



**Classical[®]
California
KUSC**

**Annual Report
2023**

Nurturing a love of classical music for all



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Classical California KUSC
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Los Angeles, California 90015
KUSC.org

Letter from the President

Classical California KUSC strives to nurture a love of classical music, inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to make it an enduring part of their lives. In a myriad of ways, the past fiscal year saw the station exploring ever new ways of advancing this mission. Your support made it all possible.



On the airwaves, on social media, and on our website, we went the extra mile to promote the region’s cultural institutions large and small, serving as a megaphone for Southern California’s sprawling arts ecosystem. This role was of particular significance in the fall of 2021 as performing arts organizations faced the considerable challenge of fully re-opening following pandemic-related closures and cutbacks.

As ever, our burgeoning community engagement work focused on introducing classical music to children and families who may not otherwise have access to this life-enhancing art form we all love. In February we commemorated Black History Month with a new school initiative: *I Believe*, the brainchild of pianist Lara Downes, Classical California resident artist and evening host. The interactive student assembly and concert took place at Watts Learning Center Charter Middle School, with Lara and student musicians introducing more than 400 kids to works by long-neglected Black composers.

After a long, pandemic-necessitated pause, we relaunched *Classical California KUSC Kids Discovery Day*, our popular children’s music festival. We were thrilled to be back at the beautiful Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, delighting thousands of children and their families with interactive musical activities and wall-to-wall performances by local groups.

Ever mindful of the desire to diversify our music offerings and broaden our reach, we launched Classical California KUSC’s first stream devoted to classical music composed, performed, or conducted by musicians from Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world. *Nuestra Música* is hosted on separate Spanish and English channels by Brisa Siegel, a graduate of our highly successful talent development program.

None of these achievements would have been possible without your own passion for the music, and your investment in Classical California KUSC’s future.

There are challenges ahead: public radio stations around the country are still reeling from the double whammy of the pandemic, which altered listening patterns and shrunk charitable giving. As a result, for the past three years we’ve seen a slight decrease in the number of Classical California KUSC member supporters. The great news is that our revenue remains robust thanks to your enduring commitment to all that Classical California KUSC does to enhance the lives of Southern Californians and listeners around the world. Thank you again for partnering with us to spread a love of classical music and the arts for all...for generations to come.

James A. Muhammad
President
Classical California

Community Engagement and Events



Classical Kids Discovery Day at The Bowers Museum, Orange County

A Commitment to Local Arts

In the fall of 2021, as arts organizations throughout Southern California resumed activities and welcomed back concertgoers with open arms, Classical California KUSC served as a powerful megaphone to promote their events and performances. We also amplified their offerings on the air, presenting recorded concerts by the **Los Angeles Philharmonic**, **Pacific Symphony** and more.

For the first time since the pandemic, we reveled in the return of *Classical California KUSC Kids Discovery Day* (KDD), an annual children’s music festival that is a joyous and educational celebration of music, dance, and the visual arts. Held at cultural locales across the region, the family-friendly event is a wonderful opportunity for kids to step into the world of live classical music in a fun and approachable way. In December 2022, KDD took place at **The Bowers Museum** in Santa Ana, where more than two thousand children and their families enjoyed listening to kid-friendly classical music performances and took part in interactive musical activities with our amazing arts partners like **Pacific Chorale**, **Orange County Youth Symphony**, **Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra**, **Backhaus Dance**, and the **Orange County School of the Arts** among others. Classical California KUSC’s *Be a Classical DJ* booth was a particular highlight, where hosts helped kids try out the mic, read scripts, and record on tape. Some kids were even featured on the air! It was a day filled with music and fun for everyone.



I Believe at Watts Learning Center, credos (left); Lara Downes with Thornton School of Music cellist, Quenton Blache

I Believe

Classical California KUSC celebrated Black History Month with the launch of a new public school initiative, *I Believe*. Designed by Classical California’s resident artist and evening radio host, **Lara Downes**, *I Believe* encourages kids to change their perceptions and open their ears to the wonders of classical music. The interactive student assembly was held at **Watts Learning Center Charter Middle School**, and introduced more than **400** students to works by Margaret Bonds, Florence Price, and Billie Holiday—composers long-neglected in the concert hall. A grand piano was graciously donated by **YAMAHA** for the event.

James Muhammad, President of Classical California, says: “The *I Believe* project illustrates the level of passion Lara has for creating a brighter future for this world. During times of uncertainty, she brings light to the students through the medium of music. Inspired by Bonds’ composition, ‘Credo,’ Lara designed a lesson plan for classroom teachers to use prior to the event. Students were also encouraged to create their own credos, or ‘I Believe’ statements, detailing what matters to them.” Notes Lara: “Seeing the impact Margaret Bonds made with her music inspired me to start this national initiative asking young people to leave their marks in the classical world and the world in general. They can be the people to inspire the next generation.”

Some student credos were read by their middle school authors at the assembly; others were displayed in the auditorium where the assembly took place. Special guest USC student **Shandela Contreras**—a fast-rising LA poet and an alum of **USC’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative**—read her “I Believe” poem at the assembly.

Community Engagement and Events

Los Angeles Times Festival of Books

In April, Classical California KUSC hosted a stage at the **Los Angeles Times Festival of Books**, a free community event that attracts approximately 150,000 people to the University of Southern California (USC) campus each spring. Thousands of listeners from across Southern California stopped by the Classical California KUSC booth to meet our hosts and staff, including **Brisa Siegel** (*Nuestra Música*). Siegel emceed live musical performances by **Los Angeles Opera** singers and **Los Angeles County High School for the Arts** (LACHSA) on the USC Friends and Neighbors Stage. Kids got to “Be a DJ,” with Classical California’s **Alan Chapman**, **Suraj Partha**, **Jennifer Miller Hammel**, and **Brian Lauritzen** serving as on-air tutors. They also got to learn about the Anatomy of a Violin with **Metzler Violin Shop**.



Los Angeles Times Festival of Books



Music on the Brain event with performances by USC Thornton School of Music students

Your Brain on Music

Did you know music can have a dramatic impact on your brain? It can shape the way we think, act, and even how we connect with others. In June, Classical California KUSC collaborated with USC’s **Brain and Creativity Institute** to present a panel discussion on how learning music accelerates brain development and how music has the power to heal and enhance well-being across our lifespans. The panel, facilitated by Classical California KUSC’s **Gail Eichenthal**, featured some of the world’s leading researchers in the fast-changing field of neuroscience, including professors **Beatriz Ilari**, **Assal Habibi**, USC Vice Provost for the Arts **Josh Kun**, and the world-renowned Institute founder/director, **Antonio Damasio**. The panel discussion was followed by a chamber music concert featuring students from the **USC Thornton School of Music**. A video of this event can be seen on our Classical California YouTube channel, youtube.com/@ClassicalCalifornia

Partnerships

Community Arts Partners

At Classical California KUSC, our strategy for community partnership and engagement is ever-expanding. Our initiatives focus on introducing classical music to youth who have a limited exposure to the performing arts, while spreading a love of classical music for all. We also bank on our reach across the airwaves, as well as our appearances at public events, to act as a “megaphone” and promote arts organizations that may not have the resources to tell their stories to a broad audience. As you read through this report, you will learn more about a few of our FY23 community partnership highlights, and see that we strive to embrace audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Importantly, Classical California strives to expand the reach of classical music, building new audiences and perhaps even inspiring the classical musicians of the future.



Talent Development Program

Building Future Talent: Host Trainees

Classical California KUSC believes training the next generation of knowledgeable and companionable hosts will play a key role in nurturing a love of classical music for our listeners, and help immeasurably in our quest to connect more people to the joys of the art form. Now in its third year, *Building Future Talent* is a talent development program that trains the next generation of radio hosts, digital content providers, and producers. Paid trainees learn the ropes of classical hosting and storytelling while working with our team of veteran Classical California hosts and producers. Alumni of the program have joined our full-time staff, creating a distinctive presence on our airwaves. One of the first *Building Future Talent* trainees, **Brisa Siegel**, was recognized by *Current* as a *Current* “Rising Star” of 2023, and was a major force behind the creation of Classical California KUSC’s *Nuestra Música* stream. 2023 trainee **Solomon Reynolds** will host a brand new weekly feature: **Saturday Morning CarTunes**, in FY24. This fun and funky 5-minute offering will introduce children and families en route to their Saturday activities to various musical instruments. Multi-faceted artist **Suraj Partha**, an actor, musician, and writer, is heard regularly on the Classical California KUSC airwaves. He has also written and hosted some of our most popular videos and blogs.



Photos left to right:
Hosts in Training
Solomon Reynolds,
Suraj Partha and
Brisa Siegel



Special Programming

FY23 was rich with special programming at KUSC. Our popular specials over the past year included Love At First Listen, a warm and sentimental week in May during which our listeners shared the pieces that made them fall in love with classical music. Highlights of **Sounds of the Season**—a two-week holiday celebration in December— included the launch of our first holiday playlist and virtual fireplace on YouTube, a celebration of Hanukkah with **Lara Downes** on her **Evening Show**, and a 10-day special with Downes as she counted down her ten favorite albums of 2022.



Lara Downes



Suraj Partha

In honor of Black History Month, Downes hosted **Crossings**, two hours of music from Black composers whose inspirations and innovations helped define our American sound—from Scott Joplin and Florence Price to Wynton Marsalis and Jon Batiste. Later in the month—and in partnership with **LA Opera**—Classical California presented the radio premiere of LA Opera’s groundbreaking opera, *Omar*. The month of May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. To commemorate the occasion, host **Suraj Partha** introduced **Friendship and Harmony**, a 2-hour special celebrating Asian and Pacific Americans in classical music and featuring artists such as **Yo-Yo Ma** and the **Silkroad Ensemble**, **Mahani Teave**, and **Reena Esmail**. As summer was poised to begin, we aired *Let Freedom Ring*, a commemoration of Juneteenth hosted by **Lara Downes**. This 3-hour program of music by Black composers reflected on freedom and celebrated the limitless power of creative expression.

Finally, host **Maggie Clennon Reberg** explored the vast contributions of the LGBTQ+ community to the world of classical music, from early music to the great Romantics, to contemporary artists with strong ties to the Golden

State. **Glitter and Be Golden: A California Celebration of Pride** highlighted works by **Tobias Picker**, **Jennifer Higdon** and **Michael Tilson Thomas**; ensembles led by **Marin Alsop** and **Craig Hella Johnson**; and performances by harpist **Emmanuel Ceysson**, soprano **Patricia Racette** and pianist **Sarah Davis Buechner**. A glowing celebration of Pride, California-style, on Classical California!



Maggie Clennon Reberg

Digital Highlights



Classical California and **NPR** collaborated on another season of **Amplify**, a video series hosted by Lara Downes. This series of deeply personal conversations with visionary Black musicians “amplifies” those shaping the future of classical music. Guests have included composer, singer, and instrumentalist **Rhiannon Giddens**, soprano **Julia Bullock**, and violinist **Randall Goosby**.

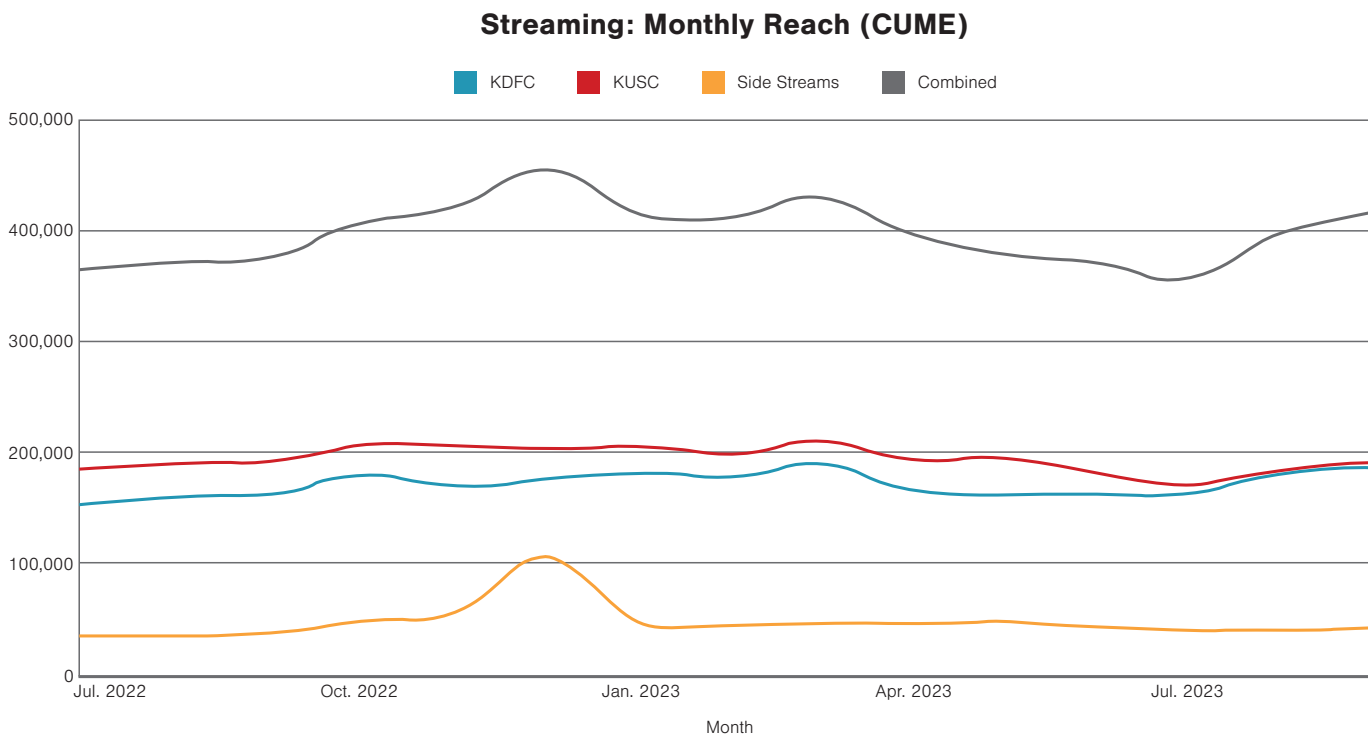


Alternate streams added in 2022|23 included **Classical California Ultimate Playlist**, which featured our listeners’ 250 favorite pieces streamed back-to-back; the relaunch of our beloved holiday stream, **A Classical California Christmas**; and **Classical California at the Movies**, a celebration of favorite movie music in the lead-up to the Academy Awards, plus exclusive interviews with the year’s nominees for Best Original Score. We also launched **Nuestra Música**, Classical California’s first stream devoted exclusively to classical music composed, performed, or conducted by musicians from Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world—with versions hosted 24/7 by **Brisa Siegel** in both English and Spanish.

Technology

At the heart of Classical California KUSC’s mission is making classical music accessible to a large and diverse audience. To expand its listener base and engage audiences in the digital realm, Classical California KUSC explores digital innovations such as content creation platforms like TikTok and YouTube, as well as themed web streams with a primary goal of evolving from a successful public radio station to a multi-platform classical music content provider.

Digital advances made in FY23 will provide us with greater flexibility moving forward to utilize innovative approaches to music programming. Among our greatest achievements: adopting new technologies to increase listenership, improve our broader understanding of listener preferences, and provide tailored listener experiences.



Climate Change and Classical California KUSC



Throughout the year, 1.3 million listeners enjoyed over 6.5 million hours of digital music delivered through our streaming platforms.

While our engineering and operations staff worked throughout the year to streamline and modernize our software infrastructure, they were simultaneously challenged by mother nature. The rapid effects of climate change paired with facilities not used to severe weather led to massive efforts to repair and maintain some of our most critical facility sites. Throughout the winter and into the spring, prolonged winter storms sent flurries and floods across the region. Classical California KUSC’s main transmitter site, Mount Harvard, was covered in snow and ice and inaccessible for weeks, left to run on generator power alone.

Damage at Gibraltar Peak in Santa Barbara included mudslides, washed-out roads, as well as downed power and communication lines, requiring months of workarounds and repair to maintain service.

Classical California KUSC’s backup transmitter location for Mount Harvard on Lookout Mountain in the Hollywood Hills experienced roof and water damage after heavy seasonal rains, requiring emergency repairs. Rest assured that behind the scenes, our stalwart engineers are always hard at work maintaining and improving our state-of-the-art sound in the face of ongoing logistical challenges!

Classical California KUSC Sponsorship

FY23 was a restorative season for the Classical California KUSC Sponsorship team. A sense of things returning to the “new normal” included the return of many of our longest tenured support partners in the arts community, and the ability to develop long-term strategies and plans without interruption.

Through it all, Classical California KUSC Sponsorship’s passionate commitment to our dual objectives was steadfast: Providing creative input, value, and a measurable return on investment for our partners in the arts community and the corporate sector, while generating revenue to fund our own programming and community efforts.

- 1. **Classical California KUSC KIDS Discovery Day** in December of 2022 at Santa Ana’s **Bowers Museum** was sponsored and underwritten in part by our friends at **SOUTH COAST PLAZA**.
- 2. Classical California KUSC continued its unrivaled partnership with the **LA PHILHARMONIC** throughout the four seasons, with summer at **The Hollywood Bowl** and a spectacular concert season at the **Walt Disney Concert Hall**.
- 3. **VIKING CRUISES** set sail with Classical California KUSC’s ***The Great Escape*** for its fourth year as exclusive sponsor.
- 4. Classical California KUSC’s ***At The Movies*** flexed its Oscar influence during awards season by celebrating the best in cinema and original scores.

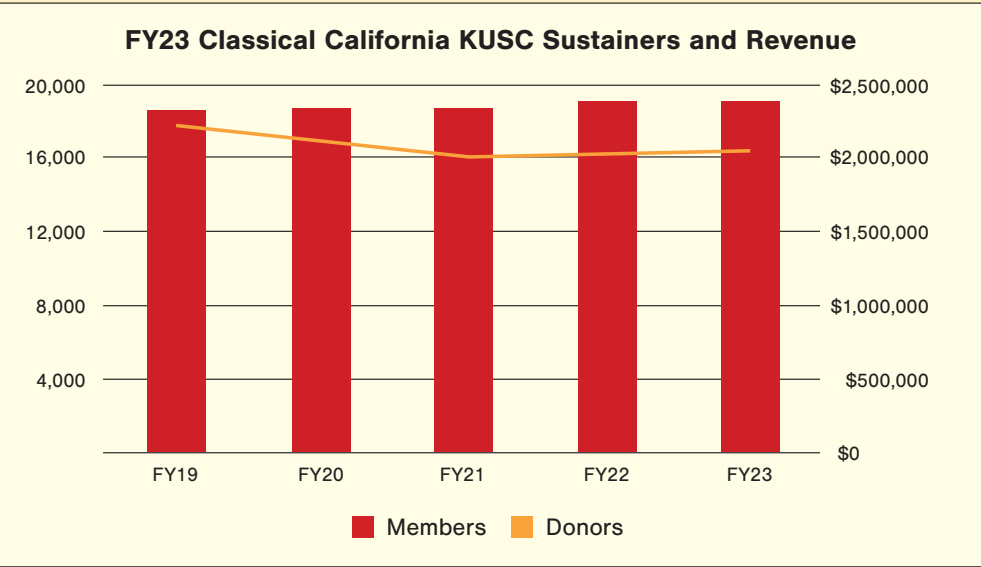
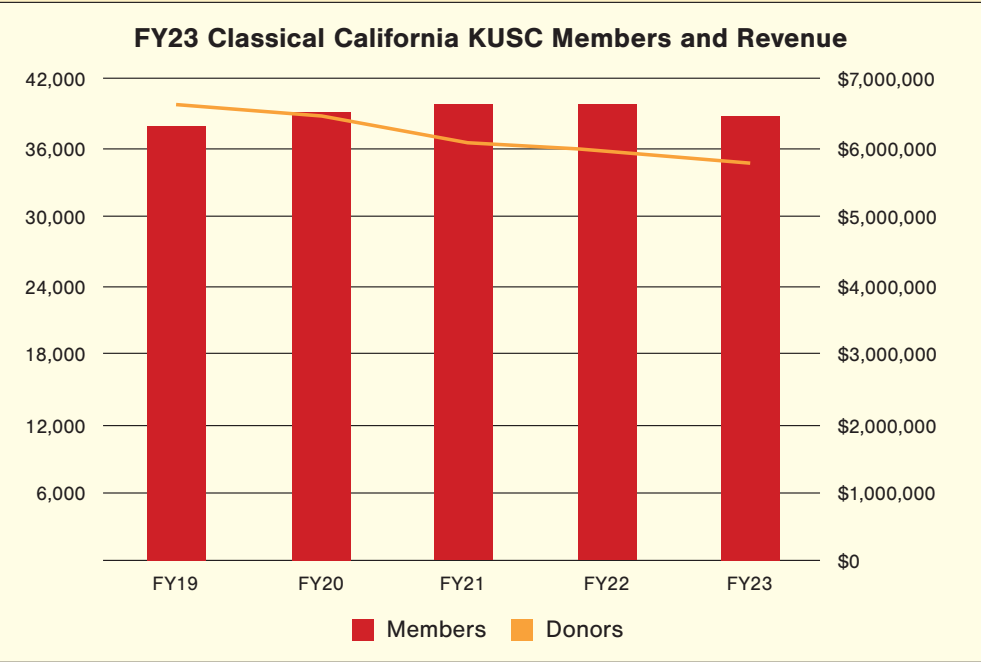
For information about customized partnerships and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Classical California KUSC’s **Tim McClellan** at tmcclellan@kusc.org.



Membership Support

Membership support makes up **83%** of the revenue received by Classical California KUSC. We could not exist without this level of commitment from our supporters. While we experienced a slight decrease in membership from FY20 to FY23, our revenue in FY23 remained strong. Over **34,000** members made a financial commitment during FY23, sustaining our mission to champion the power of classical music. Our plan during FY24 is to increase membership—including new members—through direct mail, and on-air and digital techniques. As a listener-supported station, Classical California KUSC remains committed to producing classical music programming that inspires and challenges our audience. We would not exist without this level of commitment from its supporters.

Thank you!



Classical California KUSC Major Gifts

We celebrate our Leadership Circle members for their annual giving to support our vision of nurturing a love of classical music for all. We gratefully acknowledge this rapidly growing list of members for their relentless support from June 2022 to July 2023.

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

President's Gold (\$25,000 +)

Anonymous (3)
The Colburn Foundation
*Louise G. Garland
Valerie and Hans Imhof
The Norman and Sadie Lee Foundation
* Stanley Lintner
Jason Subotky and Anne Akiko Meyers
The Flora L. Thornton Foundation
Lee and Deborah Walcott

President's Circle (\$10,000 - \$24,999)

Anonymous (8)
Curtis N. Browne
Nancy E. Barton Foundation
Gary and Shuko Clouse
Andy Edmonds
Robert and Cynthia Hall
Carole Innes Ownes
Allen Katz and Robert Cooper
Linda and Bill Krantz
Heather MacDonald
Christine Mankofsky
The Negaunee Foundation

The K.T. & E.L. Norris Foundation
The Ruby Family Foundation
Dr. Jack and Anitra Sheen
Dr. Daniel Temianka

Composer's Circle (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Anonymous (31)
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Eve Bernstein
Dennis and Patricia Burke
Ana and Robert Cook
Jacqueline Eldridge
Arthur J. Geoffrion and Herman H. Hamer Memorial Fund
Barry Graynor
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Janet Petersen
Susan Rice
Michelle Rohè
Anne-Marie Stephens
Douglass M. Stewart, Jr.
Bea and Dennis Volper
Shan Wang

WHH Foundation
Ramona R. Whitney
Anna and Edward Yeung

Producer's Circle (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Anonymous (124)
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Abeles
Bonnie Bee Bailey-Jones
Karen and George Bayz
Linda and David Bush
Norman E. Dufort
In memory of Diane K. Gordon
Teresa Gordon
Mr. Barry A. Graynor
Dr. Cornelia Haag-Molkenteller
Charlotte Hughes and Christopher Combs
Lynda Jarman
Linda Kristenson
Katharina and Thierry Leduc
Alan and Abby Myerson
Jean L. Oppenheimer
Jane C. Parks
Anne Breck Peterson
Edward Platt
Peggy and Peter Preuss
Anne and Ernest Prokopovych
Susan F. Rice

Peter Rutenberg
Alexander A. and Mariette Sawchuk
Dena and Irv Schechter
Claire and Dr. Charlie Shaeffer
Shanbrom Family Fund
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Karen and William Timberlake
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Timothy P. Whalen
Susan White
David and Michele Wilson
Meredith Jackson and Jan Voboril

Legacy Society

Anonymous (72)
Dr. Barbara Ackermann, LCSW
Carleen Anderson
Jerry and Barbara Andes
Dr. Roman Anshin, M.D.
Sonia Appell
Jim and Nancy Bailey
Christopher D. Baker
Charles N. Baron
Terry S. Bateman
Benla C. Bennett
Herbert M. Berk
Lillian Berman Goldfarb
Martin Bray and Scott Henderson

William J. Bryan
Jeremiah and Raun Burnham
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Nancy Coleman-Frank
Edward and Lisa Cook
Dr. Allen J. Curtis
Caroline S. DeMar
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Jeanette Fraser
David F. Freedman
Robin Friedheim
Dr. and Mrs. E. Peter Gabor
Peggy Garvey
Robert L. Glasser
Deborah Goetzman
Meredith Goodwin
Donald P. Gould
David Grant
Tom Greene
Heinz Hanau
Rod and Nancy Harvey
Robert S. Helfman
Vera J. Hirtz
Terrence Joseph Hughes
Len and Trudy Kapner
Steven Katz
*Doris H. Keniry
*Nick J. Labedz
Donald & Sharon Lafler
*Morton Lampert

Dr. Peter B. Landecker
Jocelyn Lee
Dennis and Kathleen Lees
William Earl Lentz
Adolph Maier
Hon. Nora Manella
Alison Manheim
Susan J. Marks
James Michaelis
Les Modie
Maury and Barbara Mortensen
John R. Oden and Mark Dizik
Craig Percy and Silvia Berg
Ernest and Anne Prokopovych
James Pykonen
Suzanne Robinson
In Memory of Charles Simon Sarkas
*Ronald and Barbara Schonfeld
Matej Sherko and Anthony Rosello
Lynette Sim
June Smith
Max Stolz, Jr.
Evelyn Stone
*Joseph and Linda Svehla
Craig and Junior Vickers
Carol Ann Walker Trust
Carole E. Walker
Ramona R. Whitney
Jon Harvey and Joemy Wilson
Dr. Robert and Mrs. Nadyne Zafran

*Deceased





Classical California KUSC Senior Leadership



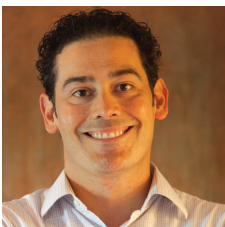
James A. Muhammad
President,
USC Radio Group



Minnie Prince
Chief Philanthropic
and Community
Development Officer



Bill Lueth
President, Classical
California KDFC
Vice President,
Sponsorship and
Marketing



Justin Collard
Chief Technology
Officer



Mark Steinmetz
Vice President,
Content



Daniel Sy
Senior Business
Officer

Classical California KUSC Board of Councilors

The Board of Councilors represents the interests of the listeners and the community at large by acting as a liaison between Classical California KUSC and the community, offering advice regarding strategy for USC Radio and helping with fundraising efforts.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Frank Cruz | Valerie Imhoff |
| Corey Field | Chuck Jones |
| Sam Garrison | Natalie Klein |
| Gary Clouse | John Osterweis |
| Mieko Hatano | Frederica von Stade |
| Cynthia Hersey | Lee Walcott |

Classical California KUSC Hosts



Alan Chapman



Brian Lauritzen



Brisa Siegel



Dianne Nicolini



Jeff Freymann



Jennifer Miller Hammel



John Van Driel



Lara Downes



Rich Capparella



Rik Malone



Robin Pressman

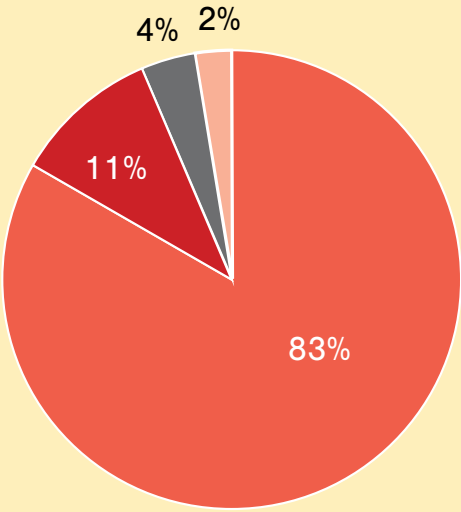


Solomon Reynolds



Suraj Partha

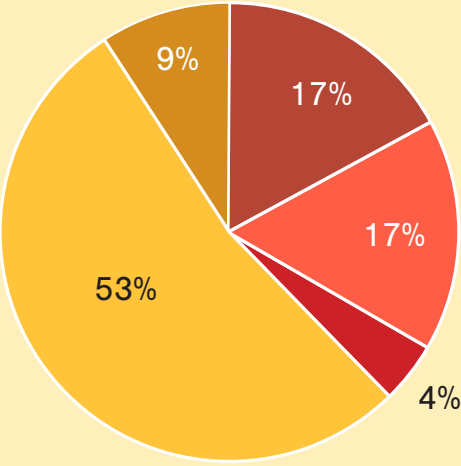
Fiscal Year 2023 Overview



- Development
- Underwriting/Sponsorship
- Government Funding
- Other

Classical California KUSC Operating Revenue

Development	\$10,860,746
Underwriting/Sponsorship	\$1,374,521
Government Funding.....	\$464,891
Other.....	\$328,582
TOTAL	\$13,028,740



- Development
- Underwriting/Sponsorship
- Operations
- Content/Engineering
- Administration

Classical California KUSC Operating Expenses

Operations.....	\$1,623,079
Development	\$1,615,001
Underwriting/Sponsorship	\$409,066
Content/Engineering	\$5,132,949
Administration	\$902,257
TOTAL	\$9,682,352

Classical California KUSC’s most recent independent auditor’s report conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited can be found on our website:

<https://www.kusc.org/culture/our-mission/audited-financials/>



Experience Life Classically
KUSC.org

