



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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68th Annual “Stairway of the Stars” Concerts Set for March

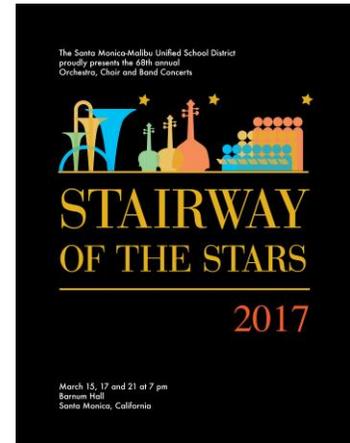
Nearly 1,000 SMMUSD elementary, middle and high school students will star in three separate “Stairway to the Stars” concerts on March 15, 17 and 21, at 7 pm, in Santa Monica High School’s historic Barnum Hall auditorium.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has presented an annual musical extravaganza showcasing the talents of students from every school in the district and share its outstanding music education programs with parents and the community. This concert series marks the 68th year of this program.

The **Orchestra** concert will be on Wednesday, March 15.

The **Choir** concert will be on Friday, March 17.

The **Band** concert will be on Tuesday, March 21.



Tickets will be available on a first-come, first-served basis during the advance online ticket sales period, starting February 22, and will continue to be available online until *noon* on the day of each concert. Remaining tickets for each concert will be on sale at the Barnum Hall box office from 5:30 to 7 pm. This year, for the first time, there will be *assigned seating*. Proceeds from the ticket sales go right back into the district’s award-winning music programs. General adult admission is \$17 for each concert and youth / student is \$12. Numerous sponsorship packages are available. Parking will be available in the Civic Center parking structure on 4th Street.

Orchestra Night - Wednesday, March 15

<http://stairway2017orchestra.brownpapertickets.com>

Choir Night - Friday, March 17

<http://stairway2017choir.brownpapertickets.com>

Band Night - Tuesday, March 21

<http://stairway2017band.brownpapertickets.com>

“These three concerts are the culmination of hard work and dedication by our students and music instructors, and we look forward to exceptional performances again this year,” said SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati. “We appreciate the support of our community through attending events and direct donations, as well as through donations to the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation, which contributes to many of our successful visual and performing arts programs.”

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The **Stairway 2017 Honor Award** will be presented to **Mark Barnard**, who graduated from Santa Monica High School in 1977 and later from the USC Thornton School of Music and the New England Conservatory. Barnard's first Stairway of the Stars was in 1971, performing in the elementary honor orchestra under guest conductor Carmen Dragon. He has now come full circle as he will be also be the guest conductor at the Stairway Orchestra Concert on March 15.



Barnard is a distinguished music educator, educational composer, conductor, clinician, and performer. As a composer, arranger, and music editor, Barnard has created numerous publications for educational orchestra, band, choir, and keyboard. His compositions and arrangements have been featured and performed at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, the Midwest Clinic, and many conventions and festivals worldwide.

There will be a different guest conductor for each of the three Stairway concerts.

Stairway 2017 Guest Conductor for Choir – Ariel Quintana, D.M.A.

Born in Argentina, Ariel Quintana graduated from the Universidad Adventista del Plata and earned a Master's Degree from the National Conservatory of Music in Buenos Aires. After moving to California, he founded the Opus 7 Chamber Singers, touring Europe in the 1990s and performing at the Hollywood Bowl in a 2002 concert commemorating the first anniversary of 9/11. From 2006 to 2010, Quintana was Assistant Conductor of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. He also earned a Doctor in Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Southern California and is currently Director of Choral Activities at La Sierra University.



Stairway 2017 Guest Conductor for Band – Travis J. Cross

Travis J. Cross serves as associate professor of music and department vice chair at UCLA, where he conducts the Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band and directs the graduate wind conducting program. He is also associate dean for academic mentoring and opportunity in the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. Previously, at Virginia Tech, Cross led students in performances at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. Cross earned doctor and master of music degrees in conducting from Northwestern University and the bachelor of music degree from St. Olaf College. He has appeared as a guest conductor, composer, and clinician in Canada, China, Korea, and Thailand.



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