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**PACIFIC CHORALE'S *TO THE HANDS* FILM  
RECEIVES MAJOR FILM FESTIVAL RECOGNITION:  
OFFICIAL SELECTION AND WORLD PREMIERE  
AT NEWPORT BEACH FILM FESTIVAL**

**Costa Mesa, CA (September 16, 2025)** — The GRAMMY® Award-winning Pacific Chorale announced today that its choral-theatrical film *To the Hands* is an Official Selection at the **Newport Beach Film Festival, receiving its world premiere screening on October 21, 2025.** The film will additionally receive its Los Angeles County premiere at the **San Pedro International Film Festival as an Official Selection November 6-9.** Rooted in Orange County and recorded in Samueli Theater at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, the 66-minute self-produced film explores human displacement and homelessness. Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw's powerful score is the thematic foundation, combining with a tactile blend of live performance, choreography, and visual design.

Recently celebrating its 25th anniversary, the Newport Beach Film Festival (NBFF) is one of the largest luxury lifestyle film festivals in the United States. The event brings an internationally curated collection of films and vibrant cultural gatherings to the beautiful Southern California coast. Committed to championing the work of original storytellers from around the globe, the Festival celebrates contemporary screen culture and cinematic excellence, engaging the community in compelling conversations with filmmakers and artists. The Newport Beach Film Festival is sponsored in part by UCI Health, Los Angeles Times The Envelope, KIA, Fashion Island, and the City of Newport Beach. Festival dates are October 16-23, 2025.

Anchored by Shaw's eponymous *To the Hands*, itself a modern response to Buxtehude's 1680 *Ad Manus*, Pacific Chorale's film asks an urgent, centuries-old question: "*Would you harbor me? Would I harbor you?*" In a journey that is both intimate and universal, it is a reflection and reckoning on human fragility, strength, complicity, and care. *To the Hands* is an invitation to imagine a world in which we hold and heal each other's wounds.

## Quotes from Leadership

### **Robert Istad, Artistic Director, Pacific Chorale**

“We are elated that our film will receive its world premiere at the Newport Beach Film Festival, right here in Orange County. The project epitomizes Pacific Chorale’s mission to connect and innovate through choral art while also asking urgent societal questions. It is our call for empathy and service in a divided time. To bring our work into the cinematic medium and be highlighted in this way is an honor as a nonprofit organization and as a choir. Pacific Chorale will be on the red carpet!”

### **Marty Austin Lamar, Director, *To the Hands***

“As director, my vision for Pacific Chorale’s *To the Hands* was to blur the lines between concert, ritual, and cinema, creating an immersive space where music, movement, and light could speak together. It was a joy to work with such extraordinary artists in shaping this experience, and I am thrilled to see the film resonate with audiences through the Newport Beach Film Festival.”

### **Alex Nelson, Vice President of Artistic Production, Pacific Chorale**

“This film is the most distinctive project produced by Pacific Chorale in its 58-year history. Together with Marty and Rob, an incredible team of creators formed a lament for the present and appeal for the future. As an independent nonprofit chorus, we are proud and grateful to be recognized by the film community for this work. I grew up in San Pedro, and it’s wonderful to be included in my hometown’s film festival. We are eager to share our film widely over the coming months.”

## Festival Recognition

In addition to screening at the **Newport Beach Film Festival as an Official Selection**, Pacific Chorale’s *To the Hands* will receive its Los Angeles County premiere as an **Official Selection at the San Pedro International Film Festival**. Additional recognition for *To the Hands* across the national and international film festival circuit includes:

- **SoCal Film Awards** – *Cultural Impact Award*
- **Los Angeles Independent Film Festival** – *Honorable Mention*
- **Cannes Arts Fest** – Nominee, *Best Independent Film*
- **Chicago Indie Film Awards** – Nominee, *Best Experimental*
- **LA International Cinema Awards** – Nominee, *Best Human Rights*
- **San Diego Independent Cinema Awards** – Nominee, *Best Experimental*



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## Community Partnerships

Through *To the Hands*, Pacific Chorale extends its mission beyond the concert hall by highlighting the vital work of local nonprofits addressing homelessness and displacement: **Community Action Partnership of Orange County, Friendship Shelter, and Tiyya Foundation.**

The project is sponsored by longtime cultural partners **Seegerstrom Center for the Arts** and the **National Endowment for the Arts**. *To the Hands* is made possible through the generous support of Platinum Sponsor Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons, Pacific Chorale's Artistic Innovation Fund, and the Ron Rudderow Legacy Fund.

## About the Film

*To the Hands* was recorded live September 14–15, 2024, at Samueli Theater, Seegerstrom Center for the Arts, in Costa Mesa, California. The film was produced by Robert Istad and Alex Nelson, directed by Marty Austin Lamar, with lighting design by Lauren K.O. Dixon, choreography by Courtney Ozovek, projection design by Omar Ramos, and recording and editing by Christian Amonson and Arts Laureate. On screen artists include 16 singers of Pacific Chorale, Etienne Gara and string instrumentalists of Delirium Musicum, David Clemensen on keyboard, five dancers from California State University Fullerton, with Robert Istad conducting. Music by Caroline Shaw, Ysaÿe Barnwell, Ken Burton, Dieterich Buxtehude, Shawn Kirchner, Michael McGlynn, Sarah McLachlan, Kevin Siegfried, Rick Hucknall (Simply Red), and Moira Smiley. Runtime: 66 minutes.

For more information about *To the Hands*, visit: [www.pacificchorale.org/tothehands](http://www.pacificchorale.org/tothehands)

## Ticket info for Screenings

Tickets for *To the Hands* at the Newport Beach Film Festival are \$20. The screening will take place at Starlight Triangle Cinemas, 1870 Harbor Blvd. in Costa Mesa, on Tuesday, October 21 at 5:45 p.m.. Tickets are available through the festival's website at <https://newportbeachff2025.eventive.org/films/68b789c05465449efa6f5c1b>

## ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

The GRAMMY® Award-winning **Pacific Chorale**, led by Artistic Director **Robert Istad**, is celebrated for its artistry, innovation, and powerful performances that inspire audiences across Orange County, California and beyond. Hailed as an OC “treasure” with a “fresh viewpoint” that “can sing anything you put in front of it with polish, poise and tonal



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splendor” (*OC Register*), the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts has risen to national prominence since its founding in 1968.

Pacific Chorale has premiered more than 40 works by leading composers, collaborates regularly with Pacific Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and has performed with major orchestras across the United States and abroad. In 2022, the Chorale received a GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance for its contribution to the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s recording of *Mahler: Symphony No. 8* under Gustavo Dudamel.

Beyond the concert hall, Pacific Chorale is deeply committed to community impact, with acclaimed recordings, free digital offerings, and education programs serving students and families throughout Orange County.

Learn More at [www.pacificchorale.org](http://www.pacificchorale.org)

#### ABOUT NEWPORT BEACH FILM FESTIVAL

The Newport Beach Film Festival is celebrating 26 years of cinematic excellence. Recognized as the Nation’s largest luxury lifestyle film festival, NBFF has become a pivotal stop on Hollywood’s award’s circuit. Hosting over 58,000 attendees in the heart of the California riviera, The Festival boasts a curated program of over 300 films from 50 countries. In addition to world premieres and industry events like NBFF HONORS featuring Variety’s 10 Actors to Watch, The Festival highlights the region’s top restaurants along with nightly seaside receptions and galas.

Learn More at <https://newportbeachfilmfest.com/>

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