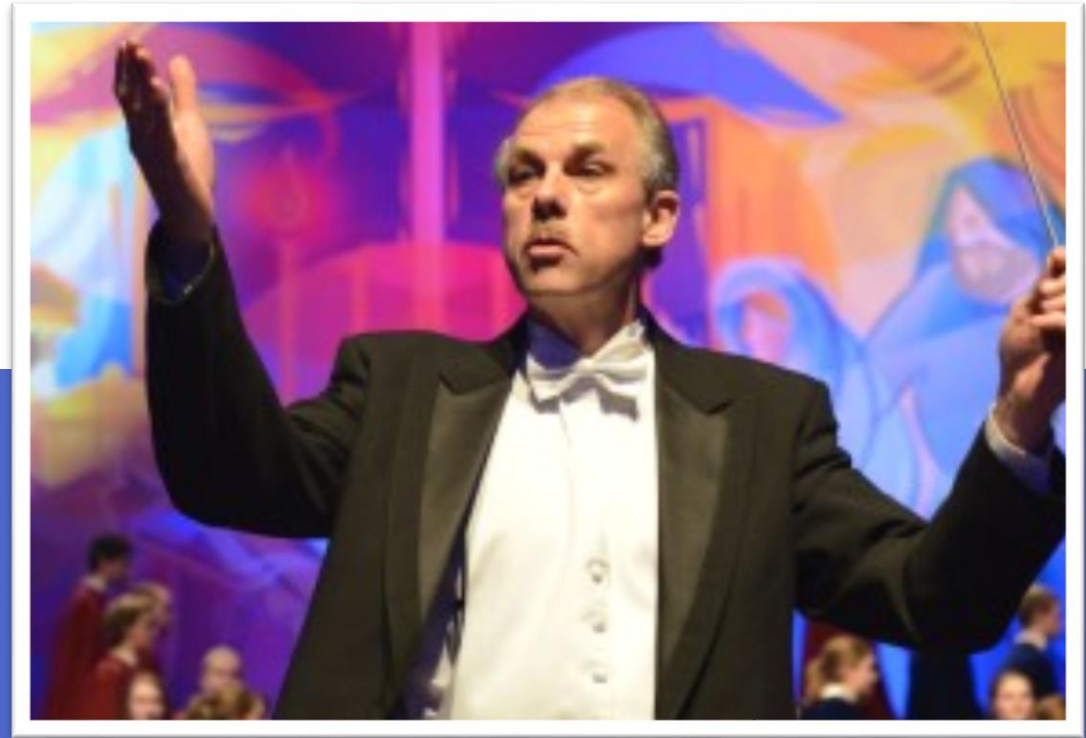


# MEET RENÉ CLAUSEN

COMPOSER OF  
*THE GOLDEN  
QUEEN*



GETTING TO KNOW THE COMPOSER IS PART OF  
THE PROCESS OF LEARNING A NEW SONG.

**René Clausen**  
composed  
*The Golden Queen*  
in 2014.





**As a youngster, Clausen loved music. Though his father was a church organist, the family didn't have a keyboard instrument at home.**

**He says that he "itched to have a piano."**

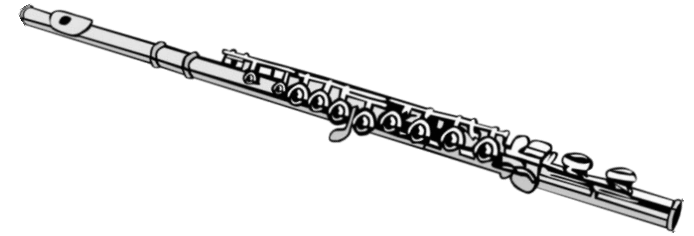
**Whenever his family paid a visit to friends and relatives, he headed for the piano and spent hours figuring out how to play familiar tunes.**

**He finally took his first real piano lesson during his freshman year of college.**



**Right after sixth grade, René signed up for the summer band program in his home town of San Fernando, California. His instrument was the alto saxophone.**

**That fall, he took his saxophone to Junior High and played it in the orchestra.**



**The director noticed his interest in music and encouraged him to check out other school instruments. René took them home and taught himself how to play. Using beginner books with fingering charts and basic techniques, he taught himself how to play the flute and the trumpet.**

**Learning to play more instruments was an important milestone along his pathway to becoming a musician.**

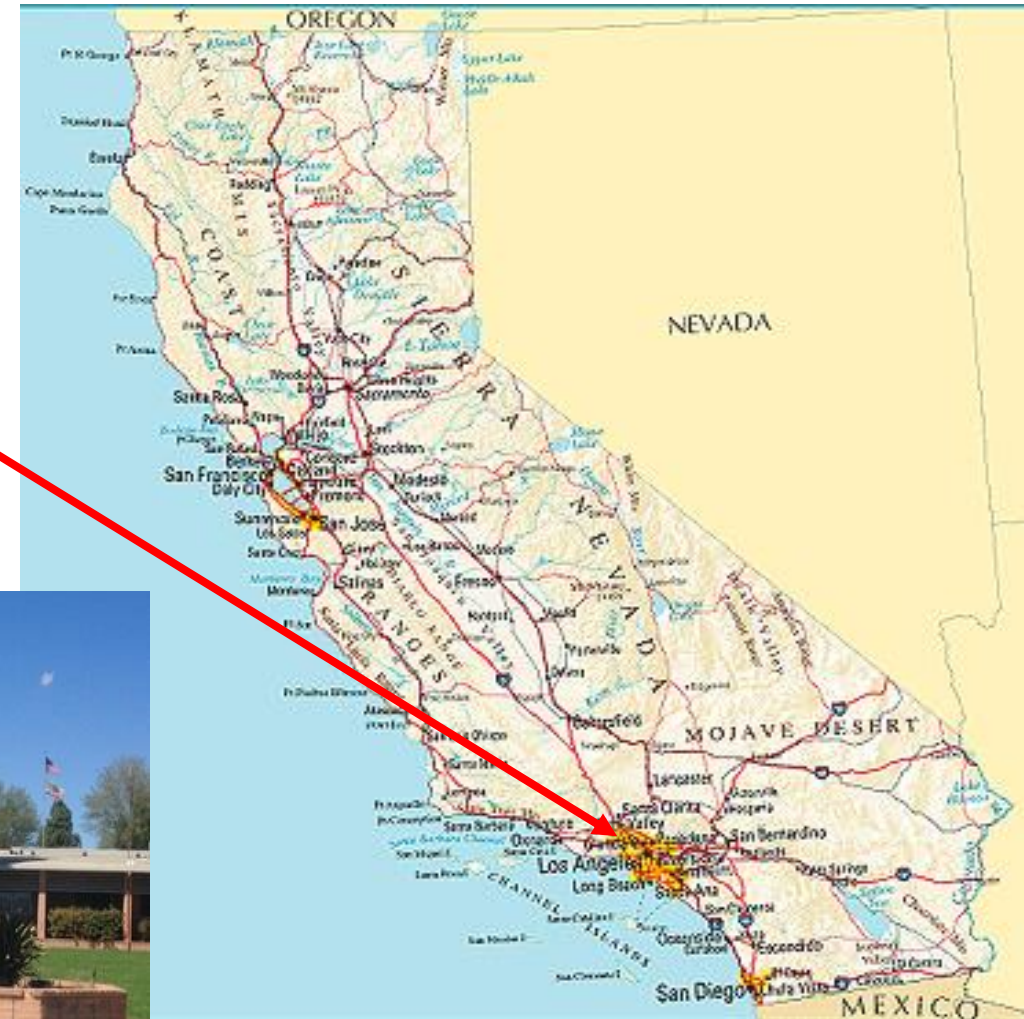




**When Clausen went to Chatsworth High School in California's San Fernando Valley, he found many more ways to make music...**

**...and he tried them all!**

- ✓ **He played trumpet in the marching band**
- ✓ **Sang in the concert choir**
- ✓ **Played sax in the jazz band**
- ✓ **Played French horn in the orchestra**







**A really memorable experience was the 1968 Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California. René marched as a member of the Los Angeles Unified School District - All District High School Honor Band.**

**This was another important memory that lasted a lifetime.**





**Clausen gives credit to his school music teachers for opening the doors to the wonder of making music and inspiring him to pursue a musical career.**

**In his junior year, choir director, Don Gustafson, gave Clausen his very first chance to conduct a choir. He asked the sixteen year old to lead the Chatsworth Girls Glee Club.**

**That experience was an eye opener for Clausen. It eventually led him to make conducting a key part of his life as a musician.**





**The St. Olaf Choir in performance**

**Clausen went to Northfield, Minnesota to attend St. Olaf College. The school is famous around the world for its choral music program.**

**Later he received a Master of Music Performance degree and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Illinois, Urbana.**



**After working in secondary schools, he became director of choral activities at West Texas State University, Canyon, TX. Wichita State University in Kansas was his next home, where he was assistant professor of music.**



**In 1986 Clausen took a new job in Minnesota. He became the conductor of the Concordia Choir and Professor of music at Concordia College, Moorhead. Concordia has been his teaching, conducting, and composing home for many years.**

**The Campanile (bell tower) is a campus landmark at Concordia College**

**At Concordia, Clausen has developed a reputation as an outstanding choral conductor and teacher. He regularly works with college students, music educators, and other conductors. His Concordia Choir regularly tours the United States and other countries around the world.**



**The Concordia College Choir**





**He is also the Artistic Director of the yearly Choral Celebration - a famous Concordia College Christmas Concert. This event is a massive artistic and logistical happening with over 400 singers, a 90-piece orchestra, and an enormous mural backdrop.**

**Under his artistic direction, the 2009 Christmas concert, *Christmas at Concordia: Journey to Bethlehem* won a 2010 Emmy Award**

When asked to share some thoughts on being a composer, this is what René Clausen had to say.

The idea of becoming a musician and composer first occurred to me in high school. "When I was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade I did an arrangement of a pop song called 'This Guy's In Love With You,' originally sung by Dionne Warwick, for our stage band. I will never forget hearing something I had written performed for the first time—it was quite magical!"

When asked about the best thing about being a composer, Clausen described the creative life of the composer as being like that of authors. Authors sit with a blank sheet of paper upon which they can put down ideas as big or small as they wish—limited only by their imagination. So do composers!

*"It is about expressing who you are."*



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Here is his advice to students who want to composer music:

- ✓ *Listen to many different kinds of music as you can find*
- ✓ *Keep learning new things and growing all of the time*
- ✓ *Understand that inspiration strikes at different times. You can be inspired by a special text, a special person, or something as practical as a commission for a new piece.*
- ✓ *Understand that composing is a discipline. This means that sudden inspiration is not always a part of the process – hard work is.*

Though Dr. Clausen's life is filled with music, he also has interests in science, astrophysics, and philosophy. *"If I was not in music, I may have become a scientist"* says Clausen.

Clausen and his wife, Frankie, live in Moorhead, Minnesota, where they raised their three grown children, Joshua, Katie and Rachel.

# PHOTO CREDITS

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- Frame 3 - [https://concordiacollege.edu/files/faculty/rene-clausen\\_ed\\_9314.jpg](https://concordiacollege.edu/files/faculty/rene-clausen_ed_9314.jpg)
- Frame 4 – saxophone <http://www.clipartbest.com/cliparts/LiK/kLz/LiKkLzq4T.jpeg>; flute <http://www.clipartbest.com/cliparts/9cz/7Lj/9cz7Lj4Ki.png>; trumpet <http://www.clipartbest.com/cliparts/nTB/7dK/nTB7dKnTA.jpeg> Suzanna – I can find no agreement for use info at the website. It just states that it is the largest Free Clipart site.
- Frame 5 – Map from [http://nationalmap.gov/small\\_scale/printable/images/preview/reference/pagegen\\_ca.gif](http://nationalmap.gov/small_scale/printable/images/preview/reference/pagegen_ca.gif); Chatsworth H.S. [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/86/Chatsworth\\_High\\_School.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/86/Chatsworth_High_School.jpg)
- Frame 6 – Rose Bowl bands from <https://latimesphoto.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/rose-parade-2012-10.jpg>; Rose Bowl "Float flowers" by Ucla90024 - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Float\\_flowers.jpg#/media/File:Float\\_flowers.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Float_flowers.jpg#/media/File:Float_flowers.jpg)
- Frame 7 – girls choir [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e7/School\\_choir\\_-\\_Western\\_High\\_School\\_\(Baltimore,\\_Maryland\\_-\\_2007\).jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e7/School_choir_-_Western_High_School_(Baltimore,_Maryland_-_2007).jpg)
- Frame 8 – St. Olaf Choir [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/ac/Olaf\\_Chair.JPG](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/ac/Olaf_Chair.JPG)
- Frame 9 – Concordia bell tower <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/5c/2009-0522-Concordia-Campanile.jpg/375px-2009-0522-Concordia-Campanile.jpg>
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