

# Pacific Chorale

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## PACIFIC CHORALE CONCLUDES 2010–2011 SEASON WITH “A POET’S VOICE”

**140-voice Chorale performs poetic text settings by Schubert, Brahms, Bruckner, Weber,  
Ralph Vaughan Williams and Randall Thompson**

**Joined by harpist Mindy Ball, pianist David Clemensen and horn quartet**

**Santa Ana, CA, May 4, 2011** – On Sunday, May 22, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Pacific Chorale will present “A Poet’s Voice,” the final concert of its 43<sup>rd</sup> season. Artistic Director John Alexander will conduct the 140-voice Chorale, joined by harpist Mindy Ball, pianist David Clemensen, and a quartet of French horns, performing selections by German Romantic composers Johannes Brahms, Anton Bruckner, Franz Schubert and Carl Maria von Weber. The concert will conclude with Ralph Vaughan Williams’ “Three Shakespeare Songs” and Randall Thompson’s memorable setting of poetry by American icon Robert Frost in *Frostiana*.

### A POET’S VOICE

Sunday, May 22, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

Concert preview with Robert Istad at 4:30 p.m.

Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Pacific Chorale

Mindy Ball, harp • David Clemensen, piano

Keith Popejoy, Jacki Sellers, James Taylor and Russell Dicey, horns

John Alexander, conducting

Franz Schubert	<i>Nachtgesang im Walde</i> (“Night Song in the Forest”), D.913 <i>Ständchen</i> (“Serenade”), D.920a <i>Der Gondelfahrer</i> (“The Gondolier”), D.809
Johannes Brahms	<i>O süsßer Mai</i> (“O sweet May”), Op. 93a, No. 3 Four Songs for Women’s Chorus, Horns and Harp, Op. 17
Anton Bruckner	<i>Abendzauber</i> (“Evening Magic”), WAB 57
Carl Maria von Weber	<i>Jägerchor</i> (“Huntsmen’s Chorus”) from <i>Euryanthe</i> , Op. 81
Ralph Vaughan Williams	Three Shakespeare Songs
Randall Thompson	<i>Frostiana: Seven Country Songs</i>

The three selections on the program by Franz Schubert (1797–1828) all use texts by the composer’s early-19<sup>th</sup>-century Viennese contemporaries: Johann Gabriel Seidl, Franz Grillparzer and Johann Mayrhofer. “Nachtgesang im Walde” describes the mystery and wonder of a forest at night. The piece, for men’s voices with accompaniment for four horns was written at the behest of the brothers E. C. and J. R. Lewy. The Lewys were

accomplished hornists who organized the work's premiere performance in 1827. "Ständchen," a serenade for mezzo-soprano soloist and chorus, was commissioned for the birthday celebration of a female friend. Schubert had to hastily rewrite the work when it transpired that the intended choristers were in fact female, not male as he had initially presumed. Pacific Chorale will be performing the composer's original version for men's voices. "Der Gondelfahrer," based on a text by Schubert's frequent collaborator Mayrhofer, presents another night scene, this one depicting the gondolas of Venice.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) wrote many part-songs for chorus, from which John Alexander has selected "O süßer Mai" of 1884, an *a cappella* meditation on the season of spring with text by Karl Achim von Arnim. More unique within the composer's output are the four songs for women's voices, two horns and harp that Brahms wrote for a Hamburg ensemble he directed. Beyond their unique performing forces, the songs are notable for their text selections, particularly "Come away, death," on a song from William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, and the closing movement "Song of Fingal," based on the highly influential "Ossian" poems of James Macpherson. "Ossian" later proved to be not the third-century Gaelic bard that the author claimed, but a fabricated pseudonym for Macpherson himself.

Anton Bruckner's (1824–1896) "Abendzauber" is an oddity in the literature: a rhapsodic invocation of an alpine landscape for baritone solo, male chorus, horn quartet, and a trio of yodelers! Despite the apparent incongruity of the ensemble, the work is lushly written and harmonically sophisticated, if understandably rarely heard. The first half of the concert concludes with a hunting chorus from the opera *Euryanthe* (1823), something of a trademark of composer Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826), who included similar scenes in other operas such as *Der Freischütz* (1821).

In 1951, the British Federation of Music Festivals commissioned Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) to write a new piece for a national choral competition. The result was the Three Shakespeare Songs for *a cappella* chorus, using texts from *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. "A Poet's Voice" concludes with Randall Thompson's (1899–1984) seven-song cycle *Frostiana*, commissioned in 1959 for the bicentennial celebration of Amherst, Massachusetts, Robert Frost's hometown. While Frost's own reaction to hearing his poetry set to music has not been reliably documented (anecdotal accounts range from "Play it again!" to outright disgust), *Frostiana* was quickly embraced by the choral community. Pacific Chorale presented the West Coast premiere of the cycle's orchestrated version in 1989, but this concert will mark the Chorale's first performance using Thompson's original scoring for piano accompaniment.

"A Poet's Voice" has been made possible, in part, by support from season sponsors Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons, and by underwriting gifts from Martin and Margie Hubbard, Warren Coy, and Lenora Meister and Salt-Away Products, Inc.

## TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for "A Poet's Voice" are on sale now through the Chorale's ticket office, (714) 662-2345 and online at the Chorale's website, [www.pacificchorale.org](http://www.pacificchorale.org). The ticket office is open 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday. Tickets may also be purchased through the Segerstrom Center for the Arts box office, both in person and by calling 714-556-2787, and online at [www.scfta.org](http://www.scfta.org).

## TICKET PRICING

\$15	Promenade Circle Sides/Grand Tier Rows F-G
\$25	Orchestra Rows AA-CC/Grand Tier Rows A-E
\$40	Orchestra Rows A-C/Promenade Circle

\$50	Orchestra Terrace Sides
\$60	Dress Circle Sides
\$65	Orchestra Rows D-F/Dress Circle Center
\$75	Orchestra Rows G-R/Orchestra Terrace Center
\$125	Box Circle

For more information, patrons can call Pacific Chorale at (714) 662-2345 or visit [www.pacificchorale.org](http://www.pacificchorale.org).

All programs are subject to change. For further press information, please contact Ryan McSweeney at (714) 662-2345 or email [ryan@pacificchorale.org](mailto:ryan@pacificchorale.org).

### **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 Segerstrom Center for the Arts 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 numerous West Coast and world premieres to Southern California performance halls. 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, Bramwell Tovey, Marin Alsop, John Williams, JoAnn Falletta, Sir Andrew Davis, Nicholas McGegan, Ivor Bolton, Gerard Schwarz and Max Rudolf.

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