

A Return to the Stage

SCSO to Debut in Renovated Concert Space

Story by Shauna Boyd

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra (SCSO) are celebrating their 26th year performing in the Sacramento Region with a debut concert in the newly renovated SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center (1301 L Street, Sacramento, CA 95814) on Saturday, May 14 at 8 PM.

The SCSO will partner with guest chorus Schola Cantorum of Sacred Heart Church in Sacramento to perform the dramatic and romantic Requiem by Giuseppe Verdi, which is billed as a work of virtuosic brilliance. Verdi wrote the work in Latin, and the performers will sing it in Latin with the English translation printed in the programs and projected above the stage. "It's a powerful and operatic work that demands large choral forces," said SCSO President and CEO Jim McCormick. So, SCSO Music Director Donald Kendrick will conduct 175 chorus singers, four accomplished soloists, and 52 orchestra members – for a total force of 232 performers on stage.

The artists are eager to finally perform in the renovated concert venue after the forced hiatus due to COVID-19. During the shutdown, the SCSO members were planning their comeback, raising more than \$120,000 to pay for new choral risers. McCormick said the investment was "a legacy for the future," showcasing the courage and dedication of the SCSO to put in that work without any indication of when they'd be back on the stage. "It says something



The Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra (SCSO) will return to the stage on May 14 for their first performance since 2019, debuting in the newly renovated SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center. Photo of past performances by Ronald B. Johnson

about our resilience," said McCormick.

And now, with the upcoming performance on those new risers, McCormick said it feels like SCSO is "rising again." The risers will wrap around the orchestra, which McCormick said will create an incredible "balance of sound." With the sopranos behind the violins, the tenors and altos behind the brass and woodwind instruments, and the basses singing behind the cellos, the complementary tones will blend together seamlessly on the stage. And a new Constellation Sound System will amplify all the performers with a natural, high-quality sound. McCormick said these new features will "raise the quality and level of professionalism."

The concert will be dedicated to the people of Ukraine and all oppressed people, and it will open with a performance of the Ukrainian National Anthem.

McCormick said that "music is so healing" and Requiem is often referred to as "the Mass for humanity," expressing great sadness but also great hope, so the performance is fitting "at a time of war when people are in need of solace."

The SCSO recorded a performance of Verdi's Requiem 11 years ago at the Mondovi Center in Davis, CA, and those CDs will be available for sale for \$10 each, with proceeds going to Ukrainian relief. Additional donations for Ukraine will also be accepted.

The performance will also honor the memory of Sacramento's celebrated restaurateur Biba Caggiano, who passed away in August 2019. "She put Sacramento on the map when it comes to food," said McCormick. "She was fiercely Italian, and no one was more Italian than Giuseppe Verdi," so the SCSO felt the Requiem

they held Zoom meetings to practice, it couldn't replicate the joy of singing together in one space. McCormick said this community of singers have dearly missed "the journey" of regular rehearsals and performances, and they are excited for their return to the stage.

After the concert, a reception will be held in the lobby so attendees can meet the talented orchestra members and singers – including distinguished soloists Jennifer Forni, Soprano; Linda Baird, Mezzo Soprano; Robert Breault, Tenor; and Timothy Jones, Baritone who are flying in from across the country for this performance. SCSO Music Director

Donald Kendrick, who has been conducting for more than 30 years, said, "We're very excited to bring this piece of music, the best thing [Verdi] ever wrote in his life, to the newly refurbished theater, debuting the new risers, and employing the new sound system. ... This performance promises to be one the most significant things we have done in a long time."

Kendrick said it will be an "unbelievable, unforgettable evening."

Through its performances, the SCSO seeks to transform our communities through the power of music, believing that the performance and appreciation of live music are vital to the well-being of society. Music elevates our experiences; it evokes the deepest mysteries of life and inspires all who hear it. And live music in particular creates a sense of shared experience that cannot be replicated: "That's what great music does; it provides a platform to bring people together," said McCormick, "it's a coming together of a community."

Tickets are on sale now. For more info, visit <https://sacramentochoral.org>. ★



SCSO will perform Giuseppe Verdi's Requiem, with a full force of chorus singers, orchestra members, and accomplished soloists. Photos of past performances by Ronald B. Johnson



performance would be an ideal time to honor her legacy.

McCormick said the concert will be a significant moment for the audience, coming back to experience live orchestral and choral music after the lengthy shutdown, and also very therapeutic for the performers, who haven't been able to sing together in person for the last two years. Although



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