

USC THORNTON CONCERT CHOIR: *LUX MUSICA*



Thursday | **APRIL 28, 2016** | 7:30 PM
ALFRED NEWMAN RECITAL HALL
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

TRAM SPARKS
NATHANIEL FRYML
HOPE THOMPSON
JAIRUS GIL-BRAMBILA
SAMUEL ORAM

guest conductor
assistant conductor
student conductor
student conductor
accompanist

USC Thornton
School of Music

PROGRAM

W.A. MOZART

(1756 – 1791)

***Vesperae solennes de confessore*, K.V. 339**

IV. Laudate pueri

V. Laudate Dominum

Lucie Shelley, soprano

WILLIAM BYRD

(1543 – 1623)

Ave verum corpus

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

(1685 – 1759)

**Chorus: “And with His stripes”
from *Messiah***

Hope Thompson, conductor

NICK STRIMPLE

(b. 1946)

Leshoni Konanta Elohai

Isabella Custino, Justin Jeon,

Daniel Newman-Lessler, Jesse Meltz,

Hope Thompson, Emma Vranich,

Eric Yu, cantors

JOSEF RHEINBERGER

(1839 – 1901)

Abendfriede

(please hold applause)

SAMUEL BARBER

(1910 – 1981)

Sure on this shining night

THOMAS MORLEY

(1558 – 1602)

My bonny lass she smileth

Jairus Gil-Brambila, conductor

*The use of flash cameras, video cameras, and other recording devices
is not permitted. Please turn off all cell phones.*

*Due to safety considerations, members of the audience
are not allowed backstage prior to or following performances.*

STEPHEN CHATMAN

(b. 1950)

DANIEL PINKHAM

(1923 – 2006)

ADAPT. BY STEPHEN PAULUS

(1949 – 2014)

ARR. BY SHAWN KIRCHNER

(b. 1970)

You have ravished my heart

Wedding Cantata

III. Awake, O north wind

IV. Epilogue: Set me as a seal

Jairus Gil-Brambila, conductor

The Road Home

Cassie Schmitt, soprano

Wana Baraka

PROGRAM NOTES

W.A. MOZART

Vesperae solennes de confessore, K.V. 339

The career of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) is remarkable both from the perspective of his prodigious talent as a child and the quantity of outstanding music he was able to produce in his short life. His untimely death at the age of 35 has caused many to wonder what direction his music might have taken in later decades. The young Mozart wrote music solidly in the Classical style, and while he is perhaps best remembered for his unparalleled gift of melodic invention, he was also a skilled technician, having mastered both the popularly elegant homophony of his day as well as the polyphonic traditions handed down to him from the Baroque and Renaissance eras. Both approaches can be readily heard in his collection of psalm settings, *Vesperae solennes de confessore*.

In 1779 and 1780, Mozart composed two very similar settings of the *Solemn Vespers* for the Salzburg Cathedral, both of which contain six movements; use identical texts; and are scored identically for SATB soloists and choir, brass, strings, continuo, and timpani. The later setting (K.V. 339) is the better-known, due in large part to the popularity of Movement V, one of those excerpted on this program. The title “de confessor” (not Mozart’s inscription) likely refers to its intended use for the feast day of a notable saint, although the specific saint is unknown.

In Movement IV of the *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, Mozart writes in a Renaissance style, utilizing strict points of imitation between the four choral voice parts and indicating that the instrumental accompaniment is to be *colla parte* (doubling the vocal lines). The character of the movement, set in D minor, is far more dramatic than in his 1779 setting, perhaps drawing particular attention to the paradoxical association of “God...on high,” whose name is to be praised wherever the sun shines, with those who dwell in the “dust.” Movement V, which is set in the relative key of F major, also distances itself from its parallel 1779 movement by exchanging virtuosic melismas for simple, soaring lines. The soprano’s exposition of the shortest psalm in Scripture is followed by a reverent choral response, after which soloist and chorus join together to sing “Amen.”

Laudate pueri Dominum, laudate nomen Domini.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.

A solis ortu usque ad occasum laudabile nomen Domini.

Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus et super coelos gloria ejus.

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster, qui in altis habitat,

Et humilia respicit in coelo et in terra?

Suscitans a terra inopem et de stercore erigens pauperem;

Ut colloset eum cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui.

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo, matrem filiorum laetantem.

Gloria patri, et filio, et spiritui sancto,

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.

Amen. (Ps. 112, Vulgate)

Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised.
The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.
Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high,
Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth?
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;
That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.
He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will ever be, even unto ages of ages.
Amen. (Ps. 113, King James Version)

*Laudate Dominum omnes gentes; laudate eum omnes populi:
Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus, et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.*

*Gloria patri, et filio, et spiritui sancto,
Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen. (Ps. 116, Vulgate)*

O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people;
For his merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will ever be, even unto ages of ages.
Amen. (Ps. 117, King James Version)

– Nathan Fryml

WILLIAM BYRD ***Ave verum corpus***

William Byrd (1543-1623) began his musical career as a chorister in Queen Mary's Chapel Royal. The young musician held this position at a time when Queen Mary restored Catholicism in England after Henry VIII Anglicized the country. With the restoration of Catholicism came the restoration of the Catholic liturgical style and a deviation from the simple style of Protestant hymns. Though raised in a Protestant home, Byrd became increasingly involved in Catholicism. He remained devout all his life, despite the growing persecution of Catholics in England.

Byrd crafts his *Ave verum corpus* in *stile antico* ("ancient style," conscious of historical, contrapuntal traditions), while also including numerous homorhythmic sections that show influence from his Protestant roots. The text is clearly understood but elevated by tasteful polyphonic moments, especially in the final section of "miserere mei," as each voice pleads one after the other for mercy. The composition ends with a solemn "Amen." This motet is beautiful for its simplicity and for Byrd's marked attention to meaningfully setting this sacred text.

*Ave verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine,
Vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine,
Cujus latus perforatum fluxit aqua et sanguine:
Esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.*

*O dulcis [Jesu], O pie [Jesu],
O Jesu, fili Mariae,
Miserere mei. Amen.*

Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary,
Who having truly suffered, was sacrificed on the cross for mankind,
Whose pierced side flowed with water and blood:
May it be for us a foretaste in the trial of death.

O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus,
O Jesus, son of Mary,
Have mercy on me. Amen.

– Hope Thompson

G.F. HANDEL **“And with His stripes” from *Messiah***

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) was born in Halle, Germany. Although his father objected to his desire to study music, Handel learned to play organ and was composing for the organ, oboe and violin by the age of ten. He toured Italy, and eventually moved to London and made it his permanent home. There he was commissioned to write his opera *Rinaldo* (1710), the first work that garnered widespread recognition for the composer. He wrote several others operas but eventually turned to writing oratorios, the most famous being *Messiah*, which debuted in 1742. In addition to his operas and oratorios, Handel's *concerti grossi*, anthems and orchestral compositions also brought him much success.

Handel influenced countless composers including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Melodic material from Handel's chorus “And with His Stripes” from Part II of *Messiah*, is also found in the Kyrie from Mozart's Requiem, written in 1791. A similar melodic shape also appears in the *Laudate pueri* from Mozart's *Vesperae solennes de confessore* composed in 1780. The only text for Handel's composition is the last part of Isaiah 53:5, “... and with His stripes we are healed.” This short phrase carries significant weight in the Passion story, thus meriting its own movement. The subject and countersubject of the fugue also stress the importance of the text, with dissonance on the word “stripes” drawing attention to the anguish suffered by Christ for the sake of those he loved.

– Hope Thompson

NICK STRIMPLE

Leshoni Konanta Elohai

USC faculty member Nick Strimple (b. 1946) has experienced wide-ranging career successes in his work as an internationally renowned conductor, composer/arranger, lecturer, and author. As founder and director of the Los Angeles Zimriyah Chorale, Dr. Strimple has devoted considerable efforts to the presentation of music by Jewish composers, both modern and historic. He has distinguished himself as an expert in music of the Holocaust and has written and arranged a substantial body of music for Jewish liturgical and non-liturgical use. *Leshoni Konanta Elohai* is a recent commission for the installation of a cantor at a major synagogue in greater Los Angeles in 2015.

The text for *Leshoni Konanta Elohai* is attributed to Solomon ibn Gabirol, an eleventh-century Jewish philosopher and poet who lived in Andalusia (the southern portion of the Iberian peninsula). This poem falls into the category of Jewish *piyutim*, or “liturgical poetry,” writings traditionally associated with formal prayer. The prayer “Leshoni Konanta” is typically used by Sephardic communities as part of Passover and Shemini Atzeret liturgy and functions as a *reshut*, or “permission,” in which the speaker seeks permission to bring his literal requests before God. This particular prayer of permission focuses on the all-encompassing, constant provision of God that makes praise and petition even possible.

Strimple sets lines of the traditional Jewish prayer in alternation with a poetic English translation by Deborah Silver. A solo cantor sings the original *piyut* in four sections, and the choir responds to each with the corresponding English translation, set to essentially identical music for the first three responses. The final section of the cantor’s *piyut*, as well as the corresponding choral response, are dramatically extended and sung at full dynamic as the prayer reaches a climatic request for God’s protection. The music then relaxes and settles into a peaceful yet fervent reiteration of the final phrase, “My Lord, do not delay.”

*Leshoni konanta Elohai vativchar
B'shirim shesamta b'fi tov mimishchar.*

My God: 'tis Thou didst frame my tongue and placed it in me fit for prayer,
Provisioned it with rhyme and song richer by far than merchant's ware.

*V'negdach konanta tz'adai mimishchar
V'li garon tata b'kori lonichar.*

O from the first didst Thou direct my steps to turn ever to Thee;
My throat with love dost Thou protect that parched and hoarse it ne'er shall be.

*V'yitzri hilibanta k'mo tzemer tzachar
V'la kein lo shata l'vavi bi s'charchar.*

My soul, by Thy hand purified, whiter than whitest wool doth blaze,
And Thou dost hold my heart and mind free from distraction Thee to praise.

*Heyeih sitri ata k'etmol uchmachar
Umagini atah Elohai al t'achar.*

O now be Thou my refuge sure tomorrow as for yesterday;
Encompass me and shield me: Lord my God, my source, do not delay.

– Nathan Fryml

JOSEF RHEINBERGER
Abendfriede

The late nineteenth century German organist and composer Josef Gabriel Rheinberger (1839-1901) was a child prodigy like his predecessor Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, though unlike Mozart the world traveler, Rheinberger spent nearly his entire career in Munich. Rheinberger aligned himself with neither the New German School (typified by the hyper-Romantic Wagner), nor the neo-conservative (reactive) and highly influential “Society of St. Cecilia.” Though a well-regarded music director and highly sought-after teacher and composer during his lifetime, Rheinberger’s music experienced a severe decline in popularity and use in the early decades of the twentieth century. This temporary neglect was followed by a dramatic “rediscovery” late in the century that has led to a resurgence of his major sacred works on concert programs and increasing interest in his lesser-known chamber and secular output, *Abendfriede* being an excellent example.

Abendfriede (“Evening Peace”) was composed in 1871, the fifth of a set of choral part-songs published as *Im neuen Frühling : 5 Lieder für gemischten Chor*, Op. 52 (“The New Spring: 5 Songs for Mixed Chorus”). The poem “*Abendfriede*” was written by Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866). In the opening bars, one can hear the swallow soaring in the soprano line before coming to rest lightly on a repeated “A.” A few bars later, the tenor voice holds the word *friede* (“peace”) as the other voices sing an intimate, dotted figure. As the opening melody returns, now in the alto voice and transposed down the interval of a 4th, one can feel the warm glow of the waning sun. The swallow sings eagerly of the beautiful morning sure to come before drifting off into reflective slumber.

*Die Schwalbe schwingt zum Abendliede
sich auf das Stänglein unterm Dach,
im Feld und in der Stadt ist Friede,
Fried ist im haus und im Gemach.*

The swallow soars for its evening song
to the perch under the roof;
peace lies over the fields and in the town,
peace is in the house and in the chamber.

*Ein Schimmer fällt vom Abendrote
Leis in die stille Strass herein,
und vorm Entschlafen sagt der Bote,
es werd ein schöner Morgen sein!*

A shimmer from the sunset falls
softly into the quiet street,
and before dying away, the messenger says,
it will be a beautiful morning!

– Nathan Fryml

SAMUEL BARBER

Sure on this shining night

Samuel Barber (1910-1981), one of the first students to enter the new Curtis Institute of Music in 1924, enjoyed remarkable success as a composer, pianist, and vocalist at a very early age. He produced enormously popular orchestral and operatic works (for which he won two Pulitzer Prizes) in addition to writing over 100 art songs. If there is one criticism leveled against Barber, it is that he was rather European in his compositional style, a fact which, while preventing him from garnering any great consideration as an American innovator, nonetheless has left us with a body of high-quality, often breathtakingly-beautiful music.

Sure on this shining night is a choral arrangement Barber made of an art song he wrote nearly 30 years earlier. The song is the third in a set of *Four Songs*, Op. 13 (1937-40), in which the composer set works by four different poets, one of whom was American poet James Agee (1909-1955) whose work Barber would continue to use and with whom he would later form a strong friendship. Agee's poem was untitled, published in a 1934 collection called *Permit Me Voyage*. Barber called his song by the poem's first line, "Sure on this shining night," and he loved to tell the story of how he was once asked by a phone operator to sing the opening bars of his "hit" song as proof of his identity. Barber's arrangement moves the characteristic canonic lines (originally between soprano solo and piano) into the choral parts, with sopranos and tenors (and later sopranos and altos) offset by a bar and the interval of a minor 3rd. However, Barber's choral version retains the gently pulsating piano accompaniment, so gracefully reminiscent of the soft light the night gives.

Sure on this shining night
Of star-made shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.
The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.
Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder wand'ring far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

– Nathan Fryml

THOMAS MORLEY

My bonnie lass she smileth

Although Thomas Morley (1557-1602) left a substantial body of sacred music (service music, psalms, motets, and anthems) under the influence of William Byrd (1539/40-1623), his output of English secular music was pivotal, especially for the development of the English madrigal. Religious political tension and his waning allegiance to the Catholic Church, breaking at the turn of the century, provided sufficient impetus for him to delve into sacred music for the Protestant Church, and allowed him to explore writing secular music in the Franco-Flemish style of Italian madrigals. His close association with Byrd served to his benefit,

allowing for him to partake in the music publishing monopoly, and some years later (1598), Morley published a volume of English versions of selected Italian madrigals. His treatise *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (dedicated to Byrd) gives insight to the theoretical basis of composition of his own time and of earlier composers. Morley's mastery over the Italian madrigal style can be appreciated in the clarity of texture reflective of the premadrigalian English polyphony, while it still maintains the harmonic warmth, lively rhythms and harmonic simplicity so attractive in the Italian madrigal.

Morley's first madrigals (comprising a set of 22) were published in 1594, and his 20 ballets were published in 1595. *My bonnie lass*, published in his *First Book of Balletts to Five Voices* is light in character, homophonic, strophic, and dance-like (as denoted by the 'fa-la-la' refrains). Morley adapted madrigals of Giovanni Gastoldi, Luca Marenzio, Giovanni Croce and Orazio Vecchi into English, and *My bonnie lass* is actually an English reworking of an Italian madrigal by Gastoldi. The poetic structure comprises two repeated sections (AABB), and each section begins homophonically with the melody in the top voice.

My bonny lass she smileth,
When she my heart beguileth.
When she her sweet eye turneth,
O how my heart it burneth.

Smile less dear love therefore,
And you shall love me more.
Dear love call in their light,
Or else you'll burn me quite.

– Jairus Gil-Brambila

STEPHEN CHATMAN ***You have ravished my heart***

A prominent Canadian composer of international repute, Stephen Chatman (b. 1950) is the head of the composition department at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. In addition to works for various instrumental ensembles and soloists, Dr. Chatman has written nearly 100 choral works. His compositions were generally "complex, virtuosic, and atonal" prior to 1976, but in the late 1970s he began to incorporate a wide variety of techniques which gave his music a more rounded character. In 1982, a rather dramatic shift towards lyricism and folk-like character occurred, the first composition in this new style being his *cappella* choral work, *You have ravished my heart*.

Chatman's text for *You have ravished my heart* is adapted from the Song of Solomon 4:9-16, a conversation between two passionate lovers. At the start of the work, long lines weave around a "C" pedal tone, moving in and out of parallel with each another, yielding a mysterious quality perhaps indicative of the intoxicating effect the bride's eyes have upon the heart of the groom. The music then transitions to new tonal centers, albeit with similar motion of voices, as the focus of the groom shifts to take in other aspects of his beloved's body and adornment. A return to the opening music accompanies the groom's rapt consideration of his bride's devotion solely to him and preservation of her fruit for him alone.

You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride!
You have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your necklace.
How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is your love than wine
and the scent of your oils than any spice.
Your lips distil nectar, my bride;
honey and milk are under your tongue.
A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
a fountain sealed.
Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates,
henna with nard and saffron, calamus, cinnamon,
all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloe,
a garden fountain, a well, and flowing streams.
Awake, O north wind:
Let my beloved come to his garden
and eat its choicest fruit.

– Nathan Fryml

DANIEL PINKHAM ***Wedding Cantata***

Although Daniel Pinkham (1923-2006) wrote largely for the church, he in no way considered himself a sacred music composer, asserting that the church was a more secure platform through which he could hope to hear his music performed more than once. Pinkham was an innovator, and his compositional style explores a unique modern harmonic language, yet with the Baroque economy of instrumentation harkening back to Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). He received honorary degrees from Nebraska Wesleyan University, Adrian College, Westminster Choir College, New England Conservatory, Ithaca College, and Boston Conservatory. Pinkham held teaching posts at several music institutions, and was Music Director Emeritus of the historic King's Chapel in Boston (one of the first American churches with a pipe organ) for 42 years.

Derived from the *Song of Solomon*, the text of movement III (*Awake, O north wind*) from Pinkham's four-movement *Wedding Cantata* for mixed voices and piano accompaniment may be interpreted as the communion in which the Christian church offers service to Christ. The text tells of a lover's dispensation to share her life with her beloved. The speaker beseeches the north and south winds to blow, which may be understood liturgically to be the comforting spirit of God upon the church. In the context of the poetry, the unity of the lovers is seen through the garden in which the lover 'eats his pleasant fruits.' The movement opens with the first verse sung by the women, then repeated by the men, signifying the unity of the bride and groom. The text is then set canonically eventually breaking into imitative polyphony, and ending with the entire choir singing the word 'blow' three times to signify the strong winds of love.

Movement IV (*Epilogue: Set me as a seal*) is more solemn than *Awake, O north wind*, and represents the bride and groom exchanging vows at the altar. The chordal rhythmic motion

and unified alignment of text gives a sense of clarity, but also may reflect the agreement in the vows being made. The melodic motion in the soprano and tenor ascends on the word “arm,” underlining the importance of the vows while the text “for love is strong” highlights the power they each have to preserve or destroy their marriage. The movement ends with a prayerful “Amen.”

Awake, O north wind;
and come, thou south;
Blow upon my garden,
that the spices may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his pleasant fruits. (Song of Songs 4:16)

Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
As a seal upon thy arm:
For love is strong. Amen. (Song of Songs 8:6)

– Jairus Gil-Brambila

ADAPT. BY STEPHEN PAULUS
The Road Home

Grammy Award-winning composer Stephen Paulus (1949-2014) was raised and educated in Minnesota and spent much of his career in the Twin Cities area, composing over 450 works before complications from a major stroke took his life in October of 2014. Best known for his operas and choral music, his most famous choral work, *Pilgrims’ Hymn*, was sung at the funerals of Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford. The texts for both *Pilgrims’ Hymn* and *The Road Home* were penned after the melodies were already written (or in the case of the latter work, selected) by the composer. Here is a brief description of *The Road Home* by Paulus himself:

“In the Spring of 2001 I received a commission from the Dale Warland Singers to write a short “folk” type choral arrangement. I had discovered a tune in a folk song book called “The Lone Wild Bird.” I fell in love with it, made a short recording and asked my good friend and colleague, Michael Dennis Browne to write new words for this tune. The tune is taken from *The Southern Harmony Songbook* of 1835. It is pentatonic and that is part of its attraction. Pentatonic scales have been extant for centuries and are prevalent in almost all musical cultures throughout the world. They are universal. Michael crafted three verses and gave it the title “*The Road Home*.” He writes so eloquently about “returning” and “coming home” after being lost or wandering. Again, this is another universal theme and it has resonated well with choirs around the world.”

Poet Michael Browne notes how he was searching for a “significant simplicity, something memorable and resonant and patterned....a persona [outside] myself, though [with] a ‘personal vibration’ to it.” A resemblance of the opening pitches to the Scottish song “Loch Lomond” in conjunction with personal life circumstances and the yearning implicit in the tune led Browne to pen these simple, resonant words.

Tell me where is the road I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost, so long ago?
All these years I have wandered, Oh when will I know
There's a way, there's a road that will lead me home?

After wind, after rain, when the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream in the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling from far away,
There's a voice I can hear that will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me, come away is the call,
With love in your heart as the only song;
There is no such beauty as where you belong,
Rise up, follow me, I will lead you home.

– Nathan Fryml

ARR. BY SHAWN KIRCHNER
Wana Baraka

Another American composer of yet a younger generation, Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970) has served as the composer in residence for the Los Angeles Master Chorale since 2012. He is also an accomplished singer/songwriter, pianist, conductor, and church musician. *Wana Baraka*, arguably his best-known choral work to date, is a simple yet joy-infused arrangement of a popular Kenyan religious song. *Wana Baraka* has been performed by choirs the world over, and in 2012 it was sung by the Nairobi Chamber Choir as part of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations honoring the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Beginning “as if from a distance,” the choir takes on the character of a procession of excited worshipers. Kirchner weaves into the texture various syncopations, simple (clear/honest) harmonies, and call and response, all characteristic of Kenyan communal song and reflective of the blessings experienced by those who pray. The arrangement never relinquishes its intensity, building gradually and constantly to a final, fortissimo, accented reiteration of “[Jesus] said so!”

Wana Baraka wale waombao;
Yesu mwenyewe alisema. Alleluya!
Wana amani,
Wana furaha,
Wana uzima.

They have blessings, those who pray;
Jesus himself said so. Hallelujah!
They have peace,
They have joy,
They have well-being.

– Nathan Fryml

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



DR. TRAM SPARKS

Tram Sparks joined the USC Thornton faculty as Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Choral and Sacred Music. Prior to her move from Philadelphia to Los Angeles in 2009, Sparks was Associate Professor and Associate Director of Choral Activities at Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance, where she taught from 1999-2009. Dr. Sparks taught graduate and undergraduate courses in choral literature, conducting, and aural theory, and was conductor of the Concert Choir, University Chorale, Women's Chorus and University Singers

while at Temple University. In addition to her appointment at Temple, she has served as Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Dordt College (Sioux Center, Iowa) and Director of the Choral Program at St. Joseph's University (Philadelphia).

Sparks holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting from the Yale University School of Music, and the Master of Music and Bachelor of Music in choral conducting and piano performance, respectively, from Temple University's Boyer College of Music. While at Yale, she was recipient of the Edward Stanley Seder Scholarship as well as the French Award, a choral conducting honor. Sparks holds a Certificate in program studies in Music, Worship and the Arts from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and has served as music director in synagogues and churches in Philadelphia and Los Angeles.



SAMUEL ORAM

A native of Boston, pianist Samuel Oram made his solo debut in Harvard University at the age of 13. He began his musical studies at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School and has studied with internationally acclaimed pianists Leon Fleischer, Menachem Pressler, Earl Wild, Ilana Vered, Jeffrey Cohen, Stewart Gordon, and Ursula Oppens. Before moving to California, Oram completed a Professional Studies Certificate program at the Manhattan School of Music. He is currently pursuing his Doctoral studies in Keyboard Collaborative Arts at the University of Southern California in the studio of renowned

pianist Alan Smith. Oram has performed extensively throughout the United States and abroad, and has won prestigious awards including the Grand Prize and Solo Performance Prize in the Corpus Christi International Competition, First Prize in the Manhattan School of Music Concerto Competition, First Prize for Solo Piano Recital from the Liao Ning Province Art Festival, Honorable Mention in the Wideman International Piano Competition, and Top Prize in the Concours Musical de France.



DR. CRISTIAN GRASES

Cristian Grases joined the USC Thornton faculty in the Fall 2010 semester as assistant professor of choral music and conductor of the USC Thornton Concert Choir. Born in Venezuela, he earned degrees from the Simón Bolívar University (MM) and the University of Miami (DMA). An award-winning conductor and composer, he has been commissioned to write for several prestigious organizations such as the Piedmont Children's Chorus and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. Numerous ensembles, including the Los Angeles Master Chorale, have performed his compositions. Dr. Grases is an active guest conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and conducting pedagogue in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. He has also presented sessions in the World Symposia and ACDA regional and national conventions. He was elected into the Board of Directors of the International Federation for Choral Music in 2008 and remains active in this position. In addition, Dr. Grases is currently chair of the Ethnic and Multicultural Repertoire and Standards Committee for the Western Division of the ACDA, he is part of the editorial board of IFCM's International Choral Bulletin, and has started a new Choral Series entitled "The Choral Music of Latin America and the Caribbean" published by Gentry as an editorial outlet for new Latin American choral repertoire. Under his direction, the USC Thornton Concert Choir performed an all Latin American program at the Fall 2015 national convention of NCCO.

PERSONNEL

USC THORNTON CONCERT CHOIR

SOPRANO

Katie Amrine, Senior, B. Architecture, Parker, CO
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UPCOMING EVENTS

PIATIGORSKY INTERNATIONAL CELLO FESTIVAL

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2016 – 8:00 P.M.

Bovard Auditorium

Sofia Gubaidulina, *Canticle of the Sun*

USC Thornton Chamber Singers

Cristian Grases, chorus preparation

David Geringas, cellist

Uriel Segal, conductor

Tickets: <https://piatigorskyfestival.usc.edu/tickets/>

CHORAL AND SACRED MUSIC STUDENT RECITALS

LORRY BLACK, DMA RECITAL

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2016 – 7:30 P.M.

Temple Etz Chaim

1080 E. Janss Rd.

Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

FREE

AMBER KIM, DMA RECITAL

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016 – 4:00 P.M.

Newman Recital Hall

FREE



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