

About Us

Orange County Women's Chorus

Twenty Years of Excellence!

Founded in 1997 by Dr. Raymond Egan and directed since 2000 by Eliza Rubenstein, the **Orange County Women's Chorus** is recognized as one of the area's leading choruses! The OCWC has performed at venues including the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, the Irvine Barclay Theatre and Walt Disney Concert Hall's REDCAT Theater. The chorus was named a 2014 Outstanding Arts Organization by Arts Orange County, won a prize at the 2015 International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales, and participated in the Carnegie Hall premiere of Kirke Mechem's *Songs of the Slave* under the baton of Eliza Rubenstein in New York City in June 2017.

The OCWC's wide-ranging repertoire especially emphasizes contemporary and little-known works. The chorus is committed to exploring works by women composers of the past and the present, and has commissioned new works by Kirke Mechem, Ruth Huber, Angel Lam, Dale Trumbore, Sharon Farber, Ethan Sperry, and Joan Szymko. The ensemble's website hosts a nationally-known database of choral works by women composers.

Women of Excellence

Chorus members include teachers, professors, attorneys, nurses, executives, retirees, students, artists, activists, mothers and grandmothers.

Questions? Contact Mary Langsdorf
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949-451-8590

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Our Mission and Values

The Orange County Women's Chorus creates and performs outstanding choral literature, engages and enriches our audiences, and celebrates women in music.

We embrace these values:

- **Excellence:** The Orange County Women's Chorus pursues artistic excellence by recruiting talented and dedicated musicians, preparing and performing choral music with the highest level of artistic integrity, and commissioning new works for women's voices.
- **Community:** The Orange County Women's Chorus fosters a deeply felt sense of community among its members. We support each other, have fun, and work together to achieve artistic excellence. The OCWC strives to extend this sense of community to our audiences, collaborators, and donors.
- **Diversity:** The Orange County Women's Chorus embraces different perspectives and abilities. We are women who come from a variety of backgrounds, life experiences, and professions, ranging in age from young adult to retirees. We are committed to performing music from different cultures and eras, in original languages.
- **Leadership:** The Orange County Women's Chorus is an advocate for women's choral music and for women in music. We commission and perform new work for women's voices and we offer opportunities for women to develop expertise and gain recognition as singers and conductors. Our board is actively engaged in organizational development, and is committed to adopting best practices for nonprofits and lifelong learning.



Women of Excellence... Our Singers

Christina Alexopoulos	Boska Dzida	Tracy Kogen	Laurie Soderberg
Erin Allen	Shauna Ehler	Cinthia Kush	Heather Spickard
Kelly Arnold	Darlene Favenir	Mary Langsdorf	Cathryn Starr
Kathy Baldasari	Rosa Galvez	Felicia Lee	Claire Stoneman
Marjorie Beale	Allison Gibbons	Shauna McFadden	Mariko Takahashi
Alex Behrens	Sarah Hughes	Lauren Melville	Barbara van Gaasbeek
Amanda Bistolfo	Adriana Gomez	Carole Mintzer	Katrina Veldkamp
Elizabeth Bjornsti	Samantha Gossage	Emily Mizuki	Kathryn Vickers
Janet Bratton	Ako Harada	Patricia Morgan	Petrina Walker
Lyndsay Brill	Allison Hieger	Masako Morita	Marie Washington
Laurel Chowdhury	Emily Horowitz	Devereux Powers	Mary Watson
Lisa Claborne	Sarah Hughes	Ellen Quandahl	Beth Weiner
Danielle Cobb	Chardette Jameson	Lisa Roetzel	Stephanie Wright
Mikaela Curtis	Cynthia Knell	Martha Selby	

Eliza Rubenstein, Artistic Director

Eliza Rubenstein studied choral conducting and English at Oberlin College before moving to southern California in 1995 to earn her master's degree in conducting from UC-Irvine. Besides her work with the OCWC, she is the Director of Choral and Vocal Activities and Chair of the Music Department at Orange Coast College, and the Artistic Director of the Long Beach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra. She also serves on the board of the California Choral Directors' Association as the editor-in-chief of CCDA's award-winning *Cantate* magazine.

Eliza is a former animal-shelter administrator and dog trainer, and the co-author of *The Adoption Option: Choosing and Raising the Rescue Dog for You*. In 2006 she presented a seminar entitled "Sit! Stay! Sing!: What Choral Conductors Can Learn from Dog Trainers" at the ACDA's Western regional convention. Her family includes her partner, Julie Fischer; a yellow Labrador named Dayton; and Wilbur, a grey cat.

Sarah Hughes, Assistant Director

Sarah Hughes is a graduate of the Conservatory of Music at Chapman University in Orange. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in music education with an emphasis in voice and a Master of Arts degree in teaching. She currently teaches music to students in kindergarten through 5th grade in the Fountain Valley School District and maintains a private voice studio. When she is not involved in music, she is busy playing with new recipes, crafting, or dancing the night away to her favorite swing bands.

Conducting Internship

One of the OCWC's most exciting programs is its Conducting Internship, an annual opportunity offered to one or more promising young women entering the field of choral conducting. Since conducting continues to be a largely male-dominated field, and since it is traditionally difficult for aspiring conductors to gain experience at their craft, this paid internship is an important and innovative contribution to the musical community, and choruses across the country have used our program as a model for their own internship opportunities. We are pleased to welcome Mikaela Curtis as our 2018 – 2019 intern.

What People are Saying

Audience

"Brava! You are magnificent!"

" . . . An incredible sound, beautifully in tune, with so many colors and exquisite musical lines . . . I love this chorus!" —Dr. Ricardo Soto, Director of Ensembles, Orange Coast College

"Every concert is a WOW! And no two are a WOW in the same way."

"Wonderful selection, lovely theme, beautifully performed. Brava!"

Composers

"Alert and flawless musicianship"

-Kirke Mechem, composer

Singers

I want to take a moment to say how amazing this group of women is. You not only take on the world with your voices (musically and otherwise), but you help heal the individual, too. I've been in choirs that are all about the music—you are all about the heart, and the music comes from that. Thank you!—R.A.S.

Our History

- 1997 First organizational meeting
- 1998 First performance
- 1999 First guest artist: Jonathan Mack, tenor, joined the group for Igor Stravinsky's *Cantata*
- 2000 Eliza Rubenstein named Artistic Director
- 2001 First marketing and audience development grant from Arts Orange County
- 2002 First concert production grant from Allergan Foundation
- 2003 First operational support grant from Disneyland Cast Community Fund

Our History (continued)

- 2004 One of 19 choruses invited to sing at the western regional convention of the ACDA
- 2005 Reprise of a collaboration with the Wooden Floor at Walt Disney Concert Hall's REDCAT Theater
- 2006 Debut at Henry and Renée Segerstrom Concert Hall as guests of MenAlive, December 10
- 2007 Performed Olivier Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine*; first commission, "To My Excellent Lucasia, on our Friendship," from Ruth Huber
- 2008 Tenth anniversary and second commissioned work, Angel Lam's "Oh Stars, from the Abyss"
- 2009 Performed Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*
- 2010 Commissioned "Tribute" from Dale Trumbore
- 2011 Commissioned "When Music Sounds" from Sharon Farber
- 2012 One of 14 choruses invited to perform at the western regional conference of the ACDA; commissioned the treble arrangement of *Barso Re* from Ethan Sperry
- 2013 Commissioned "We Can Sing That" from Kirke Mechem
- 2014 One of two Outstanding Arts Organizations named by Arts Orange County
- 2015 First international tour; competed in the International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen Wales and placed third in Folk Choirs
- 2016 Collaboration with Bel Canto for Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms"
- 2017 Commissioned "Water Women" from Joan Szymko; made our Carnegie Hall debut as part of a masterworks chorus for Kirke Mechem's "Songs of the Slave" under the baton of Eliza Rubenstein
- 2018 Twentieth Anniversary Season and tour to the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia

Role and responsibilities of the Board—what we do

The Board's major responsibility is to develop the widest possible support and community involvement for the chorus. We are the governing body of the corporation and we are responsible for managing the business and property of the OCWC. As the Board of the OCWC, we:

- Establish our mission and vision
- Ensure that we adhere to the mission
- Maintain the financial solvency of the corporation
- Elect officers
- Appoint the Artistic Director
- Supervise the investment of capital assets
- Give generously
- Raise funds
- Approve annual budget and long-range plans
- Sell tickets
- Attend concerts
- Promote the OCWC to the public
- Demonstrate pride in the OCWC

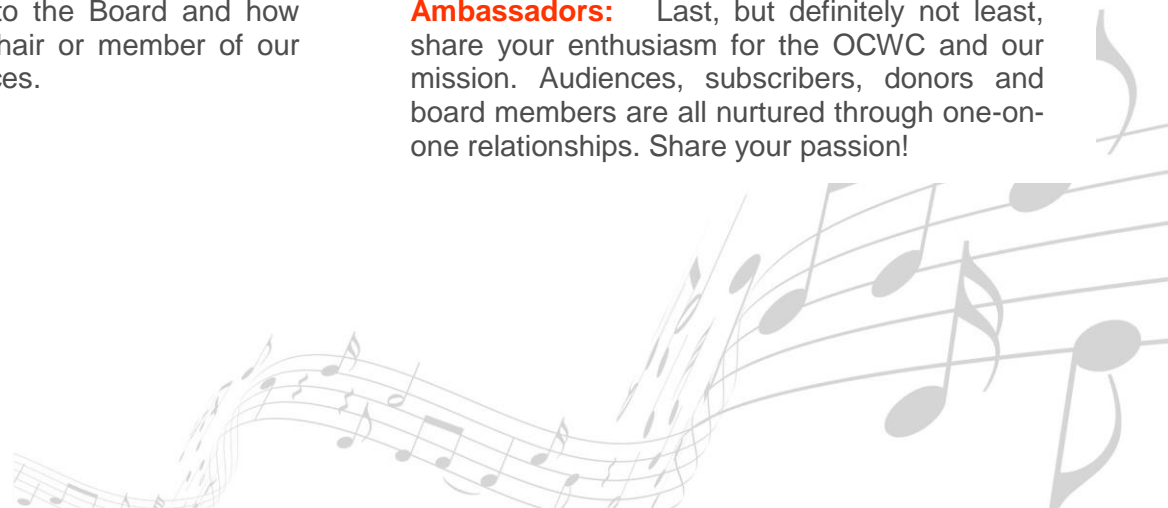
Expectations of Board Members—what we commit to each other and the OCWC

Meetings: Board members are required to attend a minimum of 75% of our Board meetings. We typically conduct four in-person Board meetings per year plus a strategic planning session. These are supplemented by conference calls and video conferences as necessary.

Committees and Task Forces: All Board members are expected to serve on one or more of OCWC's governing committees and working task forces. Singers and supporters may serve on task forces also, helping us do what needs to be done. Please carefully consider the skills and abilities you bring to the Board and how you might serve as a chair or member of our committees and task forces.

Contributions: All Board members are expected to support the organization financially. We ask Board members to make gifts that are personally significant to you, and we believe that if you are serving on our Board, we should be one of the top three recipients of your charitable giving. At a minimum, we ask you to match the contributions requested of our singers (\$250 annually) and we respectfully suggest a minimum donation or combination of donation and fundraising of \$1,000. With grant requests it is important to respond that 100% of the Board contributes to the financial resources of the organization.

Ambassadors: Last, but definitely not least, share your enthusiasm for the OCWC and our mission. Audiences, subscribers, donors and board members are all nurtured through one-on-one relationships. Share your passion!



Organization—how we get things done

The Orange County Women's Chorus currently has a part-time Executive Director, with the majority of our organizational work done by volunteers. The Board of Directors is in transition, from a hands-on, working singers Board to a community-based Board whose primary responsibilities are governance, audience development, friend-raising and fundraising.

Governance: The governance team identifies and recruits new Board members and develops governing policies and procedures. The chairman of the governance committee is the president of the Board. The governance team includes a minimum of one other Board member and may include other volunteers.

Operations and Volunteer Management: This team is responsible for all aspects of concert production, including facilities contracts, sound engineering, reception hosting, and managing the front-of-house and back-of-house volunteers.

Audience Development: The audience development team issues press releases, develops print and direct mail materials, nurtures long-term relationships with media partners, and maintains the website. The team manages the box office and singer ticket sales, updates the online box office, and manages all email marketing to our patrons. This team conducts audience surveys, promotes the OCWC and evaluates the results of promotional activities, all designed to increase concert attendance and public awareness.

Fundraising: This committee is responsible for developing and implementing a fundraising plan that encompasses everything from the annual donor campaign, online giving, special events, and identifying potential corporate contributors to developing a grant calendar and preparing grant applications.

Executive Director

Allison K. Hieger

Artistic Director and Conductor

Eliza Rubenstein

Assistant Director

Sarah Hughes

Conducting Intern

Mikaela Curtis

Pianist

Janelle Kim

Board of Directors

Mary C. Langsdorf, President
 Kathryn J. Baldasari, Chief Financial Officer
 Marjorie Beale, Commissions and Touring
 Janet Bratton, Operations
 Shauna Eheler, Legal and Administration;
 Fundraising
 Allison Hieger, Chorus Connections and
 Governance
 Heather Spickard, Fundraising





BOARD MEMBER AGREEMENT

As a member of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Women's Chorus (OCWC), I agree to support the mission of the organization. I understand that my duties and responsibilities include the following:

1. I am legally responsible, along with other board members, for this organization. I am responsible to know and approve all policies, participate in strategic planning and be familiar with all programs and services. Along with the other board members and in partnership with the artistic and executive/managing director, I oversee the implementation of policies and programs of the OCWC.
2. I am fiscally responsible, with other board members, for this organization. It is my duty to be active in monitoring the OCWC's income and expense, in planning the budget and in fundraising to meet the budget.
3. I am morally responsible for the health and well-being of this organization. As a member of the board, I pledge to carry out my duties to OCWC with the highest degree of ethics.
4. I agree to respect, listen to and treat courteously all people involved with OCWC.
5. I will make a good faith effort to do my best to support the fundraising goals of the OCWC. I agree to participate in fundraising activities as follows:
 - I will give an annual donation that is personally significant and makes me feel proud, and that is at least as much as an annual singer contribution (\$_____ in 2018 – 2019);
 - I will share names of prospective donors for fundraising activities;
 - I will attend and actively participate in programs of OCWC;
 - I will talk about the work and the achievements of OCWC with colleagues and friends;
 - I will participate in the following as often as I can:
 - identify and establish contacts with potential corporate and foundation donors;
 - identify sources of in-kind contributions;
 - send letters/requests/personal notes on fundraising appeals to friends;
 - ask friends, family, and business associates to make gifts to the OCWC.
 - help plan, organize, and participate in fundraising events.
6. I agree to serve on and actively participate in at least one standing committee of the Board.
7. I agree to attend full Board meetings and committee meetings as required by committee work plan. I understand that I am required to attend at least three-quarters of the total meetings per year to remain in good standing as a Board member.

In turn, the OCWC is responsible to me in the following ways:

1. I will be provided with board meeting agendas and meeting materials in advance, including a quarterly financial report.
2. I may call on the artistic and executive/managing directors and the president of the board to discuss the programs, policies, goals and objectives of the organization.
3. I will be provided with straightforward, thorough and timely responses to any questions I have during the course of carrying out my fiscal, legal, or moral responsibilities to this organization.

Board member name: (Print)

Board member signature & date