

STRAVINSKY'S LES NOCES

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2017 · 7PM
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

GRANT GERSHON
Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

GRANT GERSHON..... conductor
ELISSA JOHNSTON..... soprano
PEABODY SOUTHWELL..... mezzo-soprano
TODD STRANGE..... tenor
NICHOLAS BROWNLEE..... bass-baritone
GLORIA CHENG..... piano
LISA EDWARDS..... piano
BRYAN PEZZONE..... piano
VICKI RAY..... piano

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
THE OTHER MARY**

JOHN ADAMS (B. 1947)

It Is Spring
Niké St. Clair, Mary
En un día de amor
Lisa Edwards, Piano

THE DEATH OF KLINGHOFFER
JOHN ADAMS

Chorus of the Exiled Palestinians
Chorus of the Exiled Jews
Vicki Ray, Piano
Desert Chorus
Day Chorus
Gloria Cheng, Piano

A FLOWERING TREE
JOHN ADAMS

Flores!
Gloria Cheng, Piano

DOCTOR ATOMIC
JOHN ADAMS

The End of June 1945
At the Sight of This
Bryan Pezzone, Piano

NIXON IN CHINA
JOHN ADAMS

Cheers!
*Courtney Taylor, Pat Nixon | Steve Pence,
Richard Nixon | Abdiel Gonzalez, Chou En-lai
Reid Bruton, Henry Kissinger | Bryan Pezzone, Piano*

INTERMISSION

LES NOCES
IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

I. At the Bride's House (The Tresses)
II. At the Bridegroom's House
Reid Bruton, Bass
III. The Bride's Departure
IV. The Wedding Scene (The Red Table)

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TOASTING TWO MASTERS: TEN CHORUSES AND A WEDDING

by Thomas May



Although **John Adams** celebrated his 70th birthday last month, 2017 still holds another major anniversary in store: it was three decades ago, in October 1987, that Houston Grand Opera staged his debut opera, *Nixon in China*. The premiere in the company's brand-new Wortham Theater Center happened to coincide with a national convention of music critics — but even apart from that, *Nixon* had already aroused widespread attention because of its subject matter. In place of the myths of old on which so much opera had fed (*Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*), here were well-known real-life characters dramatizing the contemporary experience of the Cold War in quasi-mythic, archetypal terms: *Nixon in China* indeed.

It would actually take years (and a series of fine tunings of the score's details) before *Nixon* attained its status as a contemporary classic. But in hindsight, that premiere 30 years ago didn't just launch the stage career of one of our greatest living American artists. It also heralded and helped inspire a new creative flowering for the medium of opera itself — one that continues to grow increasingly vibrant among the youngest generation of composers (some of whom have been mentored by Adams). And the chorus has consistently served as one of Adams' most powerful tools whenever he writes for the stage. After a brief prelude of rising scales, for example, he sets *Nixon*'s opening scene — a cold, clear February morning at the airfield outside Beijing — with a masterfully paced chorus (“The people are the heroes now”), thereby establishing a pattern of powerful choral openings that is a signature of his stage works.

It's also worth recalling that Adams' very first major commission for a traditional “classical” institution, San Francisco Symphony, was a choral-symphonic work: *Harmonium* — setting texts by

John Donne and Emily Dickinson — whose premiere in 1981 led the eminent commentator Michael Steinberg to remark: “On this evening, John Adams became, unmistakably, a major figure on our musical landscape.”

Adams has long since been ranked among today's most vital and innovative figures at work in the concert hall and opera house alike. But he's not as immediately identified as a “choral composer” per se — until you take a closer look at what he has actually written for the stage. “If you consider John's operatic output, the chorus is often one of the most important elements in the story line,” says Los Angeles Master Chorale's Artistic Director Grant Gershon. “This music should come to the fore whenever anybody in the future talks about choral music in the American tradition.”

To that end, Gershon has been commissioned by the composer's music publisher, Boosey & Hawkes, to curate and edit a new three-volume set of choruses from Adams' operas and oratorios. The accompanying piano transcriptions are being prepared by the Japanese pianist Chitose Okashiro. “The goal is to create versions of these iconic choral pieces that are more idiomatic for piano than the original piano reductions, which were written for rehearsal purposes only,” explains Gershon. “These new transcriptions will make Adams' opera choruses more accessible for performance by choral ensembles throughout the world.”

It was from the keyboard that Gershon in fact first engaged with the music of Adams. In 1990, when LA Opera first presented *Nixon in China*, the young Gershon played keyboards as part of the orchestral ensemble. His work in the pit led to an enduring professional relationship and friendship with Adams, who has

entrusted the conductor with significant performances of his work ever since: Gershon led the world premiere of the 1995 theater work *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky* and, among other works, has conducted key performances of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. Joined by Gloria Cheng, he also premiered Adams' two-piano piece *Hallelujah Junction* (whose title Adams used for his compulsively readable memoir published in 2008). Gershon is looking ahead to another major Adams milestone this fall, when he will conduct the world premiere of his newest opera, *Girls of the Golden West*, at San Francisco Opera.

Our program this evening introduces ten of these new choral transcriptions for the first time, beginning with a pair of choruses from *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (whose Bay Area premiere Gershon conducted last month, leading the San Francisco Symphony and Chorus). *Other Mary* makes an appropriate starting point, for this is the Adams stage work whose inception is most closely associated with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the Walt Disney Concert Hall. Gershon and the Master Chorale created the extensive choral parts for both the LA Philharmonic concert and staged world premieres as well as the international tour.

Other Mary is a recent example of Adams' ongoing artistic collaboration with Peter Sellars, who was responsible for inspiring Adams to write for the stage in the first place. In the mid-1980s, Sellars (then still in his 20s) originated the idea for *Nixon in China* and pitched it to an initially skeptical Adams. Sellars has played a crucial role in every one of the composer's stage works since then as director and, following initial collaborations with the poet Alice Goodman, in most cases as librettist as well. In the latter capacity, the texts set in *Other Mary* exemplify Sellars' method of collage. According to this method, he juxtaposes widely varied source texts to generate a scenario.

The two choruses we hear from *Other Mary*, for example, set poems by the 20th-century Mexican poet Rosario Castellanos (*En un día de amor*) and poet and novelist Louise Erdrich (*It Is Spring*). Sellars and Adams first used this collage strategy for the millennial work *El Niño*, which is a counterpart (and "prequel") to *Other Mary* in its rethinking of sacred music models: the Nativity story of Handel's *Messiah* and the Bach Passions, respectively, in which the familiar biblical narrative becomes interlaced with the urgency of modern social justice struggles — notably pushing into the foreground the women involved in these narratives (who are overshadowed in the traditional sources).

A quick note on genre here: *El Niño* and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* are contemporary manifestations of the oratorio and can be performed purely as concert works or with a staging element. In either case, these are not to be thought of according to the old-fashioned image of the oratorio as somehow dramatically inert, as a statuesque version of operatic passion. "Handel's most dramatic music isn't to be found in his operas — it's in his oratorios," Sellars has pointed out, "just as Beethoven's *real* opera is the *Missa solemnis*."

Rosario's *En un día de amor* effects a decisive emotional shift early on from the harrowing severity of the work's opening in a jail cell. Mary and her sister Martha have opened a house of hospitality for homeless women; to gently burbling rhythms,

the chorus sings of a sensual redemption, in which "the world was the perpetual shape of awe." The Erdrich poem signals the miraculous moment when Mary awakens before dawn on the third day after the Crucifixion, before she decides to revisit Jesus' tomb.

Though written from the start as an opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1991), Adams' second stage work, also draws inspiration from the Bach Passions. *Nixon* had playfully alluded to the conventions of grand opera; *Klinghoffer* turned to this older model of the Baroque Passion oratorio, with its intercutting of individual with collective points of view. The opera has generated more controversy than any other work of Adams because of the charged content of its narrative, which recounts the real-life hijacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* in October 1985 by four Palestinian terrorists and their murder of the wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer, an American-Jewish passenger.

To convey the intense, conflicting emotions of *Klinghoffer*, Adams had to enrich his musical language with melodic elaboration and a darker, complex harmonic palette. The opera contains seven large-scale choruses, each of which plays a crucial architectonic role. They also cast their contexts in a new light, introducing a constellation of polarities that also reveal shared characteristics: Palestinians and Jews (both exiled), desert and ocean (both revealing God's presence in unexpected ways), night and day (whose arrival ushers in dramatic turning points), and the single Chorus of Hagar and the Angel (which sets nature against the supernatural).

The paired **Chorus of Exiled Palestinians** and **Chorus of Exiled Jews** — each, importantly, of the same duration — take the place of an overture or prelude. They present dramas in microcosm, internally and as a complementary pair, generating tension between the harsh facts of present reality (the news headlines) and timeless cultural memory (the realm of myth). The **Desert Chorus**, which precedes the murder of Leon Klinghoffer, meditates on the biblical text "Is not their desert the garden of the Lord?" Occurring late in the opera, the **Day Chorus** taps into Adams' moving elegiac vein, its question left unanswered: "Is not the day made to disperse their grief?"

Adams wrote *A Flowering Tree* for a festival Peter Sellars curated as part of the Mozart anniversary year in 2006. The idea behind the festival was to celebrate and reflect on the ideals expressed in Mozart's final masterpieces, including *The Magic Flute* and the Requiem. If *Messiah* served as a model for *El Niño*, *The Magic Flute* helped point the way to *A Flowering Tree*, which is based on an ancient folktale from southern India as well as classical Tamil poetry.

The poor Kumudha possesses a magical ability to transform herself into a tree and thus unintentionally attracts the attention of the Prince. He marries her, but his jealous sister causes the new Princess to become trapped in her transformed state, and Kumudha is made a freakish outcast. Her grieving husband is unaware of why she has disappeared and himself turns into a wandering beggar. Years pass before he is reunited by chance with the misshapen Kumudha and, reunited in love, is able to perform the ritual to restore her to her human form.

Scored for a chamber size cast and acoustic orchestra, *Tree* makes important use of the chorus (originally written for the Schola Cantorum de Caracas), which at times impersonates

some of the opera's characters. The **Flores!** Chorus follows Kumuda's first transformation. Meter shifts and syncopations clearly show the Adams signature. *A Flowering Tree* in a way represents the composer's creative reaction — antidote is not too strong a word — to the completion of a vastly different project. Immediately preceding *Tree*, he had completed *Doctor Atomic* (2005) for San Francisco Opera. As Adams put it: "After three years of handling plutonium and feeling the end of the world was not just a figure of speech, I was ready to come back into the light." He was referring to the threshold-crossing historical moment dramatized in *Doctor Atomic*: the moment in the summer of 1945 when, from their seclusion in the New Mexican desert, the physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer and his team made the atomic bomb a terrifying reality.

We hear choruses from each of *Doctor Atomic*'s two acts. **The End of June 1945** sets an official text taken from the administrative history of the Manhattan Project. But Adams counterpoints its prosaic statements ("production plants of several different types are in operation") with an urgently obsessive figure of descending eighth notes that conjures the spirit of Stravinsky. **At the Sight of This**, which sets a text from the *Bhagavad Gita*, occurs before the final countdown, as Oppenheimer is overcome by a timeless vision of the Hindu deity Vishnu. Sellars has summarized the musical achievement in *Doctor Atomic* as a synthesis of Wagner and Stravinsky: "He's written the *Götterdämmerung* for our time" in a language "inseparable from the rhythmic energy and moral acuity of Igor Stravinsky."

To close out this celebration of Adams choruses, Gershon has chosen the grand chorus that ends the first act of *Nixon in China*. Set in the Great Hall of the People, this is from the banquet scene, the most public scene of the opera, which will be counterparted by the revelation of private, hidden selves in the final act. Premier Chou En-lai and President Nixon have each made toasts, and a vociferous round of **Cheers!** playfully alludes to the venerable operatic tradition of a drinking chorus — the tipsiness palpable in lurching tonal shifts, all making for the perfect press photo op.

MODERNIST ICON: STRAVINSKY'S LES NOCES — Adams has observed that **Igor Stravinsky** — a source of deep, enduring inspiration for him — shared with Charles Ives and other admired composers a gift for being experimental while keeping "the commonplace roots of his inspiration largely intact." *Les Noces* is a work in which Stravinsky pushed innovation to its extreme yet at the same time underlined that sense of "cultural connectivity" — arguably even more so than in *Petrushka* or *The Rite of Spring*. "It's also one of John's favorite pieces," notes Grant Gershon, "and an influential piece for which he has always had a deep affinity."

The earliest ideas for *Les Noces* as "a choral work on the subject of a Russian peasant wedding" have been dated to even before *The Rite of Spring*, to around 1912. Stravinsky plunged into research for his material just before the start of the First World War, the outbreak of which played havoc with plans he had worked out for fresh collaborations with Sergei Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes. For this and a host of other reasons, the composition of *Les Noces* became more protracted than that of any other of the composer's works.

One of the most intriguing of those other reasons involves the sound world Stravinsky needed to find to evoke ancient Russia.

At first his idea was even to expand the luxurious orchestra he'd used for *Rite*. (The late Steven Stucky was commissioned by Esa-Pekka Salonen to prepare a full orchestral version for the LA Phil, which premiered here in 2008.) Over the next several years Stravinsky's ideas about the orchestration changed several times, and he drafted scores for various unusual combinations of instruments until he arrived at the quintessential — and highly influential — *Noces* sonority of four pianos plus percussion. The instruments do not provide "commentary" but remain bound to the singers through most of the score, contributing a character that is both brightly brittle and bell-like. This final version was premiered by the Ballets Russes in 1923, nine years after Stravinsky had begun composing the music.

The French title notwithstanding, Stravinsky composed *Les Noces* most decisively in Russian. (The title he gave it in that language, *Svadobka*, is a diminutive, literally "Little Wedding.") Envisioned as a ballet of "choreographed scenes," this was the first work whose complete scenario the composer devised on his own. His method of weaving together original source material — using a collection of Russian folk texts and a detailed survey of wedding rites from the past — anticipates aspects of the collage principle used by Sellars and Adams.

Like *El Niño* and *Other Mary*, *Les Noces* also challenges conventional notions of genre and can be staged or performed as a self-standing concert work. And it avoids straightforward, one-to-one correspondences between the solo singers and the characters, thus disrupting any effect of "psychological realism." In other words, the soloists are only partially identified with the roles of the Bride and Groom, whose words and points of view are also expressed by the chorus; the soloists in turn also sing the roles of secondary characters. Stravinsky once compared his method to that of Joyce in *Ulysses*, saying that his aim was "to present rather than to describe."

Paul Griffiths perceptively captures the curious blend of tone that permeates the main event of *Les Noces*, "at once ritualized and humorous," pointing to "the essentially comic character of severely precise, short, cross-cut forms [that] was being realized at this time in the cinema" and recalling that the composer's contemporaries "included — besides Picasso, Malevich, and Balla — Chaplin and Keaton." The overall impression is of "both comedy and icon."

The simple narrative is conveyed in four scenes ("tableaux"), the first three of which detail preparations for the wedding (which itself is never represented), followed by the wedding feast. Female and male perspectives are divided between the first two scenes: the Bride at home, her golden tresses being painstakingly plaited, followed by the Groom at his home as his "fair locks" are prepared. In the brief third scene, the Bride takes leave of her childhood home to "go to a foreign land." Longest of the four, the concluding scene depicts a messily colorful revelry celebrating the just-taken-place wedding, with toasts and drunkenness, all culminating in the ritual blessing and warming of the newlyweds' bed before the couple is conducted to it and left alone.

Thomas May, program annotator for the Los Angeles Master Chorale, writes about the arts and blogs at memeteria.com.

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

The Los Angeles Master Chorale is one of the country's leading professional choruses and one of Southern California's most vibrant cultural treasures. Hailed for its powerful performances, technical precision, and artistic daring, the Master Chorale is led by Artistic Director Grant Gershon. It is a founding resident company of The Music Center and the choir-in-residence at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Chorister positions are highly sought-after and the professional choir is a diverse and vocally dynamic group showcasing the many voices of L.A.

Presenting its own concert series each season, the Master Chorale performs choral music from the earliest writings to contemporary compositions, striking a balance between

innovation and tradition. It also regularly performs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl. Praised for its definitive performances, the choir is committed to recording the choral repertoire and has also been featured with Gershon on the soundtracks of many major motion pictures.

The Los Angeles Master Chorale's education programs include Voices Within that encourages young people to write and perform their own songs, an oratorio project for high school students, and the annual High School Choir Festival, which brings teenagers from around the Southland to perform in Walt Disney Concert Hall. lamasterchorale.org

GRANT GERSHON

KIKI & DAVID GINDLER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Recognized for his adventurous and bold artistic leadership and for eliciting technically precise and expressive performances from musicians, GRANT GERSHON is currently in his 16th season as the Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. The *Los Angeles Times* has said the Master Chorale "has become the most exciting chorus in the country under Grant Gershon," a reflection on both his programming and performances. During his tenure Gershon has led more than 200 Master Chorale performances at Walt Disney Concert Hall. A fervent champion of new music, he has led world premiere performances of major works by John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, David Lang, Louis Andriessen, Christopher Rouse, Steve Reich, Morten Lauridsen, Ricky Ian Gordon, Gabriela Lena Frank, Shawn Kirchner, and Chinary Ung, among many others. Gershon is also the Resident Conductor of LA Opera. He made his acclaimed debut with the company with *La Traviata* in 2008 and has subsequently conducted *Wonderful Town*, *Il Postino*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen*, and *Florenzia en el Amazonas*. In New York, Gershon has appeared at Carnegie Hall and at the historic Trinity Wall Street, as well as on the Great Performers series at Lincoln Center and the Making Music series at Zankel Hall. Other major appearances include performances at the Wolftrap, Ravinia, Aspen, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Salzburg, and Vienna Festivals, the South American

premiere of LA Opera's production of *Il Postino* in Chile, and with the Baltimore Symphony and the Coro e Orchestra Del Teatro Regio Di Torino in Turin, Italy. He has worked closely with numerous conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, James Conlon, Gustavo Dudamel, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Simon Rattle, and his mentor, Esa-Pekka Salonen. His discography includes two Grammy Award-nominated recordings: *Sweeney Todd* (New York Philharmonic Special Editions) and Ligeti's *Grand Macabre* (Sony Classical); six commercial albums with the Master Chorale and two live performance albums: the Master Chorale's 50th Season Celebration and *Festival of Carols*, the choir's first holiday album in nearly 20 years. He has also led the Master Chorale in performances for several major motion picture soundtracks.

"INVIGORATING, INVENTIVE AND
ENORMOUSLY GIFTED"

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Mr. Gershon was named Outstanding Alumnus of the USC Thornton School of Music in 2002 and is a member of the Board of Councilors for the Thornton School and the Board of Directors of Chorus America.

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE AND ORCHESTRA

SOPRANO

Tamara Bevard
Christina Bristow
Karen Hogle Brown
Hayden Eberhart
Claire Fedoruk
Nicole Fernandes
Rachelle Fox
Harriet Fraser
Hilary Fraser-Thomson
Alannah Garnier
Kelci Hahn
Ayana Haviv
Marie Hodgson
Virenia Lind
Deborah Mayhan
Caroline McKenzie
Lika Miyake
Beth Peregrine
Zanaida Robles
Holly Sedillos
Carrah Stamatakis
Courtney Taylor
Rebecca Tomlinson
Suzanne Waters
Elyse Willis
Sunjoo Yeo
Andrea Zomorodian

ALTO

Garineh Avakian
Lesili Beard
Rose Beattie
Carol Binion
Leanna Brand
Aleta Braxton
Monika Bruckner
Becky Dornon
Amy Fogerson
Michele Hemmings
Saundra Hall Hill
Callista Hoffman-Campbell
Sharmila G. Lash
Sarah Lynch
Adriana Manfredi
Cynthia Marty
Margaurite Mathis-Clark
Alice Kirwan Murray
Eleni Pantages
Laura Smith Roethe
Jessie Shulman
Leslie Inman Sobol
Niké St. Clair
Nancy Sulahian
Ilana Summers
Kimberly Switzer
Kristen Toedtman

TENOR

Matthew Brown
Daniel Chaney
Bradley Chapman
Adam Faruqi
Jon Gathje
Arnold Livingston Geis
Jody Golightly
Timothy Gonzales
Steven Harms
Todd Honeycutt
Blake Howard
Jon Lee Keenan
Charlie Kim
Shawn Kirchner
Charles Lane
Michael Lichtenauer
Joseph Lopez
Sal Malaki
Michael McDonough
Matthew Miles
Adam Noel
Anthony Ray
George Sterne
A.J. Teshin
Matthew Thomas
Nate Widelitz

BASS

Michael Bannett
Joseph Bazyouros
Mark Beasom
Michael Blanchard
Reid Bruton
John Buffett
Tim Campbell
David Castillo
Kevin Dalbey
Gregory Geiger
Dylan Gentile
Will Goldman
Abdiel Gonzalez
Scott Graff
James Hayden
David Dong-Geun Kim
Kyungtae Kim
Luc Kleiner
David Kress
Chung Uk Lee
Scott Lehmkuhl
Scott Levin
Edward Levy
Ben Lin
Brett McDermid
Cale Olson
Steve Pence

Jim Raycroft
Vincent Robles
Douglas Shabe
Mark Edward Smith
Paul Sobosky
Ryan Villaverde
Shuo Zhai

PERCUSSION

Theresa Dimond,
Principal
John Wakefield
Judy Chilnick
Alex Frederick
Gary Heaton-Smith
Dante Luna

TIMPANI

Scott Higgins, Principal

**ORCHESTRA
MANAGER**

Brady Steel

LIBRARIAN

KT Somero

The singers of the Los Angeles Master Chorale are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO; Dylan Gentile, AGMA Delegate

The players of the Los Angeles Master Chorale Orchestra are represented by the American Federation of Musicians.

2016/17 SEASON PROGRAM

WADE IN THE WATER

APRIL 30, 2017

LUX AETERNA 20TH ANNIVERSARY

JUNE 17 & 18, 2017

GUEST APPEARANCES

BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY NO. 9
April 22, 2017 - 8 pm • April 23, 2017 - 7 pm
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra
Alex Theater (Glendale) | Royce Hall, UCLA
Jeffrey Kahane, conductor

JANÁČEK'S GLAGOLITIC MASS
May 26, 2017 - 8 pm • May 27, 2017 - 2 pm • May 28, 2017 - 2 pm
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Walt Disney Concert Hall
Gustavo Dudamel, conductor

GUEST ARTISTS

ELISSA JOHNSTON
SOPRANO

Recently cited by the *Chicago Tribune* for the “exquisite beauty, sensitivity and precision” of her singing, soprano Elissa Johnston enjoys performing repertoire ranging from Bach, Handel, and Mozart to Messiaen, Carter, and Lachenmann. This season Elissa appears with the Long Beach Symphony in Mozart’s Requiem, with the San Luis Obispo Symphony in Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, with the Diotoma Quartet

in Schoenberg’s String Quartet No. 2 at Jacaranda Music, at Le Salon de Musiques in songs of Samuel Barber, and in Schubert’s *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* and Ned Rorem’s *Ariel* at Boston Court. She was recently a part of the new Peter Sellars staging of *Lagrime di San Pietro* by Orlando di Lasso with the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Last season included solo engagements with the Pacific Chorale in Brahms’ *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and with the Long Beach Symphony in Barber’s *Knoxville, Summer of 1915* and Mahler Symphony No. 4.

PEABODY SOUTHWELL
MEZZO-SOPRANO

Recognized for her “stylistic mastery and ripe, sensual sound” (*Opera Magazine*, UK) mezzo-soprano Peabody Southwell “is going places” (*LA Times*). She has performed principal roles for LA Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Carnegie Hall, Seattle Symphony, LA Philharmonic, New World Symphony, and San Francisco Symphony with Michael Tilson Thomas, John Adams, James Conlon, and Robert Spano. A Los

Angeles native, she frequently appears with LA Opera including the central role in David Lang’s *Anatomy Theater*, La Ciesca in Woody Allen’s production of *Gianni Schicchi* with Plácido Domingo, and the Third Lady in Barrie Kosky’s *Magic Flute*. A champion of new music, she is slated to premiere works for Ashley Fure, Ted Hearne, Nathaniel Stookey, Geoffrey Gordon, and Ellen Reid. In addition to performing, she directs, designs, and conceptualizes productions, installations, and multimedia events, challenging the insularity of classical music with bold collaboration across the arts. PeabodySouthwell.com

TODD STRANGE
TENOR

Originally from Northern California, Tenor Todd Strange is a well-rounded singer specializing in opera, oratorio, and musical theater in addition to session and concert work. Mr. Strange is a member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the LA Opera Chorus, and is a soloist in many regional companies across the United States. Recently, he sang the title role of *Candide* to rave reviews, as well as Taylor in the world premiere of *Fallujah*

with Long Beach Opera. Todd also recently reprised the role of Taylor (*Fallujah*), making his debut at New York City Opera. Other recent appearances include *The Industry (First Take)*, *Almaviva/Barber of Seville* (Bakersfield Symphony), *Nantucket Sailor/Moby Dick* (LA Opera), and *Alfredo/La Traviata* (American Vocal Arts) Mr. Strange recently made his solo voice film debut as the Camel in the recent animated blockbuster, *Sing!* Other film credits include *Minions*, *Rogue One*, and *Frozen*.

NICHOLAS BROWNLEE
BASS-BARITONE

The first prize winner of the 2016 Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition and 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, bass-baritone Nicholas Brownlee enters his final season as a Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist at LA Opera. In the 2016/2017 season, Nicholas Brownlee will make his Metropolitan Opera debut as the First Soldier in *Salome* conducted by Johannes Debus and returns to Los Angeles Opera for

productions of *Tosca*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, and *Salome*. He also sings Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Next season, he will join the ensemble at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe singing leading roles of his repertoire (*Enrico/Anna Bolena*, *Melisso/Alcina*, *Kaspar/Der Freischütz*), as well as return to LA Opera for Nourabad in *Les pêcheurs de perles* conducted by James Conlon. With the Houston Symphony Orchestra, he will sing Dvořák’s *Te Deum* conducted by Andrés Orozco-Estrada and appear with the Israeli Opera as Colline in *La bohème*.

GUEST ARTISTS

GLORIA CHENG

PIANO



Gloria Cheng has been a recitalist at the Ojai Festival, Chicago Humanities Festival, William Kapell Festival, and Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, and is known for exploring significant interconnections amongst composers. As a winner of the Grammy for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (without Orchestra) for her 2008 Telarc disc, *Piano Music of Esa-Pekka Salonen, Steven*

Stucky, and Witold Lutosławski, she was nominated a second time for her next recording, *The Edge of Light: Messiaen/Saariaho*. Her documentary film project, *MONTAGE: Great Film Composers and the Piano*, featuring the process of recording solo works composed for her by Bruce Broughton, Don Davis, Alexandre Desplat, Michael Giacchino, Randy Newman, and John Williams, will be aired on PBS SoCal in 2017.

LISA EDWARDS

PIANO



Lisa Edwards is a widely sought after pianist, keyboard collaborator, and teacher based in Los Angeles. She is currently in her 16th season as pianist/music assistant at the Los Angeles Master Chorale under the direction of Grant Gershon. Positions held include faculty artist at Idyllwild Summer Arts, pianist for Vox Femina Los Angeles, organist/pianist at San Marino Community Church, organist/pianist at Stephen S. Wise Temple, pianist at

Congregation Kol Ami in West Hollywood, and is in demand as guest artist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and other professional area orchestras and choruses. On disc, Lisa can be heard on two Nonesuch recordings of Steve Reich's music - *You Are (Variations)* and *Daniel Variations*. Obtaining her Masters of Music degree in Keyboard Collaborative Arts at the University of Southern California, she graduated with honors, and earned her Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance at the University of North Texas.

BRYAN PEZZONE

PIANO



Bryan Pezzone maintains an active freelance performing and recording career and has been based in the Los Angeles area since 1987. He holds a degree from the Eastman School of Music, and is well known as a versatile performer who is comfortable in classical, contemporary, and improvisational styles. He performs with nearly every established orchestra in Southern California including the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra,

the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New West Symphony, the Pasadena Symphony, the Long Beach Symphony, Muse-Ique, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and many others. Bryan was the principal pianist with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra from its inception in 1991 through 1999. From 1987-2000 he was the chair and founder of the multi-focused Keyboard program at the California Institute of the Arts. Beginning in the fall term 2017, Bryan will join the faculty of the Los Angeles College of Music.

VICKI RAY

PIANO



Described as "phenomenal and fearless," Vicki Ray is a pianist, improviser and composer. She has commissioned and premiered countless new works by today's leading composers. Ray is a founding member of Piano Spheres and head of keyboard studies at the California Institute of the Arts where she was named the first recipient of the Hal Blaine Chair in Musical Performance. She has appeared on numerous

international festivals and is a regular member of the faculty at the Bang On a Can Summer Festival at MASS MoCA. Her widely varied performing and recording career covers the gamut of new and old music: from Boulez to Reich, Wadada Leo Smith to Beethoven. Notable recordings include the first Canadian disc of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with the Blue Rider Ensemble, the premiere recordings of Steve Reich's *You Are (Variations)* and the *Daniel Variations* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the first recording of Cage's *Europerras 3 and 4*. Recent releases include Cage's *The Ten Thousand Things* on Microfest Records, which received a 2013 Grammy nomination.

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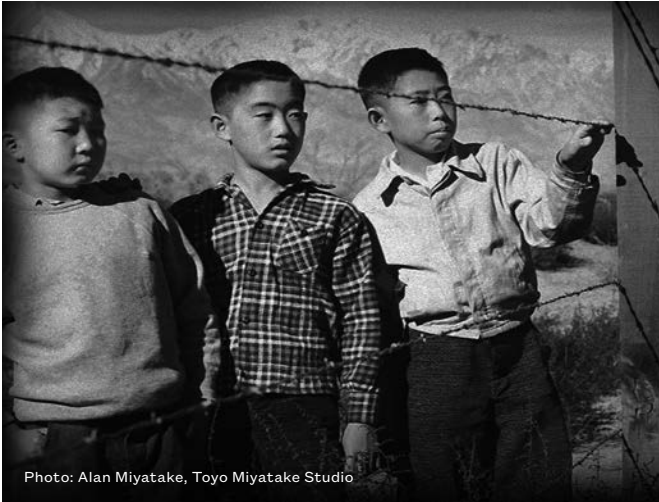


Photo: Alan Miyatake, Toyo Miyatake Studio

Through the semester-long Oratorio Project, students at Van Nuys High School composed a full-length oratorio creating an original libretto, based on the Japanese Incarceration Camps of World War II. In February, the students gave a haunting culmination performance, and though it was a difficult subject matter to set, audiences empathized with the stories and experiences Japanese-American citizens had to endure during this tumultuous time in our history. This was the 7th oratorio created by students through the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Oratorio Project. Learn more at lamasterchorale.org.

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Founded in 2012 with a generous gift from Kiki and David Gindler, the Artistic Director's Circle joins together distinguished Los Angeles Master Chorale supporters who share a passion for the group and the bold vision of Artistic Director Grant Gershon. As key stakeholders, members of the Artistic Director's Circle play a vital role in supporting core institutional programming and special initiatives through significant contributions of \$50,000 and above; and, in partnership with the Artistic Director, enjoy exciting opportunities throughout the season designed to enhance their association with the Master Chorale and its supported programs.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSEMARY SCHROEDER



We sat down recently with our committed supporters and asked them a few questions regarding their connection to the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Rosemary Schroeder shares with us her story.

Q: How did you first become involved with the Los Angeles Master Chorale?

A: I have been a subscriber of the Los Angeles Master Chorale for over 20 years. My husband Jon and I started attending performances when the Master Chorale was still at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and Paul Salamunovich was the conductor. I first became aware of the organization because of my friendship with Margie & Roger Lindbeck, longtime family members of the chorale.

Q: What is your most memorable experience with the Master Chorale?

A: There are too many to select one so I will include two performances and one program: *The Water Passion* by Tan Dun (we saw the performance twice!) and *The Passion of Joan of Arc* with the musical score by Richard Einhorn. I also love the High

School Choir Festival; it is truly inspirational to see all those high school choruses, in their own attire, filling Walt Disney Concert Hall and singing with such skill and joy!

Q: What makes the Los Angeles Master Chorale shine in comparison to other vocal ensembles and choirs?

A: The sound!!! One voice in perfect harmony. Also, the variety of the programs from Gregorian chants to traditional church music to today's most creative composers. And, its cultural inclusiveness.

Q: How are you connected with the Master Chorale now?

A: I am a season subscriber and supporter and have been fortunate to be included in several of the patron events. I am always promoting the Master Chorale to friends in hopes that they will become subscribers or increase their annual giving.

Q: What inspires you to support the arts?

A: My family. My first recollection of hearing classical music was sitting with my father after he returned from World War II while he listened to Live from the Met on the radio on Saturday mornings. I still remember him singing along to *Madame Butterfly*, his favorite opera. Also, my grandfather was an early subscriber to the Hollywood Bowl, which he shared with another couple. I remember being lucky as I grew older to attend some of the performances.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS WELCOMES LEEBA LESSIN



On January 23, 2017, the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Board of Directors welcomed new member Leeba Lessin. Leeba, a resident of Whittier, recently retired from CareMore Health System, a delivery system and Medicare Advantage Plan, where she served as President and CEO. A long-time Master Chorale subscriber and member of its major donor group the Artistic

Director's Circle, Leeba is also involved in the Whittier Area Literacy Council and is on the Board of Advisors for Westmont College. Says Board Chairman David Gindler: *"We are thrilled to have Leeba join the Board. Her passion for choral music, combined with her strong business background, make her an ideal addition to our Board. I look forward to working with her."*

ROGER WAGNER SOCIETY ENDOWMENT AND PLANNED GIVING

The Los Angeles Master Chorale established the Roger Wagner Society to honor and recognize individuals who have expressed their commitment to the art of choral music by making a gift to the Master Chorale's endowment or a planned gift benefitting the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Through this support, Society members ensure the long-term fiscal stability of the Master Chorale by creating a lasting legacy that will help preserve a vital cultural resource for future generations. The Society is named for the late Roger Wagner, who founded the Los Angeles Master Chorale in 1964 and served as its Music Director until 1986.

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Mark Taper Forum
Thru 3/19

WED 01 MAR / 12:15 p.m.

EVERY WED + FRI
LUNCHTIME! Yoga reTREAT
GRAND PARK
Thru 5/26

WED 01 MAR / 11:00 a.m.

EVERY TUE/WED/THU
LUNCHTIME! Food Trucks
GRAND PARK

THU 02 MAR / 12:15 p.m.

EVERY THU
LUNCHTIME! Concerts
GRAND PARK
Thru 5/25

THU 02 MAR / 7:30 p.m.

Salome
LA OPERA
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
Thru 3/19

FRI 03 MAR / 2:00 p.m.

Adams @ 70 : Nixon In China
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall
Also 3/5

SUN 05 MAR / 7:30 p.m.

Miljohn Ruperto: Geomancies
REDCAT
Thru 3/12

TUE 07 MAR / 12:00 p.m.

EVERY TUE
LUNCHTIME! Writers' Meetup
GRAND PARK
Thru 5/30

WED 08 MAR / 7:30 p.m.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
THE MUSIC CENTER
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
Thru 3/12

FRI 10 MAR / 11:00 a.m.

Beethoven & Shostakovich
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 3/12

FRI 10 MAR / 8:00 p.m.

Aaron Diehl presents *Jelly & George*
Jason Moran's
Fats Waller Dance Party
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall

FRI 10 MAR / 8:30 p.m.

Burning Ghosts, Evil Genius,
RAGE Thormbones
REDCAT

SAT 11 MAR / 2:00 p.m.

American Youth Symphony
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall

SAT 11 MAR / 12:00 p.m.

Downtown Bookfest
GRAND PARK

Sun 12 MAR / 4:00 p.m.

Remote L.A.
CENTER THEATRE GROUP
Mark Taper Forum
Thru 4/2

MON 13 MAR / 8:30 p.m.

Joost Rekveld: Light Matters
REDCAT

WED 15 MAR / 8:00 p.m.

Fretwork: *In Nomine*
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall

WED 15 MAR / 8:30 p.m.

Teatro El Público:
Antigonón, un contingente épico
REDCAT
Thru 3/17

FRI 17 MAR / 8:00 p.m.

Denève & Thibaudet
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall
Also 3/18

TUE 21 MAR / 8:00 p.m.

Night and Dreams:
A Schubert & Beckett Recital
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall

WED 22 MAR / 8:30 p.m.

The Wooster Group:
THE TOWN HALL AFFAIR
REDCAT
Thru 4/1

FRI 24 MAR / 11:00 p.m.

Sleepless: The Music Center
After Hours
THE MUSIC CENTER
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

FRI 24 MAR / 8:00 p.m.

Tetzlaff Plays Dvořák
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 3/26

SAT 25 MAR / 6:00 p.m.

It is obvious from the map
REDCAT
Thru 6/4

SAT 25 MAR / 7:30 p.m.

The Tales of Hoffmann
LA OPERA
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
Thru 4/15

SAT 25 MAR / 12:00 p.m.

PROUD Story Slam
GRAND PARK

SUN 26 MAR / 7:00 p.m.

Stravinsky & Adams
LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE
Walt Disney Concert Hall

TUE 28 MAR / 8:00 p.m.

Chamber Music
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall

FRI 31 MAR / 8:00 p.m.

Mirga Conducts Mozart & Haydn
LA PHIL
Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 4/2