

San Diego Choral Society Director

Mark Peterson, Director



Mark Peterson began playing the piano at age 6, and the violin at age 9.

After winning two Frederic Chopin piano awards in high school, he attended California Lutheran College, where he became the school's only paid accompanist at age 17. That same year, he was also hired as an organist at a local church without having ever played an organ. Three years later, he was then hired by actor John Daniels and Maverick International as a keyboardist and vocal arranger for the Gwen Brisco Show, and Mark toured the world for two years with singers, dancers, and a five-piece band.

After earning a credential from CSU Northridge in English and Music, he began teaching English and Choral Music at the high school level, first at Bloomington High School, then at Southern California Christian High School, and finally at Whittier High School. During this time he earned his M.A. in philosophy from CSU Long Beach in 1994, specializing in aesthetics and earning a department award for unusually high achievement. The aesthetic views that he formulated during this time—particularly the views expressed in his thesis “Musical Expressiveness”—became very influential in subsequent compositions. In 2000, he began working full time at Cypress College teaching music, and accompanying choirs and musical theater.

Since 1992, he has worked continuously as a music director/accompanist at churches. In 2004, he earned his M.M. in Music Composition from CSU Long Beach, studying with Dr. Bruce Miller and Dr. Martin Herman. His graduate recital featured “Shiva,” a choral work accompanied by a chamber orchestra, and based upon a poem by Robinson Jeffers. Since 2011, he has produced an interdenominational choir festival every Spring at Good Shepherd Lutheran, composing the mass choir piece at each festival. In 2012, he completed his greatest work: A New Nation, the musical drama based upon the epic struggle between Jacob and Esau. It premiered in Texas in 2013.

