



Pacific
Chorale

pacificchorale.org

3303 Harbor Blvd., Suite E5
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 662-2345

Robert Istad, Artistic Director & Conductor
Craig Springer, Board Chair
Rhett M. Del Campo, President & CEO

Press Contact:

Natalie Hunter, Director of Marketing: natalie@pacificchorale.org, 714.662.2345

Pacific Chorale Receives Significant Estate Gift to Further Its Mission in Choral Music and Education

Generous legacy gift will enhance Pacific Chorale's capacity to inspire the community through groundbreaking performances and education programs.

COSTA MESA, CA (March 11, 2025) – Pacific Chorale is honored to announce a generous estate gift left by the late Ron Rudderow, a former bass in the chorus who sang with us for 20 years and a longtime supporter. This gift, the majority of which will be invested in the organization's growing endowment, will strengthen our mission, supporting key roles and innovative new programming.

One of the largest estate bequests in Pacific Chorale's history, this transformative gift will be strategically allocated across three key areas of Pacific Chorale's work that align with Ron Rudderow's wishes:

Endowment for the Assistant Conductor Chair

The majority of the bequest, \$500,000, will be directed to Pacific Chorale's endowment, establishing a permanent fund to support the Assistant Conductor Chair. This role is instrumental in developing the Chorale's artistic mission, and the endowed chair will ensure that all future assistant conductors benefit from sustained leadership and musical excellence. Current Assistant Conductor Kibsaim Escárcega is the Chorale's first conductor named to the new Rudderow chair. To learn more about Kibsaim, [click here](#).

Artistic Innovation Fund for Major Commissioned Work

An additional significant portion, \$250,000, will be allocated to the Chorale's Artistic Innovation Fund, directly underwriting the creation, premiere, and recording of a major new choral-orchestral work in the 2025-26 Season. This major project promises to bring a superlative addition to the contemporary American choral repertoire with the world premiere set for October 25, 2025. More information will be shared when the Chorale announces its 2025-26 Season later this month.

Support for this Season

A final portion will be allocated to support this season's concert recordings and advancing the initial stages of the now full-time Assistant Conductor position. This essential funding will enhance Pacific Chorale's capacity to share choral music with the community, both in live settings and through recorded media, making these performances accessible to an even broader audience.

“The critical work that John Alexander and former CEO Kelly Ruggirello accomplished in the early 2000s on legacy commitments has yielded incredible dividends in recent years” said Rhett M. Del Campo, President and CEO of Pacific Chorale. “Their dedication and long-term vision made an enduring impact, even though the benefits would only be realized many years later. Their example reminds us of the importance of recommitting to this vital work so that the Chorale remains financially secure well into the future. As our endowment grows, we will be able to support our annual operating costs more effectively, allowing us to expand our programming and deepen our community impact through new and expanded education initiatives.”

Through this transformative gift, Pacific Chorale will continue to expand its role as a cornerstone of choral music and a vibrant community resource. By fostering new works, supporting key leadership roles, and enhancing concert accessibility, the Chorale not only enriches Southern California’s cultural landscape but also inspires audiences and artists alike. This investment underscores the powerful role philanthropy plays in advancing the arts and building a lasting legacy in our community. Pacific Chorale’s low operating expense-to-endowment ratio reflects its commitment to responsible financial management, supported by gifts such as this one to the endowment.

As Pacific Chorale moves forward with renewed support, we invite others to secure the Chorale’s future through their own [planned giving](#). Managed by [Main Management](#), contributions to our endowment or designated funds ensure that our organization remains a vital source of artistic inspiration and community connection for generations to come. To learn more about how to make a lasting impact, please visit our website at pacificchorale.org.

ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

The GRAMMY® Award-winning Pacific Chorale, led by Artistic Director Robert Istad, is an Orange County “treasure” with a “fresh viewpoint” that “can sing anything you put in front of it with polish, poise and tonal splendor” (Orange County Register). It has risen to national prominence since its founding in 1968.

Hailed for delivering “thrilling entertainment” (Voice of OC), the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts is noted for its artistic innovation and commitment to expanding the choral repertoire. It has given world, U.S., and West Coast premieres of more than 40 works, including numerous commissions, by such lauded composers as John Adams, Jake Heggie, James Hopkins, David Lang, Morten Lauridsen, Tarik O'Regan, Karen Thomas, Frank Ticheli, András Gábor Virág, and Eric Whitacre.

In addition to presenting its own concert series each season, Pacific Chorale enjoys a long-standing performance partnership with Pacific Symphony, including the choir’s highly anticipated Carnegie Hall debut in 2018. The chorus also regularly appears with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, with which it won the 2022 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance for its contribution to the live recording of “Mahler: Symphony No. 8, 'Symphony of A Thousand,’” conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, featuring Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Children’s Chorus, Los Angeles Master Chorale, National Children’s Chorus and Pacific Chorale.

The choir has performed with such leading orchestras as the Boston Symphony, National Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Musica Angelica, among others. In addition to receiving national accolades, Pacific Chorale has garnered tremendous international acclaim. In July 2023, the chorus completed its first international tour in seven years with appearances in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom in collaboration with Bath Philharmonia, Free State Orchestra of Bavaria, and Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra. Previous tours have taken

the choir to 19 countries in Europe, South America, and Asia, including engagements with the London Symphony, Munich Symphony, L'Orchestre Lamoureux and L'Orchestre de St-Louis-en-l'Île of Paris, National Orchestra of Belgium, China National Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Estonian National Symphony, and Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Argentina, among others.

Deeply committed to making choral music accessible to everyone, the organization has a discography of 14 self-produced recordings and an extensive collection of free digital offerings. Among other artistic highlights, Pacific Chorale's "The Wayfaring Project," an original concert film conceived and conducted by Istad and produced during the pandemic, was streamed on pbsocal.org, kcet.org and the PBS app, reaching audiences around the globe. Pacific Chorale also places significant emphasis on choral music education, providing after-school vocal programs for elementary school students, a choral summer camp for high school students, and an annual community-wide singing event at Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

www.pacificchorale.org

##