

2018 Spotlight Classical Instrumental Semifinal Panel

Dr. John Burdett is the Director of Instrumental Studies, Director of Bands, and Director of Graduate Music Education at Azusa Pacific University, where he leads the band division and teaches graduate students pursuing the Master of Music in Conducting. Previously, Dr. Burdett has held tenure track and adjunct appointments teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in conducting, music education, and ensemble direction at Mt. San Antonio College, Cal Poly Pomona, California State Universities at Fullerton and Los Angeles, among others. Dr. Burdett completed music education and conducting degrees at Azusa Pacific University and California State University, Los Angeles and earned a Doctorate of Music Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He conducts, plays and records throughout the LA area and has toured in the U.S. and Japan with a variety of classical, jazz and commercial ensembles, and was founding Music Director and Conductor of the Southern California Philharmonic.

Dr. Susan Helfter is an artist-educator known for her community engagement work through music. At the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music, Dr. Helfter is an Associate Professor of Practice, Chair of the Music Teaching and Learning Department and Director of the Thornton Community Engagement Programs. As a hornist, Dr. Helfter is a past winner of the Canadian National Music Competition and in her role with the Thornton Community Engagement Programs since 2004, she has been responsible for the direction, design, implementation and funding of these extensive music programs. Her current musical interests and pursuits lie in community and musician self-actualization through musical engagement, with research topics of musician identity, musician as facilitator and community partnerships. Dr. Helfter is called upon regularly by professional arts organizations to lead masterclasses, workshops and contribute to the development of young and emerging musicians.

U-Jung Jung is a pianist and organist who has appeared in numerous concert venues around the world including Walt Disney Concert Hall, Alice Tully Hall in New York, and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, to name a few. She has also appeared as a soloist with the Aspen Concert Orchestra, Vladivostok Symphony, Asian American Symphony, Young Musicians Foundation Debut Orchestra, La Primavera Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Orchestra, among others. Her impressive list of awards includes winner of the Nakamichi Piano Competition at the Aspen Music Festival which led to a performance with the Aspen Concert Orchestra as well as first grand prize in the Music Center Spotlight Awards Classical Instrumental division. She was one of only eight pianists from the US accepted into the Second International Junior Tchaikovsky Competition. Ms. Jung received both her Master of Music degree and Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from the Juilliard School. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at Chapman University.

Daniel Wachs has guest conducted the Spartanburg Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Fort Worth Symphony, the Monterey Symphony, Orange County's Pacific Symphony, and New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center, among many others. Wachs has also been entrusted with preparing orchestras for Valery Gergiev and Vladimir Spivakov, and has served as Assistant Conductor to Osmo Vänskä at the Minnesota Orchestra and at the National Orchestra of France under Kurt Masur. Additionally, he has served as cover conductor for the Houston Symphony and for the Rotterdam Philharmonic on tour, and as assistant conductor at the Cincinnati Opera. An accomplished opera conductor and collaborative pianist, Wachs has led Gianni Schicchi, Così fan tutte, Le Nozze di Figaro, acts from La Traviata and Die Fledermaus and many others. He has accompanied tenor William Burden in recital and recently made his debut on the LA Philharmonic Chamber Music Series at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Committed to the cause of music education, Wachs leads the Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra and is Music Director of The Chapman Orchestra at Chapman University.

Dr. Leif Woodward received his Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Southern California where he received the Colburn Foundation Scholarship for studies in Early Music. A graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Dr. Woodward has studied cello with renowned teachers Ronald Leonard, Clive Greensmith, and Jean-Michel Fonteneau. He performs with numerous organizations such as: Los Angeles Musica Angelica, American Bach Soloists, Angeles Consort, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Pacific Chorale, Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, Santa Barbara Symphony and Tesseræ. Dr. Woodward appears at the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, and Corona Del Mar Baroque Festival as well as on the chamber music series at the John Paul Getty Museum and Villa, Norton Simon Museum and Sundays Live at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He is currently on Faculty at Vanguard University of Southern California.