

## Conductor's Note

When I tell people about the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, I am often asked what our comparable institutions are. And then, after I think for a while about where you can find a community orchestra and chorus of the talent and musicality of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, along with an abiding devotion to contemporary music and a central role in the pedagogical mission of a major research university, I shake my head. Time after time, I come up empty.

And every time I have that experience, I give a little nod of thanks to the memory of Tom Nee, who started it all.

Tom served as music director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus for more than 30 years, and when we marked his passing a decade ago, we were aware that, without Tom, things were never going to be the same. When Mary—Tom's wife, musical partner, muse, conscience, and the love of his life—died last month, it felt like a chapter in our history was closed.

In honor of Mary and Tom and all that they have meant, we'll take a moment in this concert to remember them. Starting the concert with a special performance of Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, which we are adding as a tribute to Mary's indomitable warrior spirit, we'll move without a pause to this year's Nee Commission work, *Iuscinia*, by Tina Tallon. These paired pieces cover an enormous span of style, historical period, technology and musical intent. They seem very different from each other. But that's the point! We can embrace the future without giving up the past.

Playing a brand new piece for orchestra and electronics takes nothing away from the foundational works of Beethoven. To the contrary, the newness in Tallon's work reminds us that, once upon a time, the Beethoven was new and untried, and perhaps even misunderstood. And the Beethoven reminds us that Tallon's music did not arise from nowhere, but grows from our accumulating history. We'll note, with pride, that no other orchestra, outside of specialist contemporary ensembles, gives as much programming space to emerging composers, many writing their first orchestra pieces, as does the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus.

And every time, I make a radical programming juxtaposition or program a young composer in her first work for orchestra, I give a small nod to the memory of Tom Nee, who started it all.

This season we celebrate 50 years of affiliation with the University of California, San Diego. Over those years, countless students have sat side-by-side with countless community and professional musicians in our rehearsals and concerts. Undergraduates, concerned about their future lives as physicians, engineers, and other professionals, have seen, through the living examples of our community members, how music can remain a lifelong joy.

And every time I see a young UC San Diego student talking with her stand partner—the local teacher, the world class oceanographer, the cold fusion expert, the radiologist, the retired professor—I give a small nod of thanks to Tom Nee, who started it all.

Tonight we'll also feature Thomas Adès's *Concentric Paths*, a virtuoso concerto for violin and orchestra. This brilliant work will feature Keir, GoGwilt, a violinist of exceptional talent and intellect. To my knowledge, this is the first performance of a large-scale work of Adès in San Diego. And it brings to mind all the other works, from the Bernstein *Mass*, to Xenakis's *Metastasis*, to the first work that Tom Nee ever conducted with the La Jolla Symphony, Charles Ives's *The Unanswered Question*, which were brought for the first time to San Diego audiences by the La Jolla Symphony. And I give a nod of thanks to Tom, who started it all.

We'll conclude the concert with a rhythmic and joyous arrangement by Felipe Rossi of a Guillaume de Machaut piece from the late Middle Ages, and without break continue to Francis Poulenc's glorious (how else could describe it?) *Gloria*. In doing so, we'll welcome Patrick Walders in his first official music-making as the new choral conductor of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, replacing our great friend David Chase. And we'll note with satisfaction that a third of our concerts feature music with chorus.

If they were reading this, Tom and Mary would be fed up with the valedictory sentiment by now. They looked forward rather than back. And that's what we'll do also. We'll look ahead to future students who do not yet know they will attend UC San Diego, but whose lives will be changed by the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus. We'll look ahead to treating the classics with the same rough and tumble inquiry that we reserve for the newest music, and the first works of young composers with the same respect we accord the classics. I'll continue to take a moment before every concert to chat with our faithful audience who has paced us every step of the way and who not only accepts our

programming, but craves it. Demands it. We'll welcome more Young Artists like Keir and more Nee Commissionees like Tina; more of the music you love and more of what you are about to love.

But before we get on the joyous business of living the rest of lives, let's raise a glass (filled with Laphroaig, if memory serves me correctly) and toast Tom and Mary one more time. And walking off stage, I'll think of all of that music and all of those 50 years, and I'll give a little nod of thanks to the memory of Tom and Mary Nee, who started it all.

Steven Schick