

PACIFIC CHORALE HIRES EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS MANAGER

Katherine Ho joins staff of award-winning local arts organization

Santa Ana, CA, January 5, 2009 –Pacific Chorale President and CEO Kelly Ruggirello today announced the hiring of Katherine Ho as the Chorale’s new Education and Community Program Manager. “We are thrilled that Katherine has joined our team to spearhead the relaunch of our award-winning Education & Community Programs Department. Her professional background combines all the skills and expertise required to create meaningful, relevant and timely initiatives to meet the needs of our community,” said Ruggirello.

Ms. Ho brings a diverse background in non-profit administration to her position with Pacific Chorale, most recently serving as Associate Director of Education & Community Engagement for The Orchestras of Pasadena. While at Pasadena POPS, Katherine oversaw planning and implementation of numerous in-school and community programs. With a Master of Arts degree in Performing Arts Administration from New York University, as well as two Bachelors degrees, one in French Horn Performance and one in Sociology from UC Irvine, Katherine also has worked for Pacific Symphony and the New York Philharmonic in public relations and development, respectively.

ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE’S EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Throughout its 40-year history, Pacific Chorale has established a successful track record of implementing quality, meaningful and relevant education programs. Pacific Chorale’s Education Department has won numerous awards, including the Orange County Department of Education’s “Outstanding Contribution to Education Award” in 2002 and Chorus America’s inaugural national “Educational Outreach Award” in 1997.

In 2003, financial hardship resulting from economic insecurities necessitated downsizing the Education Department’s offerings and its personnel. Upon her arrival at Pacific Chorale in 2004, President Kelly Ruggirello focused on stabilizing Pacific Chorale’s administrative infrastructure and the organizational financial situation. Having closed these past three seasons in the black and with surpluses, Pacific Chorale is poised to rededicate its efforts to creating and implementing sequential music education programs to better serve the community.

The 2007/2008 season marked the launch of the “American Masterpieces Choral Festival,” an ambitious and unprecedented program created through a \$100,000 matching grant from the National Endowment of the Arts and supported by *The Wells Fargo Foundation* and other funders. This multi-faceted program included the following exciting components:

- High School Festival Day: massed choir of 125 students from 17 school districts, plus 67 students from 3 selected choirs, culminating in a side-by-side student/Pacific Chorale performance free to the public
- Bus-in Youth Concerts: provided free to 647 attendees from 11 Orange County K – 8 schools

- American Festival Chorus: 490 participants from 12 university, church and community choirs across the Orange County plus Pacific Chorale singers and alumni, culminating in a free public concert
- Intensive residencies with Alice Parker, Morten Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre, three of America's greatest choral composers, who conducted master classes and reading sessions with all participants. Additionally, their compositions were featured throughout the Festival.
- The *Young Composers Competition*, which generated 76 submissions from aspiring composers throughout the nation. Two composers were ultimately selected and their submissions received their world premieres during the Festival, performed by Pacific Chorale under the baton of its esteemed conductor, John Alexander.

Pacific Chorale's Education Department is currently managed by President & CEO Kelly Ruggirello, and governed by the Education Committee of the Board of Directors. Receiving her Masters in Education and Teaching Credential from UCLA, Ms. Ruggirello served for six years as a public school teacher and Visual & Performing Arts Mentor for Downey Unified School District, winning Teacher of the Year distinctions twice during her tenure. In 1993, Ms. Ruggirello became the first Director of Education for Pacific Symphony orchestra, and in creating the Department, won numerous national awards for groundbreaking educational initiatives, such as Class Act – an adopt-a-school partnership that has been emulated around the world. Ms. Ruggirello served seven years as Vice President of the Orange County High School of the Arts, where she was primarily responsible for raising over \$39 million to support the school's capital and annual fundraising campaigns.

FUTURE PLANS

“This is such an exciting time for Pacific Chorale,” said Ruggirello. “Thanks to some visionary corporate, foundation and individual supporters, we are able to get back into the very important business of educating people of all ages about the choral arts.” With staffing and seed funding in place, Pacific Chorale plans to continue expanding its offerings to include both adult and youth music education initiatives. A Community Sing, combined with Musicianship Classes, is planned for this summer. The Young Composer Competition will be expanded and possibly culminate next spring in partnership with CSU Fullerton. A High School Honors Choir is also in the research and development phase. As funding increases, so will new initiatives, such as school-based choral music education programs for the very young.

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. Ensembles of various sizes are selected from the membership according to the needs of the repertoire. 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 toured extensively in Europe, South America and Asia.

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. In his long and distinguished career Alexander has conducted hundreds of choral and orchestral performances in 27 countries around the globe. Noted as a specialist in conducting the choral/orchestral masterworks, he is also a strong proponent of American music, programming groundbreaking works by California composers and bringing twelve West Coast and world premieres to Southern California performance halls in the past thirteen years. Choruses prepared by John Alexander have performed under many of the most renowned conductors on the world stage, including Esa-Pekka Salonen, Seiji Ozawa, Leonard Slatkin, Zubin Mehta, Pierre Boulez, Lukas Foss, Keith Lockhart, John Mauceri, Michael Tilson Thomas, Gustavo Dudamel, Carl St.Clair, Marin Alsop, John Williams, Gerard Schwarz and Max Rudolf.