January 28

SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL

PACIFIC SYMPHONY
CARL ST. CLAIR • MUSIC DIRECTOR

presents

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Performance begins at 8 p.m.

CARL ST. CLAIR • CONDUCTOR
YAYA ZHANG • PRODUCER AND CHOREOGRAPHER | YE TAN & DAVID A. WILLIAMS • EMCEES
JESSICA ZHU & GLORIA XIONG • VOCALISTS | ORSON VAN GAY II • TENOR | GEORGE GAO • ERHU AND JINGHU
AWAKENED BLESSING LION DANCE TROUPE | YAYA DANCE ACADEMY | TONG WANG • CHOREOGRAPHER
MICHAEL TOMLIN III • CHOREOGRAPHER | UCI DANCE | TWO WORLDS – JILL AND AMNON DAMTI • DANCERS
ARIANA STRAHL • SOPRANO | CHRISTINA PEZZAROSSI • MEZZO-SOPRANO | ENRICO LAGASCA • BASS-BARITONE
HAIXIANG YU • MEDIA DESIGNER | AMERICAN FEEL YOUNG CHORUS, DIRECTED BY SAM WEI-CHIH SUN

PACIFIC CHORALE:
JOHN ALEXANDER • ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | ROBERT M. ISTAD • ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR AND CHORUSMASTER

Li Huanzhi
Spring Festival Overture
Awakened Blessing Lion Dance Troupe
Yaya Dance Academy; Yaya Zhang, choreographer

Johann Sebastian Bach
Born to Fly (Air from Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major)
Two Worlds – Jill and Amnon Damti

Chinese New Year Medley:
Hong Yi: Farewell
Lu Qiming: Red Flag
Zheng Qiufeng: I Love You, China
Jessica Zhu, Gloria Xiong, Orson Van Gay II

Hua Wu
Deep Into the Night
George Gao
Yaya Dance Academy; Ruirui Tong and Yaya Zhang, choreographers

He Zhanhao & Chen Gang
Butterfly Lovers Concerto
Falling in Love – Refusing to Marry - Metamorphosis
George Gao
UCI Dance; Tong Wang, choreographer

Hans Zimmer & John Powell
Kung Fu Girls (Music from Kung Fu Panda 2)
Yaya Dance Academy; Yaya Zhang and Michael Tomlin III, choreographers

Claude Debussy, Arr. Lucien Cailliet
Clair de Lune from Suite Bergamasque
UCI Dance; Yaya Zhang, choreographer

Traditional, Arr. Joshua Roach
Jasmine Flower
American Feel Young Chorus
Pacific Chorale

Ludwig van Beethoven
Finale from Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, "Choral"
Presto - Allegro assai - Allegro assai vivace
Ariana Strahl, soprano
Christina Pezzarossi, mezzo-soprano
Enrico Lagasca, bass-baritone
American Feel Young Chorus
Pacific Chorale
Tenor not yet determined at press time

This concert is generously underwritten by Charles and Ling Zhang.

Supported by: [The James Irvine Foundation] [Pacific Symphony Jade Society]
Auspicious Beginnings: A Medley to Greet the New Year with Music and Dance

You don’t have to be Chinese to find beauty and meaning in the pageantry of the Chinese New Year. A 15-day celebration that begins with the appearance—or rather, the non-appearance—of the new moon, the Chinese New Year is vividly spectacular, but also has moments of quiet poetry and reflection. It is a time of contrasts that gets the year off to an auspicious start.

While 15 days might seem like a long time to sustain a celebration, the festival is actually a multi-faceted event spanning many special moments. One of these is familiar to everyone lucky enough to live in a city where the flamboyant Dragon Parade takes place. Friends and neighbors from all over town gather to witness the fantastically colorful, loud, winding procession as the dancing dragon—actually a jointed construction borne along in caterpillar fashion by concealed dancers—makes its way through the streets. More than just entertainment, the parade represents the dragon’s grace and strength, qualities we hope to learn by example for the coming year.

In a time when we strive to value and celebrate diversity, the Dragon Parade has helped us meet and learn about each other. But other elements of the Chinese New Year are quieter, more contemplative and family-oriented. This spirit is embodied in the shorter musical excerpts and songs with which we greet the Chinese New Year. Their stories honor relatives, friends, ancestors and cultural heritage in song as they propitiate our aspirations for the months to come.

In today’s musical festivities, some of the compositions we’ll hear are spiced with a modern Western vernacular, while others are rooted in Chinese traditions that go back centuries. For those of us less familiar with classical Chinese music, its expressiveness is especially fascinating. It focuses on the sound of individual notes as they begin, bloom and fade, more than on melodic resolution. For experienced listeners, even the material of a Chinese musical instrument—any of seven categories including wood, stone, clay, gourd, bamboo, silk and hide—says something about the meaning of the music played on it.

Butterfly Lovers Concerto
HE ZHANHOU (b. 1933) AND CHEN GANG (b. 1935)

Background

In what is surely one of the most poetically titled of all orchestral narratives, the Butterfly Lovers Concerto tells the story not of butterfly fanciers, but of two lovers who are transfigured into butterflies. Their tale is often described as “the Chinese Romeo and Juliet,” but it also contains elements resembling I.B. Singer’s folk-tinted tale of Yentl the yeshiva student, and Barbra Streisand’s movie of that name. It is one of the most famous works of Chinese music and one of the most widely performed outside China.

The Butterfly Lovers Concerto depicts an exquisite legend set in eastern China during the ancient Jin dynasty. Its heroine is the beautiful, intelligent Zhu Yingtai, the only daughter among nine children in a wealthy family, who persuades her father to allow her to attend classes disguised as a boy, since girls’ attendance at school is all but forbidden. In the course of her studies, she falls in love with the other star pupil in her class, Liang Shanbo. Liang shares friendship with Zhu, but his scholarly dedication prevents him from noticing the signs of her femininity and the true nature of her feelings. Though Zhu is a brilliant student, her father eventually sends an urgent request for her to come home. Liang accompanies his “sworn brother” for 18 miles of the return journey as an act of friendship. Months later, after missed opportunities and innocent misunderstandings, he discovers that she is a woman and that he loves her—just as she loves him. They finally swear their mutual devotion, only to learn that Zhu’s parents have arranged her engagement to a wealthy aristocrat. Liang and Zhu’s romantic odyssey reaches its apotheosis after the heartbroken Liang has taken ill and died.

On the day she is to be married to another man, mysterious whirlwinds prevent Zhu’s wedding procession from progressing beyond Liang’s grave. As Zhu leaves the procession to pay her respects to Liang, a thunderbolt rends the grave open and Zhu throws herself into it to join her beloved. Forever reunited, their spirits ascend together as a pair of butterflies.

Thank you to our concert sponsors

Charles and Ling Zhang

Pacific Symphony is grateful to Charles and Ling Zhang for their sponsorship of Chinese New Year: A Love Feast. Charlie came to America in 1980 with twenty dollars in his pocket, and through hard work eventually became the founder of Pick Up Stix and Zion Enterprises. A Board member of Pacific Symphony, as well as an extraordinary patron, we are indebted to Charlie and his wife, Ling. We extend our sincere gratitude for all that they do for Pacific Symphony.

Jade Society

Additional support for this concert is provided by the Jade Society, a new support group of Pacific Symphony whose members are passionate about and generously supportive of Pacific Symphony’s efforts to build beneficial links and long-term partnerships with the growing number of ethnic Chinese in our region.
NOTES

The composers Chen Gang and He Zhanhao collaborated on the Butterfly Lovers Concerto in 1959, when they were students at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music during a time when Western music was revered in China as the basis for any kind of serious music. The success of its premiere brought instant fame to the two composers. But only five years later their concerto became a casualty of the Cultural Revolution, which labeled it as Western and a decadent subversion of Chinese values. It regained acceptance in the 1970s as cultural restrictions eased, and became the most performed concerto in China, eventually earning an international reputation.

What to Listen For

Chen Gang and He Zhanhao pursued a Chinese nationalist style using folk music mixed with Western classical forms much like the familiar European nationalist composers they studied at the conservatory. By original design, the instrumentation was entirely Western, employing a solo violin featured over the orchestra. To capture the folk idiom of their native land, the solo violin was written to imitate the erhu, a two-stringed fiddle, which is often called the “Chinese violin.” In 1988 Gang rearranged the concerto for the erhu, and it is now often performed on the traditional instrument as well. It is this revised version that we hear soloist George Gao on the erhu.

As you listen to George Gao’s artistry, take note of the unique sounds of the jinghu and the erhu, characterized by extreme vibrato and pitch bending due to the lack of a fingerboard—unlike a violin, on which the strings are stopped against the neck of the instrument. As the concerto opens we hear a beautiful melody introduced by the flute. Soon the lovers’ voices are heard—the soloist representing Zhu (it is, after all, her story) and the cello, a principal secondary voice, representing Liang. Combining ethereally poetic feeling with an abundance of romantic incident, the Butterfly Lovers Concerto is not structured as a typical concerto, but as a single movement with a narrative that uses formal techniques of melodic development to define the events in a twisting tale of tragic love.

Its beauty enables the music to stand on its own. But for many Chinese listeners and admirers of Chinese culture, the details of Liang’s and Zhu’s story are fixed in tradition; for these listeners, the concerto references specific plot points in a recognizable way, drawing from the Chinese opera based on this story and from related folk songs. But even without knowledge of these sources, we can enjoy the Butterfly Lovers Concerto as musical storytelling in the same way we can appreciate the beauty of a narrative painting on a scroll as it unfolds. The composition makes extensive use of the traditional Chinese pentatonic scale and chord patterns, combining them with Western Classical development.

"Clair de Lune" from Suite Bergamasque

Background

With his compatriot Ravel, Claude Debussy is considered the father of Impressionism in music. The dates are certainly right; Debussy was born in 1862, and Impressionism in painting began to take shape in the 1870s. But what does Impressionism in music mean? In painting we can see how the fleeting impression is captured, how light and air fill the canvas rather than an arrangement of solid objects. By now we are comfortable viewing the paintings of Renoir, Monet and their colleagues, and their works have gained such widespread popularity that we must remind ourselves how Impressionist paintings shocked the eye back in the 1870s: The colors seemed strangely bright, the shadowy neutrals were gone, and the paintings rendered impressions of light rather than the world of objects in space. Yet somehow that world materializes before us as we simply relax and look.

Though Debussy edged away from traditional major and minor keys, he did not eliminate traditional tonal centers, but “blurred” them. Employing exotic harmonies and the “perfect” scale comprised only of whole steps—with only seven integral notes in play, we can’t even use the term “octave”—Debussy’s music accustoms us to tonal evocations of mood and atmosphere that function as light does in Impressionist paintings. His instrumental color, texture and meandering harmonies ignore traditional combinations. Where Impressionist paintings leave the world of objects behind, Impressionist music goes beyond earlier conventions of harmonic and rhythmic development, moving from one bar to the next in a spontaneous, organic flow. That said, Impressionist music continues to challenge us as listeners a bit more than Impressionist painting does. If we are less comfortable with Debussy and Ravel than with Renoir and Monet, that may not be such a bad thing; as the art critic Sister Wendy Beckett reminds us, the trick is to come to each work of art as something new, approaching it with courage and without preconceptions, opening ourselves to the experience it offers.
Debussy started work on the *Suite Bergamasque* around 1890. It is a piano suite of four movements, of which the third—“Clair de Lune”—is by far the most popular and most often programmed.

**What to Listen For**

Though music dictionaries trace the term “bergamasque” to rustic dances from the Italian town of Bergamo, the sound of “Clair de Lune” is anything but rustic. Its sound is elegant and luminous. Moonlight has been an irresistible subject for composers, and this movement is one of its most famous evocations—along with Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata for piano and the melody from Rachmaninoff’s Second Piano Concerto which, became the pop song “Full Moon and Empty Arms.” What we hear in these four beautiful minutes seems to suspend time and movement—hardly the stuff of dance. It remains rooted in its opening key of D-flat major, budging only for an unexpected modulation into E major—distant in harmonic terms, but very close on the scale.

If you haven’t yet heard “Clair de Lune” in the concert hall or on recording, you may have heard it at the movies—in films such as *Giant* (1956), *Casino Royale* (1967) and *Ocean’s Eleven* (2001).

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**Finale from Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125, Choral**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

**Background**

Is Beethoven’s Ninth the most popular piece of classical music in the world? Is it the single work of art that breaks every rule of American culture, bringing the rarefied strains of High Art into our everyday lives? No fudging here; the answer is yes. Proving its “most popular” status with numbers may well be impossible, but the claim is so often repeated that it has established a life of its own. This symphony occupies a unique place in the world of art and in the popular imagination.

This widespread acceptance has kept the Ninth fresh. This symphony has continuing relevance for all listeners, not just classical music fans, as a universal celebration of freedom, and as a bridge between pop culture and the highbrow stuff.

The breakthrough fourth movement takes a form that no composer had ever before imagined, a symphonic chorale with full chorus and soloists, that sets Friedrich Schiller’s ecstatic *Ode to Joy*; but this movement is the culmination of a meditation on human freedom that spans the entire symphony. Small wonder that in the most populist and all-American of art forms, Charles Schulz’s Schroeder idolizes Beethoven above all other composers in the comic strip *Peanuts*.

Contrary to most Beethoven mythology, the symphony’s premiere on May 7, 1824, was fully appreciated by its audience. Reports of listeners’ enthusiasm for the bold new work suggest that on that historic Friday evening, with nearly a thousand in attendance, there was a collective understanding of their profound, shared experience, with Beethoven fully acknowledged by the cheering crowd.

**What to Listen For**

Beethoven’s idea of including the voice in a symphony also dates from this period, but may not originally have attached to the Ninth. In a sketchbook dated 1811 he envisions a cantata combining choral and instrumental movements based on the *Ode*. The Beethoven biographer Alexander Thayer describes how, in 1822, while visiting a music critic in Leipzig, the composer described plans for a tenth symphony that would include vocal elements that would “enter gradually—in the text of the Adagio Greek Myth, *Cantique Éclesiastique*—in Allegro, the feast of Bacchus.”

During these years Beethoven was working on the first three movements of the Symphony No. 9, drawing on ideas in his sketchbooks, and his plans for the symphony were purely instrumental. In 1823 he finally integrated the three critical elements that became Beethoven’s Ninth: a primarily instrumental symphony, the introduction of vocal elements, and a fourth movement incorporating Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*. But how could a fourth movement with chorus and vocal soloists fit naturally into a symphony whose first three movements were purely instrumental? The Beethoven scholar Leon Plantinga describes the dramatic moment in October of 1823 when Beethoven solved this problem, recounted by the composer’s friend Anton Schindler:

> On day he burst into the room and shouted at me: “I got it! I have it!” He held his sketchbook out to me so that I could read: “Let us sing the song of the immortal Schiller”; then a solo voice began the hymn of joy.

With some revisions, the simple words “Let us sing the song of the immortal Schiller” became the basis for Beethoven’s introduction to the Symphony’s fourth movement, solving monumental task of integrating the choral elements into the rest of the work. He later revised this line and added a phrase, “not with these tones,” a dramatically effective interruption of the movement’s furiously chaotic opening bars, which seem to depict humankind’s pointless conflict and striving; these resolve into clarity and light.

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Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.
YAYA ZHANG, Producer and Choreographer

Yaya Zhang is an award-winning artist with 20 years of stage performance, choreography and dance instruction experience. She graduated from the Department of Folk Dance at the Secondary School of Beijing Dance Academy in 1999 and received a B.A. in choreography from Beijing Dance Academy in 2003. During her decade-long study at the Beijing Dance Academy, she mastered many different Chinese ethnic folk dance traditions as well as sword, fan, ribbon and sleeve techniques. At the same time, she has extensive experiences in the choreography of the above styles and techniques. In 2004 and 2005, she carried the role of “Rumpleteazer” in the musical production of Cats by Shiki Theatre Company in Japan. Before moving to America in 2007, she worked in many productions in China including musicals. Since moving to Los Angeles area, she has been teaching at several well-known dance companies. Now she is the artistic director of YAYA Dance Academy.

YE TAN, Emcee

Tan Ye is a renowned host of Tianjin Television. She was named one of the “Ten Best” program hosts in China and instructor of broadcasting. She graduated from China Mass Communications University in 1989, and has since earned numerous awards with the television programs that she has hosted. She has also taught as a guest lecturer in several colleges in Tianjin. Tan is now the founder of “Golden Sunshine Chinese School,” a new endeavor in her life to carry forward the richness and beauty of Chinese language and culture.

DAVID A. WILLIAMS, Emcee

David A. Williams is an American actor/host/writer in China. Since moving to China in 2006 where he self-studied Chinese, he has published two books, Move to China I and II, appeared on more than 50 shows including “Avenue of Stars” and many more. He is currently in Shenzhen filming web movies and commercials. He has written several scripts, one of which, “China Dream” is in pre-production.

JESSICA ZHU, Vocalist

Jessica Zhu is a young vocalist from Laguna Niguel. Her preferred singing style spans the terrain between popular soundtracks and new music. Jessica has performed for over 3 years, and has appeared and received awards in multiple competitions. She is currently studying at St. Margaret’s Episcopal School in San Clemente in the 4th grade.

GLORIA XIONG, Vocalist

In July 2011, Gloria Xiong participated in the centennial celebration of the Xinhai Revolution. At the age of 3, she impressed over 3,000 audience members with her stage presence. In October of that same year, she again participated in a live stage concert. Since then, she has been active in more than a dozen shows and performances, singing and acting in English and Chinese. In 2015, she was named the “Little Queen of Chinatown.” Last year, she sang in Love Feast and starred in The Exit, a musical. Not caught up by the spotlight, Gloria also performs well in school and is on the principal’s honor roll.

ORSON VAN GAY II, Tenor

Tenor Orson Van Gay possesses a unique voice and charisma which are of particular value among his generation of acting singers. His performances showcase a talent and voice that have brought him constant recognition in a multitude of venues. Van Gay is originally from Beverly Hills, where he began acting in several nationally recognized television series. He has since been featured in major television commercials for CBN, ABC, WVEC, has starred on the Discovery Channel in a myriad of episodes; as well as Investigation Discovery’s (I.D.) Wicked Attraction.

Van Gay studied with Kerry Lee Jennings at Old Dominion University. Virginia Opera’s formal musical director Joe Walsh candidly introduced Van Gay to an audience as a “hybrid” new voice that is not only able to sing classical music but effectively sing other styles as well. This versatility has proven to be a strong commodity with today’s increasing musical demands on young singers. He performed the role of Prince in the world premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon’s Morning Star. He was also honored as a state and regional winner in the Mid-Atlantic NATS competition for two consecutive years.
GEORGE GAO, Erhu and Jinghu

Gemini Award-nominated erhu master George Gao is hailed as one of the most exciting, innovative and respected erhu masters today. Just a few years after he began studying the erhu at age 6, he won First Prize at the Shanghai Junior Instrumental Soloist Competition and a Silver Medal at the China National Junior Instrumental Soloist Contest in 1982. In 1985, he swept the three highest prizes of the Beijing China National Invitational Erhu Competition, launching his international performing career. In 1999, he won a Recognition Award for his appearance at the 13th World Festival for Young Students in Pyongyang, North Korea. Gao studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

As a composer, Gao has composed music for many films and documentaries including Becoming American, the Chinese Experience, The Blood of Yinzhou District and The Warriors of Quanggan, which was nominated for an Academy Award. He has also written many works for erhu including Capriccio for Erhu, which was designated as compulsory work for the final round of the 2002 International Dragon Cup Erhu Competition, and Erhu Capriccio No. 2—Mongolian Fantasy, which was designated as compulsory work for the final round of the 2008 Shanghai Spring Festival International Erhu Competition and 2011 Taipei Chinese Instrumental Competition for Erhu.

Gao is currently a professor-in-residence of Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts, and he is a guest professor at several schools including China Conservatory of Music, National Taiwan University of Arts, Zao Zhuang University, Jiang Xi University of Science and Technology in China and Ogaki Women’s College in Japan. Gao is also the guest concertmaster of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra.

MICHAEL TOMLIN III, Choreographer

A contemporary and commercial artist from California who began training at Debbie Allen Dance Academy as a scholarship student, Michael Tomlin III has worked with Odyssey Dance Theater in Salt Lake City, Utah and danced with the Lula Washington Dance Theater. Tomlin was the first African American to receive a full dance scholarship at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), where he graduated with a B.F.A. in dance and minor in math. During his time at CalArts, he performed Memoria with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at the Music Center and has worked with Merce Cunningham’s musician John King, Barak Marshall, Body Traffic in LA and Danielle Agami. Post graduation he moved to Japan and worked for Tokyo Disney Sea in a stage production of Mystic Rhythm. While in Japan he choreographed his first international piece, “IBUKI.” After living in Japan for 3 years, he continued to dance with Lula Washington Dance Theater. Last year he debuted in the ballet The Nutcracker with Lake Arrowhead Classical Ballet as the Nutcracker and Anaheim Ballet as Arabian Dancer.

TWO WORLDS – JILL AND AMNON DAMTI, Dancers

Jill and Amnon Damti, two amazing Israeli dancers, have been performing a dance called “Two Worlds” for many years in Israel and all over the world—from the White House to Moscow, Paris and London. “Two Worlds” tells the story of the convergence of the deaf and hearing worlds. Amnon Damti, deaf from birth, is considered one of the leading deaf dancers in the world today as well as a gifted choreographer. Jill Damti, Amnon’s wife, incorporates not just dance into their performance, but interacts with the audience through narrative creating an experience that allows the viewer to understand points of inflection between the deaf and hearing worlds. “Two Worlds” engages the audience, allowing them to experience how a deaf person can actually be a world class dancer. Their transformative performance enables audiences to experience new paradigms, a sense of discovery and often a new perspective on life.

ARIANA STRAHL, Soprano

Irish-American Soprano Ariana Strahl has been called “the discovery of the night” and has been celebrated as a singer with “fearless, accurate vocalism.” Recent engagements include her debut as Micaela in the Komische Oper’s Revival of Carmen. During her studies, Strahl debuted such roles as First Lady in Die Zauberflöte, La Ciesca in Gianni Schicchi, Peep-Bo in The Mikado, Suor Genovieffa in Suor Angelica, Monica in The Medium, Mrs. McLean in Susannah and the title role in Handel’s Semele. Her broad abilities also brought her to the concert stage in the role of the Mother in Stephen Paulus’ The Three Hermits and as the soprano soloist for John Rutter’s Mass of the Children.

CHRISTINA PEZZAROSSI, Mezzo-Soprano

Christina Pezzarossi, from Miles City, Mont., received her master’s degree from the The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. Pezzarossi’s operatic roles include Alice in Falstaff, Beth in Mark Adamo’s Little Women, the title role in Handel’s Agrippina, Minerva in Monteverdi’s Il ritorno d’Ulisse in Patria and Rosina in Rossini’s The Barber of Seville. This past year, she performed as Hermia in Purcell’s Fairy Queen with Opera NEO in San Diego and Alisa in Donizetti’s Lucia di Lammermoor with Opera San Jose. She has also performed with Oberlin in Italy, Emerald City Opera and Taos Opera Institute and received an Encouragement Award from the San Francisco District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. This spring, Pezzarossi will tour with Des Moines Metro Opera’s Opera IOWA program as Rosina in The Barber of Seville and join their summer season.
ENRICO LAGASCA, Bass-Baritone

A native of the Philippines, bass-baritone Enrico Lagasca is critically acclaimed for his “beautiful sound” (The New York Times) and “impressive, deep, dark instrument” (Superconductor). Lagasca sings as soloist and chorister in the choir of St. Ignatius Loyola with music director K. Scott Warren and the Bach Choir of the Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church with Donald Meineke. Lagasca also frequently sings with Musica Sacra New York, The Cathedral Choir of St. John the Divine, The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, New York Choral Artists, The Bard Festival Chorus, Collegiate Chorale, the New York Virtuoso Singers, the Oratorio Society of New York and with Ensemble VIII in Austin, Texas and have performed as chorister and soloist with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, American Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and have toured with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, to name a few.

AMERICAN FEEL YOUNG CHORUS

American Feel Young Chorus (AFYC) is a nonprofit organization formed by a group of friends who love music in Southern California in January 2015. Conducted by Sam Wei-Chih Sun, the group is dedicated to expanding the Chinese and Western choral music experience through performances and community. Their mission is to become the leader in amateur chorus in the U.S. by building a passionate team with artistic excellence and reputable image. AFYC has performed on various occasions including Orange County Chinese New Year celebrations, the Yellow River Cantata in Walt Disney Hall as part of the Memorial of World War II Victory Concert, in addition to local concerts led by renowned conductors from China, including Jiao Miao and Li Xi Lin. AFYC has been growing rapidly and evolving into a well-known chorus in the Chinese American community in Southern California. With the generous support from Mr. Charles Zhang (founder of Pick Up Stix and Zion Enterprise, Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young, and Winner of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor), the chairman of the Board of Directors, AFYC is committed to becoming the best amateur chorus in the U.S. by nurturing excellence in its members, while offering the finest repertoire and choral artistry.

SAM WEI-CHIH SUN, Director of American Feel Young Chorus

Sam Wei-Chih Sun is a pianist, accompanist and music educator. His interest in music was encouraged by his mother at age 6 when he started playing the piano. He attended the Taipei Municipal Teachers College and majored in piano performance and minored in cello and vocal performance. After graduation, Sun became an elementary school music teacher in Taipei and held many musical activities to inspire students’ interests in music. In 2005, Sun received a master’s degree in conducting from Azusa Pacific University. In 2006, he received the Chinese Overseas Music. In 2005, Sun received a master's degree in conducting from Arizona State University. In 2006, he received the Chinese Overseas Music. He is an adjunct professor of piano at Azusa Pacific University, Citrus Community College and Calvin Chao Theological Seminary. Sun is the music director at Good Shepherd Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Monterey Park. He also conducts the Southern California Taiwanese Hakka Chorus, the Arcadia Chinese Chorus and the Irvine Chinese Chorus. Throughout the year, Sun conducts professional concerts and collaborates with professional soloists.

JOHN ALEXANDER, Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale

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’s long and distinguished career has encompassed conducting hundreds of choral and orchestral performances nationally and in 27 countries around the globe. He has conducted his singers with orchestras throughout Europe, Asia and South America and, closer to home, with Pacific Symphony, Pasadena Symphony, Musica Angelica and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Equally versatile whether on the podium or behind the scenes, Alexander has prepared choruses for many of the world’s most outstanding orchestral conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Leonard Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Gustavo Dudamel, Lukas Foss, Max Rudolf, Carl St.Clair, Gerard Schwarz, Marin Alsop, John Mauceri, John Williams and Keith Lockhart.

ROBERT ISTAD, Assoc. Conductor/Choralmaster of Pacific Chorale

Robert Istad is the associate conductor of Pacific Chorale and director of choral studies at California State University, Fullerton, where he conducts the University Singers and Concert Choir, in addition to teaching courses in conducting, advanced interpretation and literature. He has prepared choruses for Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carl St.Clair and Pacific Symphony, Sir Andrew Davis and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, as well as conductors Bramwell Tovey, Eric Whitacre, Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, George Fenton, John Alexander, William Dehning, David Lockington and Mark Mandarano. Istad received his Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., his Master of Music degree in choral conducting from California State University, Fullerton, and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral music at the University of Southern California.
Founded in 1968, Pacific Chorale is internationally recognized for exceptional artistic expression, stimulating American-focused programming and influential education programs. Pacific Chorale presents a substantial 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, developing innovative new concepts in programming and expanding the traditional concepts of choral repertoire and performance.

Pacific Chorale is comprised 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, the Boston Symphony, the National Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Musica Angelica. John Alexander and the Chorale have toured extensively in Europe, South America and Asia, performing in London, Paris, Vienna, Budapest, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Russia, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, China and Hong Kong, and collaborating with the London Symphony, the Munich Symphony, L’Orchestre Lamoureux and L’Orchestre de St-Louis-en-île of Paris, the National Orchestra of Belgium, the China National Symphony, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Estonian National Symphony and the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Argentina.

Pacific Chorale’s chamber choir, the John Alexander Singers, is a fully professional vocal ensemble of 24 singers recognized for their musical excellence across a broad range of musical periods and styles. The John Alexander Singers perform regularly in concert venues throughout Southern California. In addition to extensive collaborations with Musica Angelica, Southern California’s premier period instrument orchestra, the John Alexander Singers have performed with the Kronos Quartet, Mark Morris Dance Company, The Royal Ballet of London, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Pacific Symphony, and on the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s “Green Umbrella” new music series.

Pacific Chorale’s numerous awards from Chorus America, the service organization for North American choral groups, include the prestigious “Margaret Hillis Achievement Award for Choral Excellence,” the first national “Educational Outreach Award,” the 2005 ASCAP Chorus America Alice Parker Award for adventurous programming, and the 2015 “Education and Community Engagement Award.”

Pacific Chorale and the John Alexander Singers can be heard on seven CDs, including Nocturne and American Voices, collections of American choral works; Songs of Eternity by James Hopkins and Voices by Stephen Paulus, featuring Pacific Symphony; a holiday recording, Christmas Time Is Here, on the Gothic Records label; a live concert recording of Rachmaninoff’s Vespers; the world premiere recording of Frank Ticheli’s The Shore for chorus and orchestra; and the world premiere recording of Jake Heggie’s choral opera The Radio Hour. Pacific Chorale also appears on six recordings released by Pacific Symphony: Elliot Goldenthal’s Fire, Water, Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio, Richard Danielpour’s An American Requiem, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Richard Danielpour’s An American Requiem, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daugherty’s The Passion of Ramakrishna, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, Michael Daug
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SPRING FESTIVAL OVERTURE
YAYA DANCE ACADEMY
Yaya Zhang, choreographer
Nina Bai
Claire Chang
Norah Chang
Bess Chang
Christine Chang
Anita Cheng
Amanda Cheng
Annabella Chou
Biena Dong
Nico Fung
Danae Gao
Yu Gua
Cheryl Ku
Jessie Lyu
Maggie Ma
Irene Qi
Christal Qi
Amber Sheng
Kate Sheng
Julie Tsui
Ping Wang
Wei Wang
Alyssa Wu
Willow Wu
Grace Xue
Demi Yan
Josephine Yang
Judy Ying
Jun Yuan
Cindy Zeng
Dannie Zhang
Evanne Zhang
Michelle Zhang

DEEP INTO THE NIGHT
YAYA DANCE COMPANY
Ruirui Tong, original choreographer
Rearranged by: Yaya Zhang
Bess Chang
Christine Chang
Judy Ying
Dannie Zhang
Ping Wang
Wei Wang
Jun Yuan
Grace Xue

KUNG FU GIRLS
YAYA DANCE ACADEMY
Yaya Zhang and Michael Tomlin III, choreographers
Claire Chang
Michelle Chang
Norah Chang
Anita Cheng
Amanda Cheng
Celinae
Cheryl Ku
Lena Shi
Evelyn Shih
Kate Zheng

AWAKENED BLESSING LION DANCE TROUPE
Matthew Chong
Lindsay Chang
Lionel Li
Aaron Wadjaja
Amber Wong
Adel Hong
Daniel Wong
William Xu
Max Staff:
Charles Lee
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Amy Lo

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