

# Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School Visual and Performing Arts Department

## 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Stairway of the Stars

On Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 7 pm, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District will present the **61<sup>st</sup> Annual Stairway of the Stars** concert at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. This event remains one of the most popular annual events in both the cities of Santa Monica and Malibu, as it spotlights the talents of the district's music students, teachers and music curriculum.



This year, 26 bands, orchestras and choirs will dazzle the audience at the Stairway of the Stars concert. The guest conductor for the 2010 Stairway will be Dr. Jo-Michael Scheibe.

Dr. Scheibe chairs the Thornton School of Music's Department of Choral and Sacred Music at the University of Southern California, where he conducts the USC Chamber Singers, teaches choral conducting and choral methods, and supervises the graduate and undergraduate choral program. In 2008, he assumed a new post as National President Elect of the American Choral Directors' Association. No stranger to the ACDA, Scheibe previously served as the organization's Western Division President (1991-1993), as well as National Repertoire and Standards Chairperson for Community Colleges (1980-1989). Ensembles under his leadership have sung at six national ACDA conventions (1985, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2003, 2007), as well as two national conventions of the Music Educators National Conference (1996, 2000), and various regional and state conventions.

Dr. Scheibe's artistic collaborations include choral performances with Luciano Pavarotti, José Carreras, Salvatore Licitra, Maria Guleghina and Kenny Loggins, as well as preparation of choruses for Sir Colin Davis and the London Symphony Orchestra, Franz Welser-Möst and the Cleveland Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas and the New World Symphony and conductors Jahja Ling, Edoardo Müller, James Judd, Max Valdez, Thomas Sanderling and Alain Lombard, among others. Recordings of ensembles under Dr. Scheibe's direction have been released on the Albany, Cane, Naxos, Arsis and ANS labels.

A champion of contemporary music, Dr. Scheibe regularly commissions and performs new works of choral literature. He has helped to launch careers of promising young composers and to promote music by international composers largely unknown in the United States. Music publishers Walton, Colla Voce Music and Santa Barbara distribute the Dr. Jo-Michael Scheibe Choral Series internationally.

Fall 2008 marks Dr. Scheibe's return to USC after a 15-year tenure as director of Choral Studies at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music (1993-2008), as well as previous faculty appointments at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff (1985-1993), Long Beach City College (1978-1985), Vintage High School in Napa, California and Huntington Beach High School. He received his D.M.A. from the University of Southern California and his B.A. and M.M. degrees from California State University at Long Beach, where he was presented with the distinguished alumnus award.

Dr. Scheibe has served as music and artistic director of several community choral organizations, including the Master Chorale of South Florida, the Tampa Bay Master Chorale and the Long Beach Master Chorale. He is in frequent demand internationally as a clinician, conductor and adjudicator for choruses at the university, community college, community and secondary levels.

The 2010 Stairway Honor Award Recipient will be Jeff Leibow. Jeff Leibow grew up in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, and was a product of its music program. He started at Franklin Elementary School, where he eagerly awaited the fourth grade, so he could start playing an instrument. In fourth and fifth grade, he played flute and when he moved on to Lincoln Junior High School, his teacher Christopher Schwabe convinced him to try a new instrument, the oboe. Eventually he moved to Santa Monica High School, where his hard work landed him a spot as co-principal oboe of the Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensemble. During his time in the district music program, he participated in a number of All-Southern and All-State Honor bands and orchestras, including earning the principal oboe position in the All-California Honor Orchestra.

After graduating Santa Monica High School in 1988, he moved on to UC Davis, where he earned the position of principal oboe in the University Symphony, while earning a Bachelors of Science degree in Zoology. It was during this time, he was introduced to a new instrument, his voice.



After spending a year in the Concert Choir at UC Davis, a friend dared him to audition for a local production of "A Chorus Line". With no concern for the fact that he had never danced in his life, he went to the audition and miraculously, landed the role of Mark. Little did he know, he had just discovered his future career.

After completing his degree, he worked in a laboratory on campus and continued to discover theater, eventually landing his first professional production at the Sacramento Music Circus, a nationally regarded regional theater. After two years, working in the laboratory, he quite literally, packed his bags and headed for New York City where he studied acting, voice, music and dance and eventually started working

as a professional theater actor.

After moving back to California a few years later, he combined his interests in performing and science together into a successful career in the high-tech industry, which still supplements his income today. In the years since, theater has introduced him to his wife, provided income when Silicon Valley dried up, and has now delivered a leading role as Nick Massi, one of the original Four Seasons, in the hit musical, "Jersey Boys" at the Palazzo Hotel in Las Vegas.

This year the ensembles that will perform at Stairway of the Stars are the All-District elementary honor string orchestra, choir and band; high school jazz ensemble; as well as the middle and high school orchestras, choirs and bands. Some of the musical selections will include: choral - "Domine, Ad Adjuvandum Me Festina" band- "La Mezquita de Cordoba", orchestra - "Danzon No. 2" and jazz band- "Latin Dance".

Tickets sales to the general public can be purchased the night of each performance at the ticket window on a first come first basis starting at 5:30pm. The concert will begin at 7pm and the doors will open at 6pm. Tickets are \$14.00 each. For any other questions, email Tom Whaley, the district's Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator at [twhaley@smmusd.org](mailto:twhaley@smmusd.org) or Chandra Narain at [cnarain@smmusd.org](mailto:cnarain@smmusd.org) or call 310-450-8338 ext. 287 or ext 338.