

# Photo Synthesis

By Nancy Sokoler Steiner

Quincy Jones, his eyes closed, exudes a sense of calm and serenity. Sheryl Crow brings her hands together as if in prayer. Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich clasps his hands behind his head, his open mouth forming a perfect O.



Dr. Richard M. Ehrlich says that photographing iconic musical artists for his *Face the Music* project “was an incredibly fulfilling once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Photo: Rebecca Sapp/Courtesy of the Recording Academy

These, and 38 other images of artists captured as they listened to their favorite music, are the work of UCLA physician and fine-art photographer Richard M. Ehrlich, MD. They were displayed at an exhibit, *Face the Music*, which ran for three months at the end of last year at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles, and published in a book of the same name.

“Rick’s ability to convey emotion and music and how music is impactful on so many different levels encapsulates what we do here,” said Nicholas Vega, director of curatorial affairs for the Grammy Museum, during the show’s opening reception in September. “He’s got a great eye.”

This was not the first exhibit, nor photography book, for Dr. Ehrlich, whose day job is as a pediatric urologist. His photographs are in the permanent collections of 17 museums worldwide, including the J. Paul Getty Museum, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Approximately 100 of his

donated works adorn the UCLA campus. One photograph displayed in UCLA’s Luskin Conference Center is of Royce Hall taken with a camera that was made in 1880. Another of Dr. Ehrlich’s pictures, of Powell Library, is a photomontage of 3,000 images from slides belonging to UCLA’s Department of Art History.

“Photography has sort of taken over my life,” Dr. Ehrlich says. “I think about taking pictures all the time.”

Dr. Ehrlich has published more than a dozen photography books on subjects as diverse as the sand dunes of Namibia, close-up studies of sculptural surfaces, impressionistic sunsets over the Pacific Ocean and artistic interpretations of radiological images. He spent two years with his cameras to chronicle the construction of Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. The prestigious German fine-art publisher Steidl published *Face the Music*, and later this year it will release *Arolson Archives*, images of artifacts and vast caches of documents that make up the Holocaust archives at the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolson, Germany. Another book, *Faces of Promise*, features portraits of children with autism.

“I’m always looking for new things that haven’t been done before,” Dr. Ehrlich says. “Today, with the cell phone being so ubiquitous, everybody is a photographer. So to do something different is hard.”

Dr. Ehrlich pursued photography as a youth and had a dark room in his childhood home in Westchester, New York. But he gave up the pursuit to focus on baseball, at one time hoping to become a professional ball player. He returned to photography about 15 years ago, he says, “in a serious way, not just as a hobby. I said, ‘If I’m going to get back there, I’m not going to do it superficially. I’m going to do it really seriously, so I studied and I read and I went out and took a million photographs.’”

Capturing images of the 41 musicians and composers featured in *Face the Music* proved both gratifying and taxing. As a lover of music — jazz in particular — Dr. Ehrlich enjoyed meeting some of his favorite artists. Convincing managers to give access to their musician clients, however, often proved challenging. The endeavor took five years, and there were times when he considered quitting.

Highlights of the project included snagging Ringo Starr as a subject, photographing Renee Fleming in the former Manhattan studio of fashion photographer Irving Penn and spending a day with Dave Brubeck, who passed away several months later.

Dr. Ehrlich also found the artists' choices of music revealing. Each was asked to choose three songs to listen to as they were being photographed. The Who frontman Roger Daltrey chose Edith Piaf, country artist Rosanne Cash selected The Beatles, trumpeter and music producer Herb Alpert listened to Luciano Pavarotti and Esperanza Spalding was transported by Nina Simone.

"It was an incredibly fulfilling once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, personally and professionally, to capture some of the world's most iconic musicians while they listened to their favorite songs,"

Dr. Ehrlich says.

After completing his medical training in New York — MD and surgical residency at Cornell University Medical College and urology residency at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center — Dr. Ehrlich served for two years as a major in the U.S. Air Force. In 1971, he joined the faculty of UCLA, where he performed the medical center's first pediatric laparoscopic procedure.

His most recent photography book, *Out of the Fire — Abstract Truth*, features images of patterns

formed on the sides of cars burned during the 2018 Woolsey Fire, which destroyed more than 1,600 structures and scorched 96,949 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains. A resident of Malibu, Dr. Ehrlich had to evacuate during the fires. When he finally was able to return to his home, which was spared, he was struck by the sight of the burnt cars.

Dr. Ehrlich says that medicine and photography both require skill, discipline and attention to detail. He recalls a specific instance when his two passions coalesced. "One day I went to the room of a patient I'd operated on, and in the room was one of my photographs. I thought that was really cool — to see the patient, in bed post-op, and the photograph that I shot on the wall."

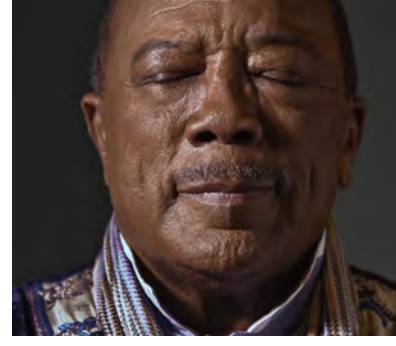
**Nancy Sokoler Steiner** is a freelance writer in Los Angeles.



To see more photographs by Dr. Richard M. Ehrlich, go to: [ehrllichphotography.com](http://ehrllichphotography.com)



To watch a video of Dr. Ehrlich photographing musicians and composers for *Face the Music*, go to: [tinyurl.com/ehrllichfacethemusic](http://tinyurl.com/ehrllichfacethemusic)



Quincy Jones (top) and Sheryl Crow (bottom) are among the 41 musical icons Dr. Richard M. Ehrlich photographed for *Face the Music*. Others include Esperanza Spalding, Graham Nash, Emmylou Harris and Joel Grey.

Photos: Dr. Richard M. Ehrlich

## Awards & Honors

**Dr. Denise Aberle (RES '85)**, professor of radiology and bioengineering and vice chair for research in radiological sciences, was elected to the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Aberle also received the Joseph W. Cullen Prevention/Early Detection Award from the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer.

**Dr. Susan Bookheimer**, the Joaquin M. Fuster Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and director of the UCLA Intellect and Developmental Disabilities Research Center at the Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA, received the 2020 Zenith Award from the American Alzheimer's Association.

**Dr. Steven Dubinett (RES '84)**, professor of medicine, pathology and laboratory medicine, and molecular and medical pharmacology, received the 2019 William S. Middleton Award from the Veterans Health Administration and the Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service.

**Dr. David Glanzman**, professor of neurobiology, was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

**Dr. Shafali Jeste**, associate professor of psychiatry, neurology and pediatrics and director of the UCLA Care and Research in Neurogenetics Clinic, received the 2019 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers.

**Dr. Amar Kishan (RES '17)**, vice chair of clinical and translational research and chief of the genitourinary oncology service at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, received the 2019 ASTRO — PCF Career Development Award to End Prostate Cancer from the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

**Dr. Linda Liau (RES '97, FEL '98, PhD '99)**, chair of neurosurgery, was appointed chair of the American Board of Neurological Surgery, the first woman to lead the organization in its 80-year history.

**Dr. Carol Mangione**, Barbara A. Levey & Gerald S. Levey Professor of Medicine and Public Health and chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research, was elected to the National Academy of Medicine.

**Dr. James McGough (FEL '91)**, codirector of the ADHD Clinic at the Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA, received the Elaine Schlosser Lewis Memorial Award for Research on Attention Deficit Disorders from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

**Dr. Antoni Ribas (FEL '98, '01)**, director of the tumor immunology program at the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, received the 2019 William B. Coley Award from the Cancer Research Institute.

**Dr. Jeremy Shelton (RES '11)**, assistant professor of urology, received the 2019 Igor Tulchinsky — PCF VALOR Young Investigator Award from the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

**Dr. Stephen Smale**, vice dean for research at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Distinguished Professor in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics, was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

## In Memoriam

**Dr. Barbara Levey**, retired assistant vice chancellor for biomedical affairs and adjunct professor of medicine and of molecular and medical pharmacology, died October 29, 2019. She was 84 years old. Throughout her career, Dr. Levey was a strong advocate of clinical pharmacology. She received National Institutes of Health grants to support training and research in clinical pharmacology, which a UCLA colleague called "her academic passion" that she supported "with every ounce of her being."

**Dr. Wallace William Tourtellotte**, emeritus vice chair of neurology at UCLA and emeritus chief of neurology at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, died July 29, 2019. He was 95 years old. Dr. Tourtellotte joined the UCLA faculty in 1971 as professor and vice chair of neurology and the VA as chief of neurology. Dr. Tourtellotte devoted much of his career as a physician and scientist to understanding the cause of and discovering a potential cure for multiple sclerosis.