



## LUNAR NEW YEAR

Saturday, Jan. 28, 2023 @ 8 p.m.

Carl St.Clair, conductor  
 Ronald Banks, emcee  
 Chloe Chua, violin  
 Cheryl Ku, dancer  
 Shunxiang Zhang, jinghu  
 Jack Zhang, jinghu  
 Bo Guan, vocalist  
 Bin He, bamboo flute  
 Jiangli Yu, guzheng  
 Emma He, bamboo flute  
 Ella He, guzheng  
 Soojin Kang, percussion  
 Jeremy Davis, percussion  
 Zoe Beyler, percussion  
 Austin Cernosek, percussion  
 Nayoung Ban, soprano  
 I-Chin Feinblatt, mezzo-soprano  
 Nicholas Preston, tenor  
 Zaikuan Song, bass  
 Yaya Dance Academy,  
 Yaya Zhang, artistic director  
 American Feel Young Chorus,  
 Sam Wei-Chih Sun, conductor  
 Pacific Chorale,  
 Robert Istad, artistic director  
 Sean Yu, video designer  
 Kathy Pryzgod, lighting designer

This concert has been generously sponsored by **Charlie and Ling Zhang** and corporate sponsor **Bank Irvine**.

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
 Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

## PROGRAM



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| HUANZHI LI                               | <i>Spring Festival Overture</i><br>Yaya Dance Academy   |
| ARR. MANQIN ZHAO<br><i>Orch. Bin He</i>  | <i>Defeating the Tiger on the Mountain</i><br>Bin He, bamboo flute<br>Jiangli Yu, guzheng<br>Emma He, bamboo flute<br>Ella He, guzheng  |
| GUANYUE LIU<br><i>Orch. Bin He</i>       | <i>Birds Chirping</i><br>performance by He Family above   |
| YEONG-SEOB CHOE                          | <i>Longing for Mt. GeumGang</i><br>Nayoung Ban, soprano   |
| VIET CUONG                               | <i>Re(new)al</i><br><i>III. Solar</i><br>Soojin Kang, percussion<br>Jeremy Davis, percussion<br>Zoe Beyler, percussion<br>Austin Cernosek, percussion   |
| JOHN WILLIAMS                            | <i>"Sayuri's Theme"</i><br><i>from Memoirs of a Geisha</i><br>Cheryl Ku, dancer   |
| DE SARASATE                              | <i>Fantasy on Bizet's Carmen, Op. 25</i><br>Chloe Chua, violin  |
| —INTERMISSION—                           |   |
| XIANG HOU<br><i>Arr. Phoon Yew Tien</i>  | <i>New Year's Greeting</i>  |
| SHUNXIANG ZHANG                          | <i>Peking Opera Impression</i><br>Shunxiang Zhang, jinghu<br>Jack Zhang, jinghu<br>Bo Guan, vocalist  |
| TRADITIONAL<br><i>Orch. Joshua Roach</i> | <i>Mo Li Hua (Jasmine Flower)</i><br>American Feel Young Chorus<br>Pacific Chorale  |
| BEETHOVEN                                | <i>Symphony No.9 in D Minor, Op. 125,</i><br><i>Choral: 4th movement</i><br><b>Presto -</b><br><b>Allegro assai - Allegro assai vivace</b><br>Nayoung Ban, soprano<br>I-Chin Feinblatt, mezzo-soprano<br>Nicholas Preston, tenor<br>Zaikuan Song, bass<br>American Feel Young Chorus<br>Pacific Chorale |
| WARD<br><i>Arr. Prechel</i>              | <i>"America the Beautiful"</i><br>American Feel Young Chorus<br>Pacific Chorale   |



Year  
of the *Rabbit*

# PROGRAM NOTES

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## Happy Lunar New Year!

The data-miners, the demographers, the digerati all tell us that just over a fifth of the world's population share a lunar calendar as part of their cultural heritage. Though the solar-based Gregorian calendar is universally accepted in the modern world, about 1.5 billion people also mark a lunar new year based on ancient traditions. And if we look back far enough into prehistory, this tradition is part of *everyone's* heritage...After all, when darkening days and colder temperatures were a terrifying phenomenon, the cycles of the moon's seeming rebirth were reassurance from the heavens to all of our ancestors.

The modern Gregorian calendar ended much uncertainty and imprecision, but it certainly didn't end the richness of the lunar calendar traditions around the world. Chinese traditions gave rise to what is perhaps the world's most popular celebration of any kind: Chinese New Year. This year, January 22 marks the beginning of a period of revelry and ceremony designed to honor the past, propitiate good fortune, and greet the lunar new year with gaiety. The festivities officially last for 15 days and are filled with the sounds of music and fireworks. It's estimated that around the world, more incendiaries are ignited during Chinese New Year than during the rest of the year combined.

In keeping with the Chinese zodiac, each year is keyed by one of twelve animals whose traits help determine our fortunes. The coming year is a year of the rabbit, as were 2011, 1999, 1987, and so on. Persons born in a year of the Rabbit are called "Rabbits" and are believed to be vigilant, witty, quick-minded, and ingenious. The rest of us should pay particular attention to these skills throughout the coming year!

Other Asian cultures also observe lunar new years, including Vietnam, where the observance is known as Tết, or Tết Nguyên Đán. This most sacred of Vietnamese festivals marks the arrival of spring, and is often celebrated with a family vacation of six to nine days. Decorating the home with peach or apricot blossoms is traditional during this period, representing the hope for an auspicious year to come. According to the Vietnamese zodiac, January 22 ushers in the year of the cat.

In South Korea, Seollal is a three-day national holiday commemorating the

first day of the Korean calendar. This is a time for visiting relatives, wearing traditional garb, performing ancestral rites, eating traditional foods, and playing traditional folk games to greet the new year joyfully.

It's also worth noting that the Hebrew calendar is based on a combination of solar and lunar cycles, with some years including a "leap" lunar cycle. The Jewish new year comes in autumn, during a period of solemn religious observance. These are the High Holy Days of Judaism, which begin with Rosh Hashana, a joyful observance of the new year, and culminate with Yom Kippur, a day to atone for the sins of the past and to begin anew.

Of all these new year's observances, the most spectacular and most public in the U.S. is the Chinese New Year, familiar to everyone lucky enough to live in a city where the flamboyant Dragon Parade takes place. Friends and neighbors from all over town (and of all ethnic backgrounds!) gather to witness the fantastically colorful, loud, winding procession as the dancing dragon—actually a jointed construction borne along in caterpillar fashion by concealed dancers—makes its way through the streets. More than just entertainment, the parade represents the dragon's grace and strength, qualities we hope to learn by example.

In a time when we strive to value and celebrate diversity, these varied traditions have helped us meet and learn about each other. Their spirit is embodied in shorter musical excerpts and songs from many lands that honor relatives, friends, ancestors, cultural heritage, and national pride in music as they propitiate aspirations for the months to come.

Appropriately, we greet the lunar new year with compositions ancient, modern, and in-between. For those of us less familiar with the traditions of Asian music, its expressiveness is especially fascinating. It focuses on the sound of individual notes as they begin, bloom, and fade, more than on melodic resolution. For experienced listeners, even the material of an unfamiliar musical instrument—in China they fall into seven categories including wood, stone, clay, gourd, bamboo, silk, and hide—says something about the meaning of the music played on it. **Happy New Year!**

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*Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.*



## Year of the Rabbit

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



**Bass-baritone Ronald M. Banks is pleased to return to Pacific Symphony.** Banks has been seen on stages around the world across a 30-year career. A versatile performer, his talents have included work in musical theatre, opera, oratorio, voice-over, and in recital. Operatic roles include *Rigoletto*, Sharpless in

*Madame Butterfly*, *Don Pasquale*, and many others.

He has worked with Los Angeles Chamber Singers, La Jolla Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and many other chorales and orchestras around the world. In musical theatre, Banks is best known for his portrayal of the King of Siam in *The King and I*, performing the role over 500 times, garnering awards and critical acclaim in productions across the nation.

Other award-winning roles include King Arthur in *Camelot* and the title role in *Sweeney Todd*. At the Disneyland Resort, Banks was known to audiences for eight years as Jafar in *Aladdin: A Musical Spectacular*. His distinctive speaking voice can be heard in the *World of Warcraft* and *Mortal Kombat* series video games, and most recently, as the English-language voice of Cho (Seung-ryong Ryu) in the Netflix TV series, *Kingdom*.

Banks' roles for Pacific Symphony Family and Class Act Youth Concerts include the Percussionator in *Superheroes!*, and Merlin in *King Arthur and the Dragon's Lair*.

He has a passion for music and arts education, having worked in outreach for Los Angeles Opera, San Diego Opera, and Pacific Symphony.



**Chloe Chua (b. 2007) shot to international stardom after winning the joint 1st Prize at the 2018 Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists.** The young star from Singapore has also garnered the top prize at the 24th Andrea Postacchini Violin Competition, 3rd prize at the

2017 Zhuhai International Mozart Competition, as well as accolades at the Thailand International Strings Competition (Junior Category Grand Prize) and the Singapore National Piano and Violin Competition (1st Prize, Junior 2017 and 3rd Prize, Junior, 2015).

Her stunning musicality despite her young age has captured the hearts of audiences around the world, and her performances have taken her to concert halls across the U.K, Thailand, Italy, Germany, China, Saudi Arabia, U.S., and Singapore, in festivals such as the New Virtuosi Queenswood Mastercourse, Atlanta Festival Academy, Copenhagen Summer Festival, and the Singapore Violin Festival. She has performed with orchestras such as the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Resound Collective,

Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra, China Philharmonic Orchestra, AFA Festival Orchestra, Salzburg Chamber Soloists, Kammerorchester Basel, Russian National Youth Orchestra, with conductors such as Yuri Bashmet, Hans Graf, Umberto Benedetti Michelangeli, and Xia Xiaotang.

As Artist-In-Residence at the Singapore Symphony Orchestra's 2022-23 season, she performs in several concerts across 2022 and 2023. Chua's debut album with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* will be released in Spring 2023 on Pentatone Records. Other recordings include a Piazzolla session with guitarist Kevin Loh, and upcoming albums of the complete Mozart Violin Concertos with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and Hans Graf. She has been with Singapore's Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) School of Young Talents since age four, and is currently under the tutelage of Yin Ke, leader of their strings program.

Chloe performs on a Peter Guarneri, Venice 1729, on generous loan from the Rin Collection.



**Cheryl Ku is a young, 16-year-old dancer whose dance education began at the age of eight.** Initially training in the

style of Chinese folkloric dance, the focus of her dance training quickly shifted to ballet, then contemporary dance. Cheryl has since furthered her dance training at Yaya Dance Academy

and most recently, her school's dance team, Diamond Bar Dance Company. In recent years, her dance training has led Cheryl to winning a multitude of awards, including Top 12 in Junior Contemporary at the prestigious Youth American Grand Prix competition, as well as Advanced Overall First Place at the Showstopper national competition tour.

In the beginning of 2022, Cheryl founded Bridges Dance Project, an organization with the goal of inspiring youth through dance performance and ultimately aiming to bridge the gap between socioeconomic groups via dance. With this goal in mind, Cheryl partnered with the San Musae Cultural Center to put on the "Dream Bridges" fundraiser recital, in which she and her dancer raised over \$5,000 for the students of the Pomona Hope Community Center.



**Shunxiang Zhang is a renowned jinghu artist and composer, credited with the jinghu piece, *Pu Tian Le*, and four performances of the "Peking Opera Symphonic Concerts of Zhang Shunxiang."** He is a

National Class-A Performer in the China National Peking Opera Company and visiting professor

at the China Conservatory of Music. Movie credits as a jinghu performer include the television drama *Da Zhaimen* and the movie *Mei Lanfang*.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



**Jack Zhang is a 13-year old jinghu performer and artist.** His work, "Quiet Contemplations in the Night," won the Golden Angel and Chinese Culture Communication Award at the 18th Annual Chinese American Film Festival, and "Quiet Night Thoughts" won the Best Feature Film Award of the 5th Chinese

Opera Micro-Film 2020. Jack was awarded The President's Volunteer Service Gold Award for both 2021 and 2022.



**Famous Peking Opera Artist, Bo Guan, is a National First-Class Actress with the China National Peking Opera Company.** She is a Visiting Professor of Voice in the Music Department at the China Conservatory of Music as well as Visiting Professor of Dance at the Beijing Normal University. A Master of Peking Opera

Performance, she was considered one of the four leaders of the Xun School in Heritage of China on Beijing TV.



**Bin He, conductor of the South Coast Chinese Orchestra and a graduate of the China Conservatory of Music, and Jiangli Yu, a guzheng master with a master's degree from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, have been bringing their Chinese instrumental music to audiences in California since 2000.** Known for their captivating performances that blend tradition with creativity, the couple was invited by the U.S. production company M-Audio in 2006 to publish an instrumental library comprising various Chinese instruments, paving the road to future productions of Chinese instrumental music in the U.S.



Having been at the forefront of introducing Chinese music to modern genres, the Southern California duo have performed for the former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, former Taiwan President Ying-jeou Ma, and former U.S. President Bill Clinton. Other performances include soundtrack production in movies, as well as



recordings for Disney. As parents, the couple have influenced their two young daughters to begin their musical journey at a very young age. **Their oldest, Emma He, started her Chinese bamboo flute lessons at four.** Emma has also studied flute with Jim Walker at the Colburn School since she was eight and



is currently a tenth-grade flute player at the Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA.) And **Ella He, the youngest, started her guzheng lessons at five.** She is currently an eighth-grade harp player at OCSA and studies under Dr. Linda-Rose Hembreiker. Both girls have been featured on the U.K.-based Classic FM, China musician's magazine, as well as China's popular TV show *Prodigy Kids*.



**Soojin Kang is a percussionist from South Korea, currently residing in Los Angeles.** While in Korea, Soojin performed with many acclaimed ensembles and won a Principal Timpani position with the Prime Philharmonic Orchestra in 2021. She now holds a trial with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Percussion Performance from Seoul National University. Then in 2018, she moved to the United States to study abroad at the University of Southern California under Los Angeles Philharmonic members James Babor and Joseph Pereira. Soojin got her Master's there and taught students as a teaching assistant. She attended the Verbier Music Festival and National Repertory Orchestra Festival. She won the SNU Brass and Percussion Competition, CBS Percussion Competition, and Korea Music Society Competition.



**Jeremy Davis (b. 2001) was born and raised in Los Angeles, California and began his percussion studies at the age of 11.** His hard work and determination have allowed him to travel the world, performing in some of the most beloved concert halls including Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall, and The

Royal Concertgebouw to name a few. When he was 17, he won the *From the Top* Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award in which he received \$10,000 for his live radio performance of Takatsugu Muramatsu's *Land*.

Davis was accepted into the University of Southern California's (USC) Thornton School of Music in 2019 and currently studies there with his two percussion instructors, Jim Babor and Joseph Pereira, both musicians of the Los Angeles

Philharmonic. Shortly after his admittance into USC, he won the Principal Percussion Fellow position of the American Youth Symphony at the age of eighteen, the youngest principal fellow of a section in the orchestra. Ultimately, Davis' passion for music is what drives him to continue striving to be the best musician that he can be on a daily basis.



**Zoe Beyler is a percussionist, pianist, and taiko player pursuing an undergraduate degree in percussion performance at the University of Southern California (USC) a Thornton School of Music, and is the Artistic Director for USC's taiko group, Kazan Taiko.** Beyler plays a range of music from classical standards

to contemporary solos and chamber music to cross-genre collaborations. As a member of the USC Percussion Ensemble, USC Orchestra, and Kazan Taiko, she is able to explore the breadth of percussion and its possibilities.



**Austin Cernosek is a freelance percussionist and educator based in Los Angeles, California.** He has performed with orchestras such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New World Symphony, Santa Barbara Symphony, and New Bedford Symphony. In Los Angeles, he attends the University of Southern

California, studying under Joseph Pereira and James Babor. Previously, he attended the New England Conservatory and University of North Texas, studying with Will Hudgins, Christopher Deane, Mark Ford, and Paul Rennick. While in Texas, he was the section leader for the Santa Clara Vanguard Drum and Bugle Corps (the corps). During both of his years as the center snare drummer, the corps secured two Fred Sanford awards for Best Percussion section. His musical journey began at a young age, whether it was doodling around on his neighbor's bell set, drumming on the dinner table with his cousin, or playing *Guitar Hero* with friends.



**South Korean soprano Nayoung Ban is a young and dedicated operatic soprano with a sizeable and remarkably warm Bel Canto voice.** She has been praised for vocal color, stage personality, and musicality beyond her years.

Recently, Ban performed as Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Tebaldo/Celestial Voice in *Don Carlo* with Maryland Lyric Opera, where she made her debut as the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

She performed Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Musetta in *La Bohème* with Opera Ithaca, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* by G. Paisiello and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* with Mannes Opera where she also appeared as Euridice in *Orfeo di Euridice*, Vixen in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Giulietta in *I Capuleti e Montecchi*, and Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* with Mannes Opera Scene Performance. Ban participated in Maryland Lyric Opera's Young Artist Institute and appeared as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Musetta in *La Bohème*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Blonde in *Die Entführung* in their concerts. Ban has also performed as a soprano soloist in G. Fauré's *Requiem* with Maryland Lyric Opera, 'Hear my prayer' by F. Mendelssohn with Peniel Women's Choir, T. Dubois's *The Seven Last Words of Christ* with Christian Broadcasting System of New York, soprano soloist in Gounod's *St. Cecilia Mass* with GNC Orchestra, and soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with New Hope Reformed Church of New York. Soprano Nayoung Ban has her Professional Studies in Mannes College of Music, holds her Master's degree at Manhattan School of Music, and ChungAng University in Korea where she also has her Bachelor's Degree.



**I-Chin "Betty" Feinblatt, mezzo-soprano, is a graduate of California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), in Vocal Performance and Music Education.** She currently sings professionally with Pacific Chorale, the John Alexander Singers, and First Presbyterian Church in Old Town Orange.

Feinblatt has performed as a chorister and soloist with Pacific Chorale on numerous occasions, most recently as the mezzo soloist in Durufé's *Requiem* in March 2009 and an alto soloist in Bach's *St. John's Passion* in April 2009. Among her Southland solo performances was her performance as alto soloist of *Messiah* with The National Children's Choir formally known as The Paulist Chorister at The Broad Stage of Santa Monica in June 2009, and The Camerata Singers of Long Beach in Dec. 2009.

Feinblatt also was one of the guest artists of "Organica" a concert at University of California, Los Angeles' (UCLA) Royce Hall with organist Christoph Bull in April 2009. Feinblatt is a frequent guest of "Organica". In June 2008, her performance in "Organica" was reviewed by Charles Lonberger in *The Beverly Hills Outlook*: "Best of all the guest artists... who vocally caressed art songs by Fauré and Gounod with a low, velvety dark yet strong and sturdy instrument... She was a wonder and a revelation this night."

Feinblatt was a featured soloist in the world premiere of *The Passion of Ramakrishna* by Phillip Glass at the Orange County Performing Arts Center in September 2006. She was also the mezzo soloist in Bach's *Mass in B Minor* at the Orange County Performing Arts Center with the John Alexander Singers in October 2004. Feinblatt has been a vocal music teacher at Fountain Valley High School since

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Spring 2007. She currently studies with voice teacher Monika Bruckner in Sherman Oaks and has coached with Dr. Kathleen Roland-Silverstein in Studio City.



**Praised by the *Orange County Register* as being “resonant and warm” and by the classical music site *Bachtrack* as “a ringing stentorian tenor”, Hawai’i native Nicholas Preston is in demand as soloist in Southern California and beyond.**

Having performed throughout California and touring as soloist in

France, Italy, and Spain. He has been a member of GRAMMY® Award-winning Pacific Chorale since 2002, and has frequently appeared as soloist with the ensemble.

Nicholas has also performed as a soloist with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, Pacific Symphony, Claremont Chorale, Santa Maria Philharmonic Society, Cypress Masterworks Chorale, and the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra. He has worked under the batons of John Alexander, Carl St.Clair, Keith Lockhart, John Williams, Nicholas McGegan, Kent Nagano, John Mauceri, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Grant Gershon, and Gustavo Dudamel. Nicholas’ solo appearances include Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Horatio Parker’s *Hora Novissima*, Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* and *Symphony No. 9*, Bach’s *B Minor Mass* and *St. Matthew Passion*, Mozart’s *Coronation Mass* and *Requiem*, Handel’s *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabeus*, and Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*. More recent performances include the role of “Messenger” in Pacific Symphony’s production of *Aida*, tenor soloist in *Vespers of 1610* by Claudio Monteverdi with Long Beach Camerata Singers, and tenor soloist in Mozart’s *Requiem* with Long Beach Symphony. Nicholas was featured in the world premiere of Philip Glass’ *The Passion of Ramakrishna*, which was commissioned for the grand opening of the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall and premiered by Pacific Chorale and Pacific Symphony under the direction of Carl St.Clair in 2006. In April 2018, he reprised the same role as his solo debut in Carnegie Hall.

Nicholas is proud to be involved with Pacific Symphony’s award-winning education and community engagement programs, being a presenter with the Class Act program as well as featured soloist in the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles concerts. Upcoming engagements include solo work with Orchestra Santa Monica and tenor soloist in the closing concert for Pacific Chorale. Nicholas received his B.A. in Music from Loyola Marymount University and

currently resides in Orange County with his wife Dr. Kathleen Preston and their daughter Zelda.

**Zaikuan Song, operatic bass, is a native of China. Song is a graduate of Michigan State University (MSU) College of Music (DMA) and China**



## **Conservatory of Music (MM and BM) in vocal performance.**

Song is recognized for his majestically resonant bass voice and for a keen dramatic instinct that he brings to a wide range of roles on the opera stage. His repertoire spans from the comic parts of Donizetti, Mozart, Puccini, and Rossini to the strong and serious roles of Verdi. Song regularly works with an illustrious array of conductors, directors, and coaches including Maestro James Meena, Maestro Marcello Cormio, Eve Summer, Ivan Stefanutti, James Marvel, Linda Brovsky, and Garnett Bruce, Coach Elden Little, and Michael Recchiuti. Song’s notable engagements include The King in *Aida*; Timur and Ramfis in *Turandot*; Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Banco in *Macbeth*; and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*. He has sung the roles of Germano in *La Scala di Seta*, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*, Frank Maurrant in *Street Scene*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dulcamara in *L’elisir d’amore*, Mr. Emerson in *A Room with a View*, Changwu Ye in the Chinese opera, *The Savage Land*, and Ariodate in *Xerxes* with MSU Opera Theater. Past season credits include leading roles with Opera Grand Rapids, Opera Carolina, Toledo Opera, MSU Opera Theatre, and concert appearances with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis Gerdine Young Artist Program in 2022. As an accomplished recitalist and concert artist, Song has been the bass soloist in Handel’s *Messiah* with Chapel Music at Duke University in North Carolina, bass soloist in Bach’s *Cantata* at the MSU auditorium building in East Lansing, a guest singer at Opera Carolina Gala at Belk Theater, and Celebrating Music that United our community at Halton Theater in North Carolina, a Guest singer at Magnificent China—U.S.-China Art Culture Festival, bass soloist. Song was awarded the Top Prize in the National NATS competition in the Advanced College/ Independent Studio men division in Las Vegas, NV as well as the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions 2020 Midwest Region Finalist, third prize.



**Yaya Zhang is an interdisciplinary young artist with 20 years of experience in stage performance, dance choreography, and contemporary art creation.**

She is a graduate of the Beijing Dance Academy and has performed in *CATS* the musical in Japan. She moved to the US

in 2007 where she continues to work as a teacher and choreographer in major dance companies in Los Angeles.

In 2014, Zhang founded Yaya Dance Academy (YDA). Open ideals and high-quality art education is Yaya Dance Academy’s continuous mission. The academy works with dancers of all ages, mainly individuals who are remarkably passionate in dance. In just a few years, her students have participated in major American and international dance competitions, winning many awards and honors at Youth American Grand Prix (YAGP), Showstopper, and Kids Artistic

Revue (KAR). They were invited to perform at YAGP's finals in Florida in 2021, was named Outstanding Studio Award in KAR 2020 and many more just to name a few.

In 2015, as an independent artist, Zhang launched her contemporary dance work, "Being" and performed at the LATC Art Festival where it was well-received. In 2016, Zhang cooperated with the Claire Trevor School of the Arts at the University of California, Irvine as a guest artist. From 2016-2022, she served as the main choreographer for Pacific Symphony's Spring Festival Concert, "Love Feast", for six consecutive years. The "Love Feast" Lunar New Year Celebration launched at the Segerstrom Concert Hall, and students of YDA were published in the *Los Angeles Times*.

In 2020, YDA was invited to perform at the halftime show on the court of the American NBA basketball game. Zhang founded a non-profit organization San Musae Cultural Center (SMCC) in 2018. SMCC's ultimate objective is to embrace its community through arts, culture, education, and international exchanges. The organization creates a platform for younger generations to give back to society through meaningful activities. In the past four years, SMCC have contributed nearly 300 free public courses in the arts to the community and have hosted the East Meets West International Music and Dance Festival.



**Radhanath Thialan is an all-rounded choreographer and facilitator in dance currently based in California.** He holds an MFA in Dance from University of California, Irvine (UCI) where he was offered full scholarship for the two-year program. Thialan's choreography has been said to be thought provoking, and

often revolves the theme of life and culture. His works have premiered internationally in Malaysia, Singapore, China, Canada, and the U.S. During his dancing years, he has performed works by Kolben Dance Company and Vertigo Dance Company in Israel, Lar Lubovitch, and worked closely with SiZheng Wang, choreographer from National Ballet of China. Thialan was one of Yaya Zhang's performers at Pacific Symphony's New Year event—Love Feast in 2017 and has been working closely with Zhang since. They have been choreographing together since 2018 for this event. Their choreography "Happy Valley" was also invited to perform at YAGP's final in Tampa, Florida in 2021. Rad is currently the Associate Artistic Director of Yaya Dance Academy and

Social Media Coordinator with San Musae Cultural Center.



**Sam Wei-Chih Sun, Director of American Feel Young Chorus, is a pianist, accompanist, and music educator.** His interest in music was encouraged by his mother at age six, when he

started playing the piano. He attended the Taipei Municipal Teachers College and majored in piano performance and minored in cello and vocal performance. After graduation, Sun became an elementary school music teacher in Taipei and held many musical activities to inspire students' interests in music. In 2005, Sun received a Master's Degree in conducting from Azusa Pacific University. Sun is an adjunct professor of piano at Azusa Pacific University, Citrus Community College, and Calvin Chao Theological Seminary. He is the Music Director at Good Shepherd Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Monterey Park. He also conducts the Southern California Taiwanese Hakka Chorus, Arcadia Chinese Chorus, and Irvine Chinese Chorus.



**Robert Istad, a GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor who "fashions fluent and sumptuous readings" (*Voice of OC*) with his "phenomenal" artistry (*Los Angeles Times*), was appointed Pacific Chorale's artistic director in 2017.** Under his leadership, the chorus continues to expand its

reputation for excellence for delivering fresh, thought-provoking interpretations of beloved masterworks, rarely performed gems and newly commissioned pieces. His artistic impact can be heard on two recent recordings featuring Pacific Chorale, including the 2020 GRAMMY® Award-winning "Mahler's Eighth Symphony" with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gustavo Dudamel on Deutsche Grammophon (2021), for which he prepared the chorus. It won Best Choral Performance and also garnered a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Engineered Album, Classical. Additionally, Istad conducted the Pacific Chorale's recording "All Things Common: The Music of Tarik O'Regan" released on Yarlung Records (2020).

Istad has prepared choruses for such renowned conductors as Esa-Pekka Salonen, John Williams, John Mauceri, Keith Lockhart, Nicholas McGegan, Vasily Sinaisky, Sir Andrew Davis, Bramwell Tovey, Carl St.Clair, Eugene Kohn, Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, George Fenton, and Robert Moody. He regularly conducts and collaborates with Pacific Symphony, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, Sony Classical Records, Yarlung Records, Berkshire Choral International, and Long Beach Symphony Orchestra.

An esteemed educator, Istad is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where he was recognized as CSUF's 2016 Outstanding Professor of the Year. He conducts the University Singers and manages a large graduate conducting program, in addition to teaching courses on conducting and performance practice. Istad, who is on the Executive Board of Directors of Chorus America and serves as Dean of Chorus America's Conducting Academy, is in demand as guest conductor, lecturer, and clinician.



## *Thank you to our sponsors*

### **CHARLES AND LING ZHANG**

Pacific Symphony is grateful to Charlie and Ling Zhang for their generous sponsorship of the 2023 Lunar New Year Gala dinner and concert. Charlie is a true example of someone who has achieved the American Dream: coming to the U.S. in 1980, diligently working hard to become a highly successful entrepreneur and business owner, and bountifully giving back to his community.

Charlie is an esteemed Pacific Symphony Board member and both he and Ling are subscribers and high-level donors. Recently, the Zhangs were honored as Philanthropists of the Year on National Philanthropy Day of the Association of Fundraising Professionals in Orange County. Charlie was honored as an Ellis Island Medal of Honor recipient and was integral in presenting the Symphony's concert *Ellis Island: The Dream of America* by Peter Boyer, which was later broadcast on PBS' *Great Performances*.

In 2018, the Zhangs generously sponsored the Pacific Symphony Tour to China. Charlie and Ling have gifted the Symphony with the building for our administrative offices, **The Charlie and Ling Zhang Center for Musical Arts and Education**. We are tremendously indebted to Charlie and Ling and extend our sincerest gratitude for all their many contributions to Pacific Symphony.



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Year  
of the  
Rabbit

# PACIFIC CHORALE

The GRAMMY® Award-winning PACIFIC CHORALE, an Orange County “treasure” with a “fresh viewpoint” that “can sing anything you put in front of it, with polish, poise and tonal splendor” (*Orange County Register*) has “risen to national prominence” (*Los Angeles Times*) since its inception in 1968. Hailed for delivering “thrilling entertainment” (*Voice of OC*), the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts is noted for its artistic innovation and commitment to expanding the choral repertoire. It has given the world, U.S., and West Coast premieres of more than 35 works, including numerous commissions, by such lauded composers as John Adams, Jake Heggie, James Hopkins, David Lang, Morten Lauridsen, Tarik O'Regan, Karen Thomas, Frank Ticheli, András Gábor Virág, and Eric Whitacre. Among other artistic highlights, Pacific Chorale’s “The Wayfaring Project,” a stunning original concert film conceived and conducted by Robert Istad and produced during the pandemic, was picked up by PBS SoCal and KCET and will be streamed through December 1, 2024 on pbsocal.org, kcet.org and the PBS app, reaching audiences across the Southland and around the globe.

In addition to presenting its own concert series each season, Pacific Chorale enjoys a long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, with whom the choir made its highly anticipated Carnegie Hall debut in 2018. The chorus also regularly appears with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, with which it won the 2022 GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance as well as a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Engineered Album, Classical, for its contribution to the live

classical recording of “Mahler: Symphony No. 8, ‘Symphony of A Thousand,’” conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, featuring Leah Crocetto, Mihoko Fujimura, Ryan McKinny, Erin Morley, Tamara Mumford, Simon O'Neill, Morris Robinson, and Tamara Wilson; Los Angeles Philharmonic; Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Los Angeles Master Chorale, National Children's Chorus, and Pacific Chorale. The choir has performed with such leading orchestras as the Boston Symphony, National Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Musica Angelica, among others.

Pacific Chorale has garnered international acclaim as well, having toured extensively to more than 19 countries in Europe, South America, and Asia, and through collaborations with the London Symphony, Munich Symphony, L'Orchestre Lamoureux, and L'Orchestre de St-Louis-en-Île de Paris, National Orchestra of Belgium, China National Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Estonian National Symphony, and Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Argentina, among others.

Deeply committed to making choral music accessible to people of all ages, the organization, which has a discography of 14 self-produced recordings and an extensive collection of exceptional free digital offerings, places a significant emphasis on choral music education, providing after-school vocal programs for elementary school students, a choral summer camp for high school students, and an annual community-wide singing event at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. **PacificChorale.org**



# PACIFIC CHORALE ROSTER

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Robert Istad • Artistic Director & Conductor

*Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons*

*Artistic Director Chair*

Kibsaim Escarcega • Assistant Conductor

Andrew Brown • President & CEO

## SOPRANO

---

Rebecca Hasquet

*Section Leader*

Cristen Bornancini

Andria Nuñez Cabrera

Ariana Celeste

Chelsea Chaves

Ayanna Delk-Lewis

Sophia Do

Adrien Gonzalez

Savannah Greene

Brooke Lea Jackson

Barbara Kingsbury

*Rita Major Memorial Chair*

Natasa Kostic

Maria Cristina Navarro

Laura Pluth

Sarah Schaffner-Pepe

Jacqueline Taylor

Ruthanne Walker Rice

Victoria Wu

## ALTO

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Jane Hyun-Jung Shim

*Section Leader*

Emily Border

Anna Caplan

Denean R. Dyson

Harriet Edwards

I-Chin Betty Feinblatt

Marilyn Forsstrom

Kathryn D. Gibson

Allison Hieger

Eleen Hsu-Wentlandt

Stacey Y. Kikkawa

Kaii Lee

Pat Newton

Kathleen Preston

Lauren Shafer

Erin Theodorakis

## TENOR

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Nicholas Preston

*Section Leader, Roger W.*

*Johnson Memorial Chair*

Jephte Acosta

Michael Ben-Yehuda

Christopher Brush

Chris Buttars

Abraham Cervantes

Craig Davis

David Evered

Jason Francisco

Alan Garcia

Vincent Hans

Dan Haub

Steven M. Hoffman

Brian P. Katz

Craig S. Kistler

Drew Lewis

Jin Ming Liao

Benjamin Lopez

David López Alemán

Ricardo Martinez

Gerald McMillan

David Melendez

David Morales

Jesse Newby

Carl Porter

*Singers Memorial Chair*

Rohan Ramanan

Daniel Mizrain Ramon

Sammy Salvador

Jeff Wang

Yngwie Slassh Zamarippa

## BASS

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Ryan Thomas Antal

*Section Leader, Ron Gray*

*Legacy Chair*

Kyle Boshardy

James Brown

Alex Cardenas

Michael Fagerstedt

Louis Ferland

Karl Forsstrom

*Singers Memorial Chair*

Larry Gates

Guillermo Gonzalez

Matthew J. Gray

Randall Gremillion

Mark Hamilton

Jared Daniel Jones

Matthew Kellaway

Tom Mena

Martin Minnich

Emmanuel Miranda

Kenneth Moore

Fernando Muñoz

Seth Peelle

Raphael Poon

Ryan Ratcliff

George Reiss

Nathan Villamor



# AMERICAN FEEL YOUNG CHORUS

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**American Feel Young Chorus (AFYC) is a nonprofit organization formed by a group of friends who love music in Southern California in January 2015.** Conducted by Sam Wei-Chih Sun and dedicated to expanding the Chinese and Western choral music experience through performances and community. Our mission: To become the leader at amateur chorus in the U.S. by building a passionate team with artistic excellence and reputable image.

AFYC performed on various occasions including Orange County Chinese New Year celebrations, the *Yellow River Cantata* in Walt Disney Hall as part of the Memorial of World War II Victory Concert, in addition to local

concerts conducted by renowned conductors from China, including Jiao Miao and Li Xi Lin. AFYC has been growing rapidly and getting evolved into a well-known chorus in the Chinese American community in Southern California.

With the generous support from Charlie Zhang (founder of Pick Up Stix and Zion Enterprise, Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young, and Winner of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor), the Chairman of the Board of Directors, AFYC is committed to becoming the best amateur chorus in the U.S. by nurturing excellence in its members, while offering the finest repertoire and choral artistry.

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## SOPRANO

Cathy Chang  
Sandra Chiang  
Wen Yu Conklin  
Nan Ding  
Jenny Du  
Zhaoli Huang  
Lisa Huang  
Shiping Jiang  
Linda Z Lee  
Shanlei Lee  
Xuhong Li  
Liyang Lin  
Gigi Liu  
Sharon Shao  
Jessica Shi  
May Shu  
BingBetty Sun  
Sammi Sun  
Jean Tao  
Wei Wang  
Amy Weng  
Hanne Xian  
Karen Xie  
Linda Ye  
Hao Yu  
Yedda Zhang  
Megan Zhao

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## ALTO

Tao Chen  
Shirley Chen  
Grace Gao  
Heather Hu  
Maggie Jiang  
Wei Jing  
Cathy J Kaiser  
Jane Li  
Dana Liu  
Theresa Liu  
Sherry Lundstedt  
Lin Pu  
Jenny Pu  
Annie San  
Sherry Shan  
Shu Wang  
Jun Wang  
Yu Wang  
Wendy Wen  
Michelle Wu  
Sunan Xing  
Krystral Yan

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## TENOR

Steven Chiang  
Adam Lin  
Jeff Liu  
Guoxian Sun  
Owen Xueyuan Yang  
Louis Zhu

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## BASS

Victor Liu  
Jim Nie  
Howard Shen  
Stan Song  
George Yen  
Christopher



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## YAYA DANCE ACADEMY

**Kids and Teens:** Bella Chen, Allison Lee, Joann Lee, Zoe Chen, Apple Zhou, Melody Li, Jasmine Wong, Stephanie Chen, Chloe Zhao, Renee Liu, Annabelle Li, Anna Qin, Angela Zhang, Angela Ma, Merida Zhang, An Houteng, Eugenie Yuan, Rainie Wenwei Zhang, Hailey Shum, Mia Yuan, Victoria Cheung, Sophia Fu, Keshia Shi, Hailey Chan, Norah Chang, Claire Chang, Nina Bai, Anna Muqin Li, Kitty Han, Olivia Huang, Shirley Hu,

**Adults:** Ping Wang, Wei Wang, Jane Wan, Cindy Lee, Zhilei Shen, Kathy Xu, Shirly Meng, Anna Cheadle, Jessica Li, Eva Wang