

South Coast Chorale Closes 35th Season with 'Love, Poetry' on June 20

A Pride-month evening of song celebrating queer love, chosen family, and the full spectrum of human connection

LONG BEACH, CA, UNITED STATES, June 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The South Coast Chorale](#) (SCC), Long Beach's LGBTQ+ community vocal ensemble, will present "Love, Poetry" on Saturday, June 20 at 7:30 pm at the First Congregational Church of Long Beach, 241 Cedar Avenue. The concert serves as the closing performance of SCC's landmark 35th anniversary season as well as the farewell performance by the Chorale's Artistic Director, Dr. Lynn Atkins. The incoming Artistic Director for the 36th season will also be introduced that evening.

In addition, a 30-minute, pre-concert panel discussing the evening's theme and starting at 6:30 pm will feature Dr. Atkins, Stephanie Wade, a trans educator, activist and U.S. Marines veteran and Viet Huong, who leverages the lessons of improv comedy and has served as an advisor and coach to leaders at all levels in organizations.

"Love, Poetry" is a close-held evening of song celebrating the full spectrum of love: queer love, chosen family, the friends who carry us, and the stories that shape us. The program brings together classical and contemporary choral works by LGBTQ+ and BIPOC composers and arrangers, weaving them into what Dr. Atkins describes as "a warm, expansive tapestry of connection and joy."

The evening's repertoire spans a wide emotional range. Elaine Hagenberg's "By Night" and "O Love," Rollo Dilworth's "The Dream Keeper," and Colin Cossi's "Finding Home Again" illuminate longing, imagination, protection, and belonging. Matthew Lyon Hazzard's "Love Poetry" and Philip Silvey's "Emily's Creed" offer devotion and resilience, while John Rutter's "Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind" brings wit and strength to the program's close. At the heart of the evening is Michael John Trotta's multi-movement composition "For a Breath of Ecstasy," a meditation on



South Coast Chorale Artistic Director Dr. Lynn G. Atkins

love's beauty, generosity, stillness, and surrender set to seven poems of Sara Teasdale.

"Poetry has always had the power to say what ordinary language cannot," said Dr. Atkins. "In light of the world we live in, we offer Love, Poetry as an invitation to practice love more liberally, more publicly, and more bravely."

In a letter to patrons, he reflected on the Chorale's mission and his time as Artistic Director: "SCC is more than an ensemble. It is a community that makes space — a safe place for queer people to gather, raise their voices, be seen, be heard, and belong. As this marks my final concert with South Coast Chorale, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Board of Directors for their leadership and trust, and to the singers for their dedication, vulnerability, humor, artistry, and heart. It has been a privilege to share in this work. To you, our patrons: thank you for supporting this chorus and believing in the power of music to create community. I leave with deep gratitude and a sincere hope that SCC will continue to grow, sing boldly, welcome generously, and stand firmly in the work of love, justice, and peace."

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Dr. Lynn G. Atkins, Artistic Director, South Coast Chorale



The South Coast Chorale's diverse and unique ensemble encompasses friends, families and supporters.



Love, Poetry Concert Flyer

"As SCC closes its 35th season, this concert reminds us why this chorus matters," said Tony Almero-Stokes, board president of the South Coast Chorale. "This is music that refuses silence and insists love must be broad enough to hold every member of our community."

The performance will be held at 7:30 pm on Saturday, June 20 at the First Congregational Church of Long Beach to follow the pre-concert panel at 6:30 pm. Running time is approximately 90 minutes. Tickets are \$35 (plus fees) and are available online at southcoastchorale.org.

The venue is wheelchair accessible and offers accessible parking. Advance purchase is strongly recommended; the box office is now cashless and accepts credit/debit only.

This performance is supported, in part, by The Arts Council for Long Beach, The City of Long Beach, The Port of Long Beach and the L.A. County Department of Arts and Culture.

About South Coast Chorale (SCC)

Founded in 1990, the South Coast Chorale is a community vocal ensemble comprised of individuals who simply enjoy singing and working together. Based in the LGBTQ+ community, SCC is proud to be a diverse ensemble that encompasses friends, families & supporters, all of whom are dedicated to building bridges between communities by using music to remind us all that we are more alike than different.

Over the years, SCC has filled a vital role in helping to enhance the cultural and educational life of greater Long Beach through partnerships with local community organizations. In the Spring of 2023, the Chorale presented a concert focused on anti-bullying and acceptance. A musical presentation of the story “Oliver Button is a Sissy” was performed in partnership with a youth theater group and two other Long Beach arts organizations. Free educational performances were presented to nearly 1,600 Long Beach area elementary school students, in addition to public performances.

The Chorale has established a reputation of performances that are distinguished for their LGBTQ+ diversity and artistic excellence, receiving community nominations and recognition from local city and state leaders and organizations, as well as audience praise. From the West Coast premiere of a choral tribute to the life and accomplishments of openly gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, to the Southern California premiere of “Street Requiem” honoring those who have lived and died on the streets, the many talented singers that have graced the ranks of SCC have performed for thousands of audience members all over the US and Canada, spreading musical messages that resound with echoes of harmony and belonging.

For more information on the South Coast Chorale, visit <https://www.southcoastchorale.org>.

Patrick Murray
South Coast Chorale
+1 562-333-8050

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