

Pacific Chorale

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PACIFIC CHORALE HONORS RICHARD MESSENGER WITH INAUGURAL *JOHN ALEXANDER OUTSTANDING CHORAL EDUCATOR AWARD*

Forty-year veteran teacher and first choral director of Irvine High School recognized for contributions to the community through his work in choral music education

Honorarium to fund Irvine High's participation in choral commission from composer John Rutter

Costa Mesa, CA, June 28, 2010 – On Sunday, May 23rd, Irvine High School's long-time choral music teacher, Richard Messenger, received the *John Alexander Outstanding Choral Educator Award*. Mr. Messenger, who retires this year after forty years of teaching, is the first recipient of this award, given by Pacific Chorale in recognition of educators who are making an impact in their community. Pacific Chorale Artistic Director John Alexander and Chairman Emeritus and Vice-chairman of Education Mary Lyons presented the award at Pacific Chorale's annual Chairman's Dinner at Pinot Provence in Costa Mesa. Messenger will also be publicly recognized from the stage at Pacific Chorale's Choral Festival on Sunday, August 15th at the Orange County Performing Arts Center's Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

Messenger has requested that the \$1,000 honorarium accompanying the award be applied toward a commission from renowned choral composer John Rutter, in which Irvine High School is participating with a consortium of choruses through the auspices of Chorus America, the national service organization for choral music. The commissioned work, which is expected to be completed September 2010, will be a secular piece for SATB choir. All participating choruses will be acknowledged in the printed score. As Messenger notes, the participation fee per chorus is \$1,000, "so Pacific Chorale's award is a perfect match. This will be Irvine High School's third commission—and that would give me great satisfaction."

ABOUT RICHARD MESSENGER

Richard Messenger began his teaching career in Emmetsburg, Iowa, in 1969, following graduation from Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska. He moved to California in 1976 to pursue graduate studies at California State University, Fullerton. In 1977, he began the choral music program at Irvine High School. In the years since, his choirs have collaborated on many occasions with Pacific Symphony and have twice earned solo appearances at festivals at Carnegie Hall.

Mr. Messenger has been active in church music throughout his career and served as president of the National Association of Church Musicians. Since 2000, he has been the music director at St. Mark Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach. He is an adjunct professor of music education at Vanguard University and at California State University, Long Beach.

Messenger was Assistant Conductor of the Pacific Chorale from 1983 to 1997. He has served on the Executive Board of the California Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association and has served as chairman of the ACDA Repertoire and Standards Committee for the state of California.

In 2004, Mr. Messenger was honored as Irvine High School Teacher of the Year and High School Teacher

of the Year for Irvine Unified School District. He has been named "Arts Educator of the Year" by the Orange County Music and Arts Administrators, and in 2009 was the winner of the Irene Schoepfle Award for Distinguished Contributions to Orange County Music Education.

ABOUT THE JOHN ALEXANDER OUTSTANDING CHORAL EDUCATOR AWARD

Selected to honor those educators whose talent, passion and perseverance are making an impact, the John Alexander Outstanding Choral Educator Award recognizes a local choral educator who has made a difference in the lives of those who produce choral music. The award recipient is recognized on stage during Pacific Chorale's annual Choral Festival. The recipient will also receive a \$1,000 honorarium to help further the development of their chorus or program.

For more information about the John Alexander Outstanding Choral Educator Award, please contact Katherine Yang, Director of Education and Community Outreach, at Katherine@PacificChorale.org, or call (714) 662-2345.

ABOUT JOHN ALEXANDER

Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale since 1972, John Alexander is one of America's most respected choral conductors. His inspired leadership both on the podium and as an advocate for the advancement of the choral art has garnered national and international admiration and acclaim. Alexander retired in spring 2006 from his position of Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Fullerton, having been awarded the honor of Professor Emeritus. From 1970 to 1996, he held the position of Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Northridge where he won the "Outstanding Professor" Award in 1976. Alexander continues his involvement in the pre-professional training of choral conductors. He is in demand as a teacher, clinician, and adjudicator in choral festivals, seminars and workshops across the United States. In 2003, Chorus America honored him with the establishment of the "John Alexander Conducting Faculty Chair" for their national conducting workshops.

ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

Founded in 1968, Pacific Chorale is internationally recognized for exceptional artistic expression, stimulating American-focused programming, and influential education programs. Pacific Chorale presents a significant performance season of its own at the Orange County Performing Arts Center and is sought regularly to perform with the nation's leading symphonies. Under the inspired guidance of Artistic Director John Alexander, Pacific Chorale has infused an Old World art form with California's hallmark innovation and cultural independence. Pacific Chorale has a membership of 140 professional and volunteer singers. In addition to its long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, the Chorale has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Disney Hall on numerous occasions. Other noted collaborations include the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, the National Symphony, and the Long Beach, Pasadena, Riverside and San Diego symphonies. John Alexander and the Chorale have performed in 29 cities around the United States, and have toured extensively in Europe, South America and Asia.