

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Masters Chorale
Dr. Brian Dehn
Artistic Director

presents

A NEW RENAISSANCE

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2026
4:00 PM

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
222 N. EAST STREET, ANAHEIM

Welcome

Dear Concert-goers,

Thank you for being here this afternoon. I hope you enjoy the music as much as we have enjoyed learning it. Your support means the world to us and allows us to bring this type of music to our broader community. Today we are delighted to perform this concert in this beautiful venue and are grateful to the Zion Lutheran Church congregation for allowing us to use it and for their support in the preparation for this event.



We are also enormously grateful to our donors whose gifts over the years have allowed this amazing group to continue and to thrive. This season our concerts have been enabled by a major grant from an anonymous donor but also a major grant from the Orange County Community Foundation. Of course, we are also grateful to the many other donors that have supported us for many years. Those donors especially have kept this organization going and allowed us to build it into a flourishing chorus that continues to build its reputation in Orange County. At our last concert, we performed Brahms' masterwork, his "German Requiem." Audience members variously described it as "fantastic," "some of the best singing I have ever heard" and "brilliant."

In Renaissance times, doctors would actually prescribe music as a treatment for many ills, including what we now call depression. And modern scholarship has confirmed that music is so good for not only the singer but also the listener. So please consider supporting choral music in one way or another. Your support can come in many ways, including joining a choir yourself, supporting music in our schools, giving a donation in any amount to support our efforts and finally, if you enjoy this concert, tell your friends about us and encourage them to attend our concerts.

Thank you again for being here today. I hope you leave with joy in your heart and feeling less stress in your life. That's one thing we hope our singing will do!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter J. Donovan".

PETER J. DONOVAN

President, Southern California Master Chorale

Program

Exultate Justi in Domino Ludovico Viadana
Exultate Justi (from "Empire of the Sun") John Williams
arr. Brian Dehn

Te Lucis Ante Terminum Thomas Tallis
Tenor Solo: Jules Ronquillo-Bodda

Te Lucis Ante Terminum J. Aaron McDermid
Trio: Abby Taylor, Paige Taylor, and Harriet Edwards

Ubi Caritas Maurice Durufé

O Nata Lux Thomas Tallis
O Nata Lux Douglas Byler

***** INTERMISSION *****

Lamentations of Jeremiah Z. Randall Stroope
O Vos Omnes (Lamentations of Jeremiah) Tomas Luis de Victoria

Manete vivos Baribus and Robinus Gibbini
Abby Taylor, Lianna Koeppl-Taylor, Paige Taylor, and Anthony Lauro

Interpolations on *Sicut Cervus* Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
arr. James Jordan
Dan St. Marsielle, soprano saxophone

Agnus Dei Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
Agnus Dei Samuel Barber
Soprano Solo: Grace Lee



Artistic Director's Note

The Renaissance was not merely an artistic period; it was a reawakening of the human spirit. Across Europe, composers sought to make the invisible visible, and to give sound to balance, proportion, devotion, grief, wonder, and transcendence. Music became architecture in motion: lines woven together with such elegance and inevitability that centuries later these works still seem suspended outside of time. Yet the Renaissance has never truly ended. Its ideas continue to echo through contemporary composers who return to these ancient texts, forms, and sonorities in search of something enduring within our own unsettled age. Tonight's program explores that ongoing conversation across centuries. Ancient texts reappear in modern harmonic language; Renaissance polyphony becomes the seed for contemporary meditation; composers separated by hundreds of years stand side by side, asking the same human questions. What does it mean to rejoice? To seek light in darkness? To mourn? To long for peace? Though musical languages evolve, the emotional and spiritual impulses beneath them remain profoundly constant.



Te Lucis Spanish Chant Manuscript

The program opens with two settings of *Exultate Justi* ("Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous"), from Psalm 33, first by the late Renaissance composer and Franciscan friar, Lodovico Grossi da Viadana and then followed by contemporary film composer John Williams from the film, *Empire of the Sun*. Viadana's setting emerges from the late Renaissance tradition, filled with unanimous declarations, buoyant imitation, and radiant clarity, while Williams transforms the same sacred exuberance into cinematic transcendence, using soaring lines and luminous harmonies that feel both ancient and modern at once. Where Viadana's rejoicing is measured, liturgical; Williams' is unconstrained, almost primal, a cry wrung from the far side of suffering. Heard in succession, the two settings become a kind of diptych: the same ancient summons, answered across the centuries in utterly different tongues. Together, they demonstrate how sacred joy continues to find new voices in every age.

Two settings of *Te Lucis Ante Terminum* ("To Thee Before the Close of Day") follow, offering music of evening, protection, and contemplation. Thomas Tallis, who navigated the theological convulsions of Tudor England with a rare and serene intactness, crafts music of extraordinary restraint and purity, allowing the text to unfold with serene inevitability. Liturgically speaking, it is the hymn sung at Compline, the last of the daily offices, a prayer to commend the sleeping self to divine protection. The persistence of this prayer across fifteen centuries of musical settings is its own form of testimony. J. Aaron McDermid approaches the same threshold, that border between wakefulness and surrender, between the known and the nocturnal unknown. More apparent in McDermid's setting is the drama of "nightmares" with a lush, dissonant language that is neither imitative nor indifferent to its predecessors. His harmonies are warmer, more immediately embracing; the petition for protection feels less austere and more intimate. Together, Tallis and McDermid remind us that prayer for protection at night is not merely a historical curiosity but a perennial human need: the nightly renegotiation between self-preservation and trust, between the sovereign self and the darkness that will not be commanded.

Artistic Director's Note

The beloved *Ubi Caritas* of Maurice Duruflé serves as both centerpiece and bridge in our first half. Rooted deeply in Gregorian chant, as all of Duruflé's choral oeuvre, the work floats between antiquity and modernity. His genius lay in making the ancient chant not a relic to be preserved but a living root from which new music could grow. Duruflé's pandiatonic harmonic language is unmistakably twentieth century, yet every phrase grows organically from the precise contours of the ancient melody. The result is music of extraordinary warmth and humility, both ancient and modern, reminding us that compassion, charity, and even love itself may be humanity's most timeless inheritance.

The first half concludes with another dialogue across eras through the text *O Nata Lux* ("O Light Born of Light"). Tallis again offers clarity, balance, and luminous simplicity within formulaic cadences, while contemporary American composer Douglas Byler expands the text into accessible lyrical landscapes rich with emotional immediacy. Tallis' setting, less than two minutes in length, is perhaps the most perfectly achieved compression in the choral repertoire. Written in broad, largely homophonic strokes; the five voices moving together with true chordal gravity. Yet within this apparent simplicity he deploys the English "false relation." This is the simultaneous sounding of a note and its chromatic neighbor which produces a quality of harmonic ache, as if the music itself were reaching toward something it cannot quite grasp. The Transfiguration, after all, is the moment when the eternal becomes briefly, blindingly visible through the mortal (the invisible, visible). Tallis finds its sonic equivalent in a handful of extraordinary chords. Byler, on the other hand, seeks warmth through beautifully shaped lines that honor the texts longing for light. The ancient plea for divine illumination becomes newly urgent in modern sound; it is consolation as much as aspiration.

The second half turns toward lamentation, longing, and ultimately peace. Z. Randall Stroope and Tomás Luis de Victoria each set the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, texts born from devastation and exile. *O vos omnes* expresses

the full catastrophe of grief: the Book of Lamentations is among scripture's most unsparing texts, a poet's raw testimony to the destruction of Jerusalem and the apparent silence of God. Stroope's contemporary response embraces a broad emotional palette, from despair to anger, drawing listeners into the anguish and vulnerability of collective grief. Victoria's setting is among the most profound achievements of Renaissance sacred music, filled with austere beauty and tremendous emotional restraint. Together, the works reveal that lamentation is not weakness, but one of humanity's oldest forms of robust prayer.

We break from the usual pairings to do another "pre-modern" setting. I hope, as you look upon the title (and composers) you will see and hear something that only SCMC can do for you. While this concert works toward bringing the past into the present, this is the opposite. Here, we try our hand at sending a modern "masterpiece" back to the style of yesteryear.

James Jordan's *Interpolations on Sicut Cervus* acts almost like memory of itself. Built upon Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's immortal motet, it sets a psalm of spiritual thirst rendered in flawlessly arching Renaissance counterpoint, each voice a separate stream flowing toward the same source. James Jordan's *Interpolations* does something at once irreverent and deeply respectful: inspired by the landmark recordings of the Jan Garbarek/Hilliard Ensemble, where a soprano saxophone improvised freely around medieval and Renaissance polyphony, Jordan introduces a jazz-inflected saxophone voice into Palestrina's pristine texture. The choir continues largely as written; the saxophone departs into the space between phrases, exploring the longing the voices have named but not exhausted. Ancient and contemporary, the fixed and the improvised, the sacred and the searching: these are not opposites but companions, both reaching toward the same unquenchable source. The past is not discarded here; it is remembered, reshaped, and heard anew.

Artistic Director's Note

The program concludes with one of the most striking pairings of the evening: Palestrina's *Agnus Dei* alongside Samuel Barber's choral arrangement of the *Adagio for Strings*. Palestrina's setting, from his *Missa Papae Marcelli*, represents the ideal of Renaissance sacred polyphony: balanced, transparent, eternal. Barber's setting, by contrast, unfolds with aching intensity, its long ascending lines carrying both sorrow and yearning toward transcendence. Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* has become, in the near-century since its 1938 premiere, the West's unofficial anthem of inconsolable grief. It has been performed at the deaths of presidents, in the silences that follow catastrophe, whenever sorrow requires a sound large enough to contain it. Composed first as a string quartet movement, arranged for string orchestra at Arturo Toscanini's invitation, and then transformed in 1967 by Barber himself into a choral setting of the Mass's *Agnus Dei*, the music seems to have been searching all along for these words. The transposition requires almost no alteration to the notes: the long, suspended melodic line, the slow accumulation of harmonic tension toward an unbearable climax, the eventual subsidence into exhausted stillness. It is as if the music

already knew it was a prayer, and Barber simply acknowledged what was always true. Beneath the differences in these two settings lies the same plea repeated across centuries: *dona nobis pacem*: grant us peace.

This is perhaps the enduring message of tonight's concert. Across five centuries, composers continue to return to the same texts because humanity continues to wrestle with the same hopes and fears. We still seek light against darkness, comfort against grief, beauty against chaos, and peace against violence. The Renaissance, then, cannot be confined to history books. It is renewed whenever artists look backward not in imitation, but in rediscovery. We seem to be doomed to repeat our mistakes of the past, even when ancient wisdom is given fresh voice for a new age. Still, the Renaissance spirit endures precisely because it believed humanity was capable of growth. These works survive not simply to remind us of old failures, but to challenge us toward wisdom, empathy, and renewal. If ancient voices continue to sing into our present moment, perhaps it is because they still believe we can become worthy of the beauty we create.



BRIAN DEHN
Artistic Director



Texts and Translations

Exultate justi in Domino

LODOVICO VIADANA

Exsultate Justi (from *Empire of the Sun*)

JOHN WILLIAMS

*Exultate, justi, in Domino;
rectos decet collaudatio.*

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just;
praise befits the upright.

*Confitemini Domino in cithara;
in psalterio decem chordarum psallite illi.*

Give praise to the Lord on the harp;
sing to him with the psaltery,
the instrument of ten strings.

*Cantate ei canticum novum;
bene psallite ei in vociferatione.*

Sing to him a new canticle,
sing well unto him with a loud noise.

Te Lucis Ante Terminum

THOMAS TALLIS

J. AARON MCDERMID

*Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator poscimus,
Ut solita clementia
Sis præsul ad custodiam.*

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That with thy wonted favor, Thou
Would'st be our guard and keeper now.

*Procul recedant somnia,
Et noctium phantasmata;
Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.*

From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread under foot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know.

*Præsta, Pater omnipotens,
Per Iesum Christum Dominum,
Qui tecum in perpetuum
Regnat cum Sancto Spiritu. Amen.*

O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, Thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee,
Shall live and reign eternally. Amen.

Texts and Translations

Ubi Caritas

MAURICE DURUFLÉ

*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.*

*Exsultemus et in ipso, jucundemur.
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus sincero. Sincero.
Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Amen.*

Where there is charity & love, God is there.
The love of Christ
has gathered us together into one.
Let us rejoice and be glad in Him.
Let us fear and love the living God.
And let us love from a sincere heart. Sincere.
Where there is charity & love, God is there.
Amen.

O Nata Lux

THOMAS TALLIS

DOUGLAS BYLER

*O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum,
Laudes precesque sumere.
Qui carne quondam contegi,
Dignatus es pro perditis,
Nos membra confer effici,
Tui beati corporis.*

O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
mercifully deign to accept
the praise and prayers of your supliants.
O you who once deigned to be hidden
in flesh on behalf of the lost,
Grant us to be made members
of your blessed body.

Lamentations of Jeremiah

O vos omnes

Z. RANDALL STROOPE

TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA

*O vos omnes,
qui transitis per viam,
attendite et videte
si est dolor,
sicut dolor meus.*

O you people,
who pass this way,
look and see
if there exists any sorrow (agony),
like unto my sorrow.

*Recordare Domine
intuere et respice
opprobrium nostrum.*

Remember, Lord
consider and notice
our humiliation and disgrace!

Texts and Translations

Interpolations on *Sicut Cervus Desiderat*

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI DA PALESTRINA

ARR. JAMES JORDAN

*Sicut c ervus desiderat
ad fontes aquarum:
ita desiderat  nima m ea
ad te, D eus.*

As a deer desires
the running waters,
so desires my soul
for you, O God.

Agnus Dei (from *Missa Papae Marcelli*)

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI DA PALESTRINA

Agnus Dei, op. 11

SAMUEL BARBER

*Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.*

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Master Chorale



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Our Artistic Director

Dr. Brian Dehn, artistic director and conductor of the Southern California Master Chorale is known for high standards in repertoire, vocal pedagogy, and informed performance practice, as well as his ability to shape singers of all levels into extraordinary ensembles. He has conducted his singers in some of the world's most remarkable venues, including Carnegie Hall, the Sistine Chapel, St. Mark's in Venice, St. Peter's in Rome, St. Mathias in Budapest, St. Tomaskircke in Vienna, St. Patrick's and The Riverside Church in New York, St. Anne's Cathedral in Sydney, St. Mary's Church in Cambridge, St. Patrick's and St. Mary's in Dublin, St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, and the Beijing Central Conservatory.

Brian received his doctoral degree from Claremont Graduate University, specializing in Baroque Performance Practice, and his Master's from San Jose State University in music education. Currently teaching at the collegiate level, he recently completed 15 years of teaching at the high school level, where his ensembles consistently earned "Superior" ratings and received invitations to prestigious festivals, including performance invitations at the 2014 and 2018 ACDA Western Region Conventions. He led his students on performance tours to New York, Spain, Portugal, San Francisco, China, Italy, Ireland, England, and Australia.

For over 25 years, Brian has held positions as director of music for various Southern California churches. Currently, he is Director of Music at First Christian Church in Orange, where he conducts the Chancel Choir, two Handbell Ensembles, the Children's Choir, and leads the contemporary band. He is also the founder and artistic director of Meistersingers, a small professional-level chamber choir, leading the ensemble through 26 successful seasons, including producing six albums, fourteen world and regional premieres, and eight commissioned works.



Our Accompanist



Mark Salters is an opera co-director, vocal coach, and pianist at California State University, Fullerton. Originally from New York, he served on the coaching staff of the Opera Department at the Univ. of Michigan under Gustav Meier. Prior to that, he was on faculty of the Yale University graduate opera program headed by noted director Tito Capobianco.

Mark has accompanied master classes by many well-known singers and coaches, including Frederica Von Stade, Roberta Alexander, Vladamir Chernov, Carlo Bergonzi, Sherill Milnes, Madame Régine Crespin, Richard Bonyngge, Rodney Gilfry, among many others. In addition, he has worked with conductors and directors from Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera, Frankfurt Opera, St. Louis Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. He has also served on the music staffs of the University of Connecticut, Opera Theater of Connecticut, and the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, Connecticut.

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FoCM meets at least six times a year and is responsible for the governance, finance, and fundraising. The board is also responsible for all operating responsibilities of Southern California Master Chorale and Starlight Carolers. FoCM consists mostly of singing members of these choirs that volunteer their time and service.

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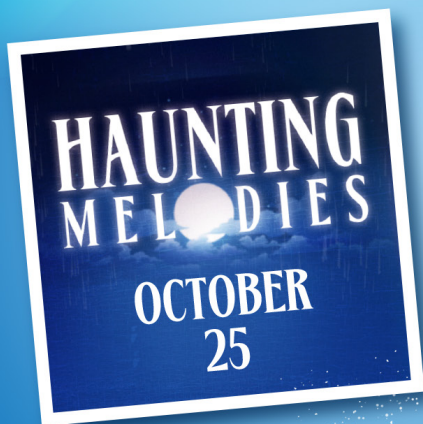
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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Master Chorale
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2026-2027



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