There is no doubt it has been a turbulent year for so many. Throughout it all, KUSC has continued to keep the music playing, providing a place of calm and reflection that you can count on.

We have learned so much from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our content, technical and membership teams met every challenge thrown their way during months of remote work. Our Classical KUSC hosts have been there 24/7 with compelling stories to add to your listening experience.

Although it’s not been possible to connect with our community in person, we have found ways to connect online. Our Classical California Ultimate Playlist, heard both on air and as a digital stream, is the result of thousands of recommendations from our listeners. It is just one of many examples of how much you have to say about why classical music matters in your life and in the life of our community.

We are now happy to be back in our downtown Los Angeles studios and hope the next year brings more opportunities to connect in person.

Due to your support, we are confident about our future, with many exciting projects yet to come. Thank you for making this such a successful year.

Judy McAlpine
President
USC Radio Group

KUSC’S Beloved Musical Tour Guides

In early 2021 we surveyed our members and listeners to ascertain their motivation for supporting the station. The importance of the music itself, the on-air hosts who share it, and the community that is supported by it, rose to the top. You told us how much you appreciate the engaging stories and enlightening context our hosts provide, and how much their commentary enhances your enjoyment of the beautiful, calming music we play.

From the veteran on-air personalities who’ve serenaded you for decades to the new hosts we’ve just welcomed to the station, these friendly tour guides help illuminate the endless variety of great classical music we broadcast, welcoming all on the journey.

KUSC Hosts
Alan Chapman
Brian Lauritzen
Dianne Nicolini
Jennifer Miller Hammel
John Van Driel
Linda Cassidy
Rich Capparela
Robin Pressman
Jim Svejda

found on "Play On, California" blog:
Creating Content For All

This past year we made significant progress in our efforts to engage listeners in new ways – and to attract new audiences. We have made a concerted effort to better reflect the communities we serve by diversifying our daily playlist and creating specially themed programs. We’ve augmented our music database with many performers and works historically underrepresented—composers of color and female composers. Some highlights of the past year:

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY
24 hours of music written and/or performed by women.

LET FREEDOM RING: A Musical Celebration Of Juneteenth
Our new Resident Artist, pianist and educator Lara Downes led listeners on a musical journey commemorating the emancipation of enslaved people in America.

ORCHESTRAS AND OPERA ON THE AIR
The Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts, Saturday mornings from December through May.

“Alexander, who is six loves listening to KUSC. He pretends he is conducting each piece you play and keeps us entertained. He wants to play at the Hollywood Bowl one day.”
– Marsha, Fullerton, CA

THE LA PHIL IN CONCERT
This past May, the Los Angeles Philharmonic performed its first Hollywood Bowl concert since 2019 for an audience of healthcare workers and other first responders. With Brian Lauritzen as host, KUSC broadcast the performance for all to enjoy. Across town, while Disney Hall was still shuttered, we aired recorded LA Phil concerts from the iconic downtown venue.

A new series of concerts featuring the California Symphony. The series is hosted by Brian Lauritzen, with commentary by the orchestra’s dynamic music director, Donato Cabrera.

Digital Innovations

At the heart of our mission is making classical music accessible to all. This requires meeting digitally savvy listeners where they are and aligning with their ever-evolving media preferences. We are continually building more content in the digital realm. These new streams were introduced this past year:

CLASSICAL CALIFORNIA MOVIE MUSIC PLAYLIST
This dream online stream for fans of film music was launched in March 2021 and hosted by San Francisco radio icon Dianne Nicolini. We added to the fun by creating content “behind the screen”—blogs, quizzes, trivia, and links to the favorite movie scores voted on by listeners.

CLASSICAL CALIFORNIA ULTIMATE PLAYLIST
Following the weeklong airing of the top 250 pieces voted upon by our listeners across the state, we shifted all that music onto a 24/7 stream available on our website and our free Apple and Android apps. Our on-air hosts invited listeners to take a deeper dive into the music through fun and informative blogs.

THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT CHANNEL
For the second year, we jumpstarted the Christmas season in late November by offering listeners an alternative stream devoted to holiday music. Once again, the stream was a huge hit, attracting some 72,000 unique listeners. “The Holiday Spirit Channel” delighted our listeners who revel in wall-to-wall classical carols and holiday arrangements during this most festive time of the year.

AMPLIFY
The second season of “Amplify with Lara Downes” was a collaboration between KUSC Los Angeles, KDFC San Francisco, NPR Music and pianist and commentator Lara Downes herself. Lara was featured in video conversations with visionary Black artists, the cultural leaders helping to shape our creative present and future.

FROM THE TOP
A warm and friendly vibe surrounds this program that gives listeners a preview of the future of classical music—performances by America’s most talented classical teens.

“From the Top” performance, Lauren Kim, 16, flute, from Ridgefield, CT
Fantasie, Op. 79 by Gabriel Faure (1845–1924)
Photo courtesy: From the Top.
Sponsorship

While a much smaller source of income for the station than the dollars raised from our members, underwriting sponsorship provides both an added revenue stream to fund our programming and an opportunity for arts partners to reach our passionate audience about their cultural offerings. Underwriting also provides opportunities for our corporate partners to support these efforts. From an on-air content perspective, we serve as a megaphone to keep our listeners informed about our arts partners and their digital offerings. From a marketing and underwriting perspective, these organizations count on us more than ever to get the word out that the doors of our concert halls are finally open; live performances are back in our lives, at last. Above all, our arts partners need our help to sell tickets, a source of crucial revenue they were deprived of for 18 months. Though our hosts on occasion mention these events in passing, the most powerful strategy for reaching a large, receptive, arts-loving audience is a targeted flight of multiple spots.

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

Community Engagement

SERVING AS A CULTURAL LEADER AND CONVENER

In addition to developing and engaging new audiences for classical music, the station has carved out a unique role as an anchor for the region’s sprawling arts ecosystem. We promote music education, develop young audiences for classical music, and serve as a megaphone to promote our arts partners. We air their concerts, tell their stories, and, since March of 2020 and through the summer of 2021, when concert halls were shuttered, we shined a bright light on their virtual content.

“My aunt used to drive me to school listening to KUSC, now I have picked up this habit of tuning in KUSC driving to school myself in the morning. There’s always something about orchestral music that calms me down at the start of a hectic school day.” – James

PLAY ON, CALIFORNIA!

From San Diego to Sacramento and from the LA Phil to the San Francisco Symphony, California offers a goldmine of musical riches. Each weekday at noon, Dianne Nicolini showcases California ensembles, musicians, and composers with her Play On series. A companion blog, Play On, California, provides stories, listings, and videos of California musical organizations big and small, highlighting in detail the efforts by our arts partners over the past year and a half to share their music with audiences online.

BACK TO THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL FOR CONCERTS BY THE LA PHIL!

This past May, the LA Phil performed a special tribute concert for an audience comprised of healthcare workers and other first responders. Brian brought it to you live!

"Listening to KUSC every morning gives me the one sense of comfort as I get to hear the best of talents being assembled together as I get from home to work.”

– Vedant Sanghvi

Found on “Play On, California” blog: Tenor Issachah Savage will be making his role debut as Tannhäuser when it opens at LA Opera.

Photo courtesy: Cory Weaver.

Found on “Play On, California” blog: Just outside of the Walt Disney Concert Hall, at the corner of 1st Street and Grand Avenue, an Augmented Reality sculpture and sound exhibit called “Every Voice” is going to be (virtually) in place between this Friday and June of next year. Photo courtesy: LA Phil.
“I love to listen ANY time of the day. When I wake up, before going to bed, and every moment in between. Makes my day so much better.”

– Alejandra López, Pomona, California
Fiscal Year 2021 Financial Overview

The financial picture for KUSC is stable. Heading into the fourth quarter, overall FY21 revenue performance was strong. Underwriting revenue faced headwinds given cancelled arts and entertainment events as well as challenges in other sectors such as travel and health industries. We are very fortunate that Membership support has remained strong. The Membership revenue performance, along with expense reductions, resulted in KUSC ending FY21 in a solid financial position, which is critical not only to sustaining our operations in FY22 but funding the future.

KUSC’s most recent independent auditor’s report conducted by PwC can be found on our website: https://www.kusc.org/culture/our-mission/audited-financials/
KUSC Southern California
Radio Network

KUSC can be heard in seven counties, from as far north as San Luis Obispo and as far south as the Mexican border. With 39,000 watts of power, Classical KUSC boasts the 10th most powerful signal in Southern California. KUSC transmits its programming from six transmitters:

- KUSC 91.5 FM in Los Angeles and Santa Clarita
- KESC 99.7 in Morro Bay/San Luis Obispo
- KDB 93.7 FM in Santa Barbara
- KDSC 91.1 FM in Thousand Oaks
- KUSC FM-1 91.5 Santa Clarita
- KPSC 88.5 FM in Palm Springs

KUSC.org