivo*. Our hero wavers briefly, then makes his escape on one of the walking tunes. At about the mid-point comes the famous "blues" section, introduced by solo trumpet: the American is feeling homesick, and his nostalgia takes the form of this distinctively American music. Matters are rescued by the sudden intrusion of a pair of trumpets that come sailing in with a snappy Charleston tune. The cheerful final section reprises the various "walking" themes, and *An American in Paris* dances to its close on a great rush of happy energy. ■

We wish to thank  
the San Diego Symphony  
for its loan of the taxi horns  
used in this weekend's performances  
of *An American in Paris*.

## La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

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### Mission Statement

Rooted in San Diego for over 60 years, the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus enriches our lives through affordable concerts of ground-breaking, traditional and contemporary classical music.

## Mood Indigo and Solitude

**DUKE ELLINGTON**

**Born April 29, 1899, Washington D.C.**

**Died May 24, 1974, New York City**

**Arr. Asher Tobin Chodos**



*The following note has been supplied by the arranger.*

In a way, the familiarity of Ellington's music today makes it hard to appreciate fully his gifts as an

orchestrator. It is important to see Ellington as part of a broader tendency in 20th century composition to treat sound and timbre—traditionally the province of the orchestrator—as essential elements in the composition of music. The intimacy and creativity with which Ellington wrote for the players in his group combined with his artistic integrity to produce a sonic texture so arresting that contemporary audiences already had a name for it; the “Ellington Sound,” or the “Ellington Effect,” as it was termed by his close collaborator Billy Strayhorn, is as much part of his artistic legacy as his enormous catalogue of unforgettable melodies.

The fact that Ellington's contributions cannot be parsed neatly into composition and orchestration makes it hard to approach his work as a traditional orchestration project. How can you arrange for orchestra something whose essence is so anchored to its original instrumentation, indeed to the very individuals for whom it was written? There is so much character in the Ellington sound that simply to arrange his pitches and durations, even remaining faithful to his idiosyncratic sense of balance and texture, feels inadequate.

A focus on Ellington the Orchestrator points to another feature of his oeuvre that is too often overlooked: its connections to the pianist Thelonious Sphere Monk. Both artists pushed the limits of consonance in the jazz idiom; both were masters at rendering beautiful the strange and uncanny (what Monk called “ugly beauty”); both did something profound by elevating personality over technical rectitude. It is no coincidence that Monk's classic 1955 Riverside recording, *Thelonious Monk Plays Duke Ellington*, is one of his best. It was this recording—and perhaps more importantly, the interpretive mode that it exemplifies—that

guided me in my orchestral arrangements of Duke Ellington.

In these arrangements, I try to situate my own work as part of the long chain of musical re-signification on which Monk and Ellington are nodes, and which itself constitutes the heart and soul of the jazz tradition. My source materials are Ellington's originals (drawn freely from various, often discrepant, recordings) and Monk's 1955 re-imaginings of them—but in many ways what I have done here has more in common with the performance practice of any jazz musician than it does with the arranger in the Euro-American tradition. I steal liberally from both musicians, I read the one through the lens of the other, I make original contributions where useful, and I truncate or extend to accommodate the present performance environment. The conceit of Chodos-on-Monk-on-Ellington may seem novel from the perspective of the symphony orchestra, but it is really nothing more than the everyday labor of jazz musicians all over the world.

It is not, then, only my notional source materials that inform these arrangements. These songs are indicators, pointers to musical agglomerations to which new meaning constantly accrues. “Mood Indigo” was, originally, “Dreamy Blues,” until Ellington's manager, Irving Mills, re-titled it and, eventually, gave it lyrics—lyrics that Ella Fitzgerald would later imbue with a somber depth Mills may never have imagined. “(In My) Solitude” began as filler material, something Ellington supposedly composed in 20 minutes, “leaning against the studio's glass enclosure.” Again, the title and the lyrics came later, and not from Ellington himself. Yet nobody who has heard Billie Holiday's haunting rendition—

*With gloom everywhere  
I sit and I stare  
I know that I'll soon go mad  
In my solitude*

—could deny that it forms a fundamental part of the meaning of this song. In these arrangements I have taken Ellington and Monk as my points of entry, but I also make use of the broader set of meanings and associations indexed by the titles *Solitude* and *Mood Indigo*. This is another way of saying that I approached these songs as a jazz musician, as Monk did in 1955, and as Ellington himself did in many revisions over the course of his career. ■

## Concertino for Two Pianos and Orchestra

**ASHER TOBIN CHODOS pianist, composer**

**Born 1986, Los Angeles**



*The following note has been supplied by the composer.*

Like a semi-formal family dinner, this piece offers an environment for free interaction that is both structurally rigid and weirdly volatile. In this piece, the three principal actors—two solo pianos and a symphony orchestra—behave like relatives. We get along, we shout over each other, we stand at a respectful distance, and we shock each other into bemused and resentful silence. This is a work that calls for trust, sympathy and humor; I couldn't have written it unless I felt for the people involved a musical kinship verging on the familial. ■

**Asher Tobin Chodos** has a practice that combines composition, performance and music scholarship. He has been named a fellow of the Dave Brubeck Institute, the Asian Cultural Council, and the Ucross Foundation. He holds a degree in Classical languages and literature from Columbia University, and is a doctoral candidate in the UC San Diego Department of Music, where he is writing a dissertation about automated music recommendation.

## Cecil Lytle piano

Cecil Lytle is a man of many hats and tastes—scholar, artist and citizen! Born in New York City, he was educated at Oberlin College and the University of Wisconsin. Equally adept in jazz and classical music, he quickly earned a reputation as an improviser and performer of late 19th century and 20th century music. After winning First Prize at the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition, he commenced an international concert career that took him to the capitols of the world.



That internationalism also inspired his academic career. Lytle joined the UC San Diego music faculty following a successful professorship at Grinnell College. Since then, he continued an international career as musician and academic holding appointments as Senior Fulbright Scholar to the

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United Kingdom, Visiting Professor at the Beijing Conservatory of Music, and Artist-in-Residence at the Darmstadt Contemporary Music Festival. His audio recordings and live television concerts span the music of Ragtime, Fats Waller, Franz Liszt, Schubert, Scriabin, and Beethoven. Lytle's 6-CD set of recordings of the *Complete Piano Music of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff/Thomas De Hartmann* won the German Stereo Review Award. Taking a break during his seventeen-year tenure as Provost of UC San Diego's Thurgood Marshall College, Lytle accepted a two-year appointment as Director of the University of California Study Centre in London. He presently teaches every summer in Paris a UCSD Global Seminar entitled, *Jazz in Paris*.

While Provost, Lytle led a team of faculty and community members to establish two award-winning public college-prep charter schools serving low income students, grades 6-12: Preuss School on the UCSD campus (850 students), and Gompers Preparatory School (1200 students) in the Chollas View Neighborhood in inner-city San Diego.

He joins with Maestro Steven Schick, Tobin Chodos, and the La Jolla Symphony to perform something old, something new, and definitely something “Blue.”



# WE DID IT!

## \$1.5 MILLION RAISED

### Endowment Campaign Completed!

Dear Friends,

We thought we could, and we did!

Last June, we weren't so sure. We ended the 2016-17 season \$50,000 short of completing the Endowment goal.

But the Endowment Committee, staff and Board of Directors worked through the summer and early fall and, in early October, the final gifts came in and took "Sostenuto" over the top. Thanks to a flurry of activity to "fill the gap," we've raised gifts and pledges totaling \$1,502,473! Of that amount, \$1,330,000 has already been received and is invested in the

Endowment fund, earning income that is used to pay the salaries of our artistic leadership.

The support of the 250+ donors who have contributed to this campaign is awe-inspiring. You've proven what a value the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus is to you and to our community, and we are forever grateful.

Thank you!

Amee Wood, Endowment Chair

## David Chase Choral Composition Award

In recognition of Choral Director David Chase's retirement on June 30, 2017 after 43 years, a Fund has been established to support a bi-annual award to further David's aesthetic of presenting new ideas in choral composition and performance. Funds collected for this purpose are held in the endowment, with income earmarked for this award.

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# Celebrating 50 Years at UC San Diego 1967-2017

Our 63rd season

## Vectors

is inspired by the 50th anniversary of the affiliation of La Jolla Symphony & Chorus with the UC San Diego Music Department. During the 2017-18 season, we will celebrate by highlighting remarkable faculty and student performers and composers in our concerts as part of our season. And in these pages, we will remember some of the high points along the way.



### November 2007: Steven Schick Debuts as LJS&C Music Director

It was exactly 10 years ago this concert weekend that Steven Schick began his career as LJS&C Music Director. On the program was the North American premiere of Philip Glass's *Cello Concerto*, with the iconic composer in attendance, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Luther Adams' *The Light that Fills the World*, and Beethoven's *Fourth Symphony*. It was a concert that set the stage for things to come.



La Jolla Symphony & Chorus  
GALA 2017

# MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR



Sally Dean

## Playful Theme, Serious Fundraising!

La Jolla Symphony & Chorus launched the 2017-2018 season and celebration of 50 years as an affiliate with UC San Diego (1967-2017) at its October 14 Gala. The whimsical Gala theme came from another 50th anniversary—The Beatles' fall 1967 release of the ground-breaking *Magical Mystery Tour* album. The fundraiser was a success and raised over \$40,000 for the artistic and educational mission of La Jolla Symphony & Chorus.



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## Quiet City

AARON COPLAND

Born November 14, 1900, Brooklyn

Died December 2, 1990, Westchester, New York



In 1939 Aaron Copland was asked by his longtime friend Harold Clurman to provide incidental music for a production at the Group Theater in New York of Irwin Shaw's experimental play *Quiet City*. Shaw (1913-1984) was then a struggling young playwright who later abandoned the stage and achieved his greatest success as a writer of fiction; among his works are a novel about World War II, *The Young Lions*, and a wonderful short story, "The Eighty-Yard Run." *Quiet City*, however, was a failure. A combination of realism and fantasy, it tells of a young trumpeter, David Melnikoff, who (in Copland's words) "imagined the night thoughts of many different people in a great city and played trumpet to express his emotions and to arouse the consciences of the other characters and of the audience." After two dress rehearsals before unenthusiastic audiences, the play was dropped.

For that production, Copland wrote a brief work for clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, and piano, first performed at the initial presentation of the play on April 16, 1939. Copland liked the music enough that the following year he arranged it for trumpet, English horn, and string orchestra. This version, premiered in New York on January 28, 1941, by the Saidenberg Little Symphony, has remained one of his most frequently performed works.

*Quiet City* may be thought of as an urban nocturne, similar in its lonely mood to Edward Hopper's famous painting *Nighthawks*. It is built on two themes: an evocative trumpet call, vaguely reminiscent of jazz trumpet music, and a dotted figure for strings, said by the composer to represent "the slogging gait of a dispossessed man." To give the trumpet player a chance to rest, Copland included interludes for English horn, and that instrument's haunting sound beautifully catches the lonely atmosphere of this little mood-piece. In the score, Copland specifies that the woodwind part can be undertaken by either English horn or oboe; at these concerts the part is performed on the oboe. ■

## Stephanie Richards

trumpet



Stephanie Richards is a trumpeter, improviser and composer whose unique voice explores sound, space and movement. Recognized for her "artistic daring as a composer and bandleader" she has composed works for musicians and carousels, scents, and submerged percussion and brass. As an improviser, Richards has recorded with pioneering masters of our time, including MacArthur fellow Anthony Braxton, Butch Morris and recent Pulitzer-awardee Henry Threadgill along with improvising artists Ravi Coltrane and Jason Moran. Her sonic explorations have led to collaborations with performance artists Mike Kelly, Laurie Anderson and Yoko Ono.

Richards has premiered works throughout North America, Mexico and Europe. Her works have been featured on stages at Carnegie Hall, the Blue-note NYC and Lincoln Center. She is a founding member of Asphalt Orchestra, an ensemble created by the composer collective Bang On a Can, where she has worked with artists such as David Byrne, St. Vincent and Susan Marshall. She holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music, McGill University and the California Institute of the Arts and is on faculty at the University of California, San Diego. Alongside trumpeter Dave Douglas, Richards encourages the performance of jazz and new music as Vice-President of the Festival of New Trumpet (FONT). She is currently working towards the release of *Fullmoon*; a record for solo trumpet, resonating bodies, and sampler to be released on Relative Pitch Records in early 2018.

## Carol Rothrock

oboe



Carol Rothrock has held the position of principal oboist of the La Jolla Symphony since 1997. She is founder and member of the La Jolla Chamber Winds and a freelance oboist in San Diego. Prior to moving to San Diego, she performed in the Boston area with the Lexington Sinfonietta, the North Shore Philharmonic, the Civic Symphony Orchestra of Boston, and the New England Wind Quintet. While living in east Texas, she performed with the East Texas Symphony, the Marshall Symphony, the Shreveport Symphony and the Shreveport Civic Opera. She received her BS from Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music, and her MA from Eastman School of Music.

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## Rhapsody in Blue GEORGE GERSHWIN

If—as Dvořák suggested—American classical music would have to come from uniquely American roots, then *Rhapsody in Blue* is probably *the* piece of American classical music. In it, Gershwin combined the European idea of the piano concerto with American jazz and in the process created a piece of music that has become famous throughout the world—in addition to its many recordings by American orchestras, *Rhapsody in Blue* has been recorded by orchestras in England, Germany, Australia, and Russia. Gershwin was in fact aware that *Rhapsody in Blue* might become a kind of national piece; he said that during its composition he “heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America—of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness.”

Classical purists argue that this is not a true piano concerto, and jazz purists argue that it is not true jazz. Of course both are right, but none of that matters—*Rhapsody in Blue* is a smashing success on its own terms. Gershwin was right to call this one-movement work a *rhapsody*, with that term’s suggestion of a form freer than the concerto. Soloist and orchestra are not so tightly

integrated as in a concerto, and the *Rhapsody* tends to be episodic: the piano plays alone much of the time and then gives way to orchestral interludes; only rarely does Gershwin combine all his forces.

Gershwin wrote the *Rhapsody* in the space of less than a month early in 1924, when he was only 25. Because he was uncertain about his ability to orchestrate, that job was given to Ferde Grofé, who would later compose the *Grand Canyon Suite*. At the premiere on February 12, 1924, Gershwin was soloist with a small jazz ensemble, but performances today almost always use Grofé’s version for full orchestra.

The *Rhapsody* has one of the most famous beginnings in all of music: the clarinet trill that suddenly spirals upward in a seductive, sleazy glissando leads directly into the main theme, which will recur throughout. The various episodes are easy to follow, though one should note Gershwin’s ability to move so smoothly from episode to episode—these changes in tempo and mood seem almost effortless. Also noteworthy is the big E-major string tune marked *Andantino moderato con espressione*; near the end Gershwin gives this to the brass and transforms its easy flow into a jazzy romp that ends in one of the most ear-splitting chords ever written. ■

# La Jolla Symphony Orchestra

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**Michael Gerdes, Assistant Conductor**

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# Vectors

2017-2018

La Jolla Symphony  
& Chorus

## Concentric Paths

Saturday, December 9 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, December 10 at 2 pm

Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

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Photo: Bill Dean

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If you have provided for La Jolla Symphony & Chorus in your estate plans, please tell us about it so that we can include you in Planned Giving events and recognize your gift. If not, let us show you how.

Through a bequest you can:









- Provide a future for LJS&C
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**For information about planned gifts,  
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