



**SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**71st Annual “Stairway of the Stars” Concerts
Shine a Brilliant Light on the SMMUSD Music Program**

For the 71st year, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District will present Stairway of the Stars, a musical extravaganza highlighting the outstanding music education programs, and showcasing the talents of students from every school in the district. Nearly 1,000 elementary, middle, and high school students will “star” in three separate concerts at Santa Monica High School’s historic Barnum Hall.

Choir Concert – Monday, March 16, 2020
Orchestra Concert – Friday, March 20, 2020
Band Concert – Thursday, March 26, 2020
All three concerts will begin at 7p.m.

Three prestigious guest conductors will direct each of the Stairway concerts:

Choir Concert Guest Conductor – Lori Marie Rios is a highly accomplished conductor, soloists, educator and voice teacher. She currently is associate professor of music at College of the Canyons (COC) in Valencia where she conducts two choirs and teaches voice. Prior to her appointment at COC, she directed the choral program at La Cañada High School. Her choirs have appeared at the American Choral Directors Association Regional Convention in Las Vegas and in 2007 were selected to appear at the ACDA National Convention in Miami. The choirs at La Cañada also performed at the California Music Educators Conference. Rios teaches in the summer graduate program at California State University, Los Angeles where she teaches voice and graduate level conducting. She is also on the choral-vocal faculty and serves as Assistant Director of the Idyllwild Arts Summer Program, where she serves as assistant director.



Orchestra Concert Guest Conductor – Anthony Parnter has embraced an international career that emphasizes his passion for storytelling with audiences, advocating for underrepresented talent in the concert hall, and cultivating inspiring experiences with underrepresented communities. He has garnered considerable praise for his leadership and interpretive prowess throughout the United States,

United Kingdom, China, South Korea, and Spain, and has recently accepted engagements in Czechoslovakia, Australia, and South America. He has collaborated onstage with luminaries spanning every musical genre. This extensive list of icons includes Joshua Bell, Yundi Li, Frederica von Stade, Roderick Williams, Cirque de la Symphonie, the Canadian Brass, Kanye West, Wes Borland, Imagine Dragons, Erick Morillo, Zedd, Alan Walker, and Rihanna.

Band Concert Guest Conductor – Dr. Shannon Kitelinger is the director of bands at San Diego State University (SDSU), where he conducts the university wind symphony, symphonic band, and concert band, as well as teaching courses in conducting, wind literature, and serving as the undergraduate music advisor. Kitelinger has taught at the high school, middle school, elementary, and university levels, as well as serving as the assistant conductor for the Lone Star Wind Orchestra, a professional wind band based in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. During his time at SDSU, ensemble enrollment has tripled and his groups have been featured at several local, state, and regional conferences. Beyond regular work as a nationally recognized guest conductor and clinician, Kitelinger has also received invitations to conduct in Europe and Japan.



The **2020 Stairway Honor Award** will be presented to Samohi graduate Julianna Di Giacomo. With appearances in top international opera houses, soprano Di Giacomo has earned a reputation as one of the exciting young lirica-spinto sopranos on the classical music scene today. This season, Di Giacomo's many engagements include Desdemona in *Otello* with Gustavo Dudamel at the Metropolitan Opera, John Cage's *Europerras I & II* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in a production directed by Yuval Sharon, and the title role of *Tosca* with Yannick Nézet-Séguin with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Vail, Colorado.

Tickets are on sale to the community and available online until **noon** on the day of each concert at www.StairwayoftheStars.org. All seats are reserved. Any remaining tickets for each concert will be on sale at the Barnum Hall box office from 6 to 7 p.m. Parking will be available in the Civic Center parking structure on 4th Street at Civic Center Drive. City parking rates will apply.

Proceeds from the ticket sales go right back into the district's award-winning music programs.

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