

# WELCOME

FROM JEAN DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT & CEO



“HISTORY ALWAYS CONSTITUTES THE RELATION BETWEEN A PRESENT AND ITS PAST. CONSEQUENTLY FEAR OF THE PRESENT LEADS TO MYSTIFICATION OF THE PAST. THE PAST IS NOT FOR LIVING IN; IT IS A WELL OF CONCLUSIONS FROM WHICH WE DRAW IN ORDER TO ACT.”

JOHN BERGER, *WAYS OF SEEING*

Welcome to Walt Disney Concert Hall for tonight's performance of Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, our collaboration with Syrian-Armenian visual artist Kevork Mourad. I find the above quote particularly apt for this performance as Kevork's vision for this production and his personal commitment to highlighting the Syrian refugee crisis in his work, brings this piece into sharp contemporary focus at a time when displacement and humanitarian crises are all too common. Kevork's work is powerful and evocative, and his skill is nothing short of virtuosic, as you will witness tonight when he creates images from the stage.

Productions such as this are only possible when artistic adventurousness is matched by generous support. We offer a heartfelt thank you to The SahanDaywi Foundation, Kiki and David Gindler, and all the supporters who have allowed Grant Gershon's exploration of lesser-performed Handel oratorios to continue.

The Gindlers' commitment to Grant Gershon's artistic vision has been continually re-affirmed since their remarkable \$1 million gift in 2012. A transformative philanthropic force throughout Los Angeles, we are delighted to honor Kiki and David at our Gala on Sunday, March 18. This festive evening will feature a performance of our acclaimed production of Orlando

di Lasso's *Lagrime di San Pietro* directed by Peter Sellars. We will also honor Peter at the Gala for his incredible artistic leadership on this project before we launch *Lagrime* on national and international tours. I invite you to join us for this special evening. Information on tickets can be found on our web site, [lamasterchorale.org](http://lamasterchorale.org), or by calling 213-972-4355.

Tomorrow we reveal the details of our 2018/19 concert season. I think you will find it an inspiring season featuring well known works while also demonstrating our commitment to progressing this artform we love, including a major new work by our Swan Family Artist-in-Residence, Eric Whitacre. But for now, we continue with our current season and tonight's special performance of Handel's *Israel in Egypt*. Thank you for being here.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Davi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the last name partially cut off.

Jean Davidson, President & CEO

# ISRAEL IN EGYPT

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2018 AT 7 PM  
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

GRANT GERSHON  
Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

GRANT GERSHON	.....	conductor
KEVORK MOURAD	.....	visual artist
AZRA KING-ABADI	.....	lighting designer
ELISSA JOHNSTON	.....	soprano
ANNA SCHUBERT	.....	soprano
SHABNAM KALBASI	.....	mezzo-soprano
NIKÉ ST. CLAIR	.....	mezzo-soprano
JON LEE KEENAN	.....	tenor
DAVID DONG-GEUN KIM	.....	bass-baritone
CHUNG UK LEE	.....	bass

## ISRAEL IN EGYPT, ORATORIO IN THREE PARTS GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

### Part I: The Lamentation of the Israelites for the Death of Joseph

Symphony

Chorus..... The sons of Israel do mourn

Chorus..... How is the mighty fall'n!

Chorus..... When the ear heard him, then it blessed him

Chorus..... Their bodies are buried in peace

Chorus..... The merciful goodness of the Lord endureth

### Part II: The Exodus

Recitative (Mr. Keenan)..... Now there arose a new king over Egypt

Solo (Ms. Kalbasi) and Chorus..... And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage

Recitative (Mr. Keenan)..... Then sent he Moses, his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen

Chorus..... They loathed to drink of the river

Air (Ms. St. Clair)..... Their land brought forth frogs

Chorus..... He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies, and lice in all their quarters

Chorus..... He gave them hailstones for rain

Chorus..... He sent a thick darkness over all the land

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Chorus..... He smote all the first-born of Egypt

Chorus..... But as for his people, he led them forth like sheep

Chorus..... Egypt was glad when they departed

Chorus..... He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up  
 He led them through the deep as though a wilderness  
 But the waters overwhelmed their enemies

Chorus..... And Israel saw that great work that the Lord did upon the Egyptians  
 And believed the Lord, and his servant Moses

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INTERMISSION

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**Part III: Moses' Song**

Introitus (Chorus).....Moses and the children of Israel sung this song unto the Lord

Duet (Ms. Johnston & Ms. Schubert).....The Lord is my strength and my song

Chorus.....He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation

Duet (Mr. Kim & Mr. Lee)..... The Lord is a man of war

Chorus..... The depths have covered them

Chorus..... Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power

Chorus..... And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together

Air (Mr. Keenan).....The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil

Air (Ms. Schubert)..... Thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them

Chorus.....Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?

Chorus..... The people shall hear, and be afraid

Air (Ms. Kalbasi)..... Thou shalt bring them in

Chorus..... The Lord shall reign for ever and ever

Recitative (Mr. Keenan)..... For the horse of Pharaoh went in with  
 his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea

Chorus (repeated)..... The Lord shall reign for ever and ever

Recitative (Mr. Keenan)..... And Miriam the prophetess,  
 the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand

Solo (Ms. Johnston) & Chorus..... Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously

*This performance is made possible with the generous support of:  
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# SLAVERY, PLAGUES, AND RESTORATION

THE TIMELY MESSAGE OF HANDEL'S *ISRAEL IN EGYPT*

by Thomas May



"I'm struck by how the Exodus story has spoken to so many different peoples over the last three millennia — especially today, with so many refugee crises and displaced peoples," says Los Angeles Master Chorale's Kiki and David Gindler Artistic Director, Grant Gershon. "To me, the heart of the Exodus story is this miraculous and unique restoration of a people to their homeland."

If *Messiah* holds the rank of one of the most reliably evergreen fixtures of the musical calendar, year after year, *Israel in Egypt* — which shares some fascinating characteristics with *Messiah* — might almost seem to have been designed with the early 21st century and its diasporas in mind. Moreover, this evening's performance juxtaposes Handel's moving and richly inventive score with the unique art of Kevork Mourad, whose work passionately engages with contemporary crises — particularly the plight of the dispossessed in his native Syria.

"Now, more than ever, it's important to be able to join our voices together to show what is happening in the world," Mourad says. "With this work, I hope to create a mirror that can help us realize that the time has come to build something after so much greed and destruction." This collaboration continues the Master Chorale's ongoing Hidden Handel project — launched two seasons ago with *Alexander's Feast* — which aims to shed new light on some of Handel's overlooked oratorio masterpieces through semi-staged, multimedia productions that feature contributions by cutting-edge artists.

**HANDEL'S SELF-REINVENTION WITH *ISRAEL IN EGYPT*** — In 1711, while still in his twenties, Handel scored his first hit in London with his opera *Rinaldo*. Its success prompted

him to settle permanently in England, restyling himself from Georg Friedrich Händel to George Frideric Handel. A few years later, the boss he had left behind in Germany would likewise make the move and become — somewhat embarrassingly for the truant composer — Handel's new sovereign (as King George I).

Handel favored a style of tragic opera (opera seria) that was based, for the most part, on mythological or historical figures, set to Italian librettos, and that showcased star singers. Yet by the late 1730s, dramatic changes in public taste were turning this into an unsustainable business model. Opera was always a risky business, but it precipitated financial catastrophe for Handel, and at the end of the 1737 season, he suffered what was likely a serious stroke, triggered in part by over-exertion.

But the composer was ripe for another reinvention. After a miraculously short recovery, Handel was back in action, and he began to turn his attention increasingly toward the English oratorio.

Oratorio usually focused on subject matter drawn from the Bible — though not always, as in *Alexander's Feast* — but in Handel's treatment such stories could be just as intensely dramatic and emotionally riveting as what he had been writing for the opera stage. And oratorio had the advantage of being considered morally uplifting — and more edifying for audiences wary of the scandal-associated world of opera.

*Israel in Egypt* dates from this important transitional phase in Handel's career. Following the miserable failure of his innovative opera *Serse* in April 1738, oratorio took center stage in his plans for the 1739 season. *Saul*, composed in the summer of

1738, became the first of his collaborations with the librettist Charles Jennens (best known for compiling *Messiah*'s libretto).

For his next biblical oratorio, *Israel in Egypt*, Handel took a bold approach that was based on a libretto different from the standard model he had used in *Saul*. *Israel in Egypt* tells its story as a collage entirely composed of biblical texts (in the King James translation). Since this of course anticipates the method used for the later *Messiah* — the only other of Handel's oratorios to use the Bible in this way — it has been conjectured that the uncredited libretto was indeed compiled by Jennens.

This method would present a problem for Handel's London audiences when *Messiah* was introduced there in 1743. The criticism circulated that drawing on a sacred source for such a secular context — and oratorio was self-evidently a close relation to opera — was akin to blasphemy. But the subject matter of *Israel in Egypt* was entirely appropriate for the Lenten season, during which the work was premiered at the King's Theatre in London, on April 4, 1739. As per his usual custom, the composer filled out the generous program with performances of organ concertos during the intervals.

**A CHORUS-RICH ORATORIO** — Originally titled *Exodus*, the genesis of *Israel in Egypt*, so to speak, is somewhat involved. Handel began with what became its final section ("Moses' Song," which draws from Exodus, chapter 15), composing it in the first two weeks of October 1738. He then turned to the more event-filled Part Two, title "The Exodus" (here, the libretto interweaves passages from Exodus and the Psalms). This took Handel less than a week to compose, and he completed the entire score by November.

But Handel also included an opening part, resulting in a neatly symmetrical tripartite oratorio in which the drama of the Exodus is framed by a lament-filled prelude and a kind of collective ode of joy at its conclusion. For Part One, Handel recycled music he had already composed for the funeral of Queen Caroline, consort of George II. Her death in November 1737 came as a personal loss to Handel, who had known her since his youth.

That earlier work, *The Ways of Zion Do Mourn*, is a dark, pathos-ridden funeral anthem that also draws from an assortment of Scripture and that Handel had considered incorporating into *Saul*. By altering just a few details of the text, the composer retrofitted Queen Caroline's funeral anthem, titling it *The Lamentation of the Israelites for the Death of Joseph*.

In this form, the essentially pre-existing Part One provides the back story for the reversal of the Israelites' fortunes in Egypt, which had resulted in their enslavement. Connections between the biblical archetype and contemporary political tangents crop up in the final part as well, in such numbers as "The Lord Is a Man of War." This is in keeping, observes musicologist Christopher Hogwood, with "the belligerent political mood, as both Whigs and Tories, poets as well as politicians, pressed for a war with Spain."

Along with a number of other self-borrowings, *Israel in Egypt* is notable for the amount of pilfering Handel makes from both old masters and some (now) rather obscure contemporaries. It has even been suggested that Handel intentionally drew on what was for him the equivalent of "early music" to give his retelling an archaic flavor. Still, there is no mistaking the signature of Handel himself both in the dramatic details and

in the cumulative architecture that make this oratorio such a stirring musical experience.

*Israel in Egypt* did, however, receive a lackluster response at its premiere. Concerned with so many recent miscalculations regarding his audience, Handel radically changed the piece by cutting out the first part entirely. He seems to have decided that the collective lamentation of the first part was overkill, and *Israel in Egypt* was eventually published in a two-part version: "The Exodus" followed by "Moses' Song," which achieved spectacular renown in the chorus-loving 19th century. Mendelssohn, for example, found much inspiration here, conducting this oratorio frequently and helping to establish its popularity.

"One of the things that was off-putting to the audiences of Handel's time was the high proportion of choruses in relation to the solo writing," Gershon notes. "*Messiah* is the only other oratorio that comes close to the same number of choruses. And, like *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt* has no real direct narrative. But what made it so hard for audiences in 1739 is precisely what makes it so compelling and attractive to audiences of the 21st century — the sense of a collective feeling and response that Handel creates with these extraordinary choruses."

This evening marks the Master Chorale's first-ever performance of the fuller, three-part original version of the work.

**THE VISION OF KEVORK MOURAD** — It's interesting to note that the single most-famous highlight from Verdi's breakthrough opera *Nabucco* is also a chorus: specifically, one that alludes to the situation of the Exodus from the perspective of the enslaved Israelites several centuries after Moses. The sense of historical patterns that recur, strata-like, has inspired the Syrian-Armenian artist Kevork Mourad as he developed his vision for this collaboration, his largest-scale project to date.

Based in New York since 2006, Mourad's signature process involves a technique of painting in real time with ink he squeezes out of a bottle onto the page and then smears into patterns that coalesce into images. These are projected via Midi-controlled camera onto a large screen, as Mourad toggles between showing his live drawing and computer-animated manipulations.

"I love to keep the improvisational element," Mourad explains. "I start by knowing the idea in my head of what I want to draw, but I don't know from which corner I will start, for example. At first it may look random, but then the shapes become recognizable." He incorporates the chorus by having them react at moments to the screen narrative; at others, the imagery is meant to appear "like an extension of their singing. It's a way to give the audience eyes."

Mourad became intrigued by the echoes between the catastrophic events that Handel depicts and their repetitions in more recent history. "This story is very familiar to me because of my Armenian background. My ancestors were forced to leave their homes 100 years ago and were welcomed by Syrians. And now this has happened to the Syrians: almost half the population has been forced to leave their homes. So there are three layers to this story for me." His visual accompaniments to Handel's music are intended "to create this space where the story is shifting in time. Sometimes it's ancient, sometimes of today."

Usually, Mourad works with his collaborators to shape the scenario, as in the acclaimed *Home Within*, which he created in

partnership with the Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh. Reflecting on the turmoil in Syria since revolution broke out, *Home Within* has toured widely. *Israel in Egypt* represents a different kind of challenge: “I’ve never used this kind of approach before, to enter into a massive work that has already been constructed. So I needed to figure out, how can I be part of it, how can I illustrate it from a different point of view? My paintings are like strata, like archeological layers of these different times throughout history. And it’s almost like the breath of Handel’s music is creating the piece. When the singers are singing, their breath is rising up to the screen and creating the piece. That is how I feel connected to Handel.”

**THE MUSIC OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT** — The vast majority of Parts One and Two is choral, with the exception of one aria and some brief recitatives, preceded by a brief, dark overture that establishes the grief-stricken mood of oppression from which Moses will have the mission to deliver his people. Handel’s treatment of his choral forces is remarkably varied. The gamut ranges from thrilling homophonic outbursts, grandly fugal edifices, and Venetian-style antiphony to echo effects from the double chorus, and, overall, imaginative word painting: again and again, Handel’s musical gestures enact or comment on what is being sung.

The orchestral palette is correspondingly large: along with the usual strings and continuo, Handel scores for woodwinds, trumpets, trombones, and timpani. Indeed, Gershon points out, this is one of the largest orchestras Handel ever used.

Throughout *Israel in Egypt*, the chorus serves multiple functions, playing the role of individual participants. In this sense, Handel further anticipates the unusual dramaturgy of *Messiah*: even Moses and the Pharaoh are referred to rather than actively characterized. The chorus by turns represents the omniscient biblical narrator and the Israelites, but their narrative distance from the events additionally carries a hint of the ancient Greek chorus.

Still, Handel never relinquishes the dramatic impulse that is at the core of his art. The sequence of plagues in Part Two presents a tour de force that takes the place of the lavish costumes, sets, and emotion-centered arias of opera seria. Handel gives us meandering anxiety in “They loathed to drink of the river,” the furious buzz of flies (“He spake the word”), powerful drum-and-brass punctuations for the hailstones, and

disquieting harmonic dissolutions during the plague of darkness, culminating in the orchestral hammer blows that accompany the final plague against Egypt’s first-born. Handel even adds wry humor in the madly dotted rhythms of the alto aria describing the plague of frogs.

“I see the plagues as what humans do to destroy themselves,” says Mourad. “The idea of plague in our day is the destruction and catastrophe facing our own civilization, through wars and nonstop conflict. The story is so powerful and you can see it happening again through our own technology, our greed, our choices to destroy our own civilization and heritage. So while the singers are illustrating the plagues, I want to add something that is symbolic.”

Part Three centers around the crossing of the Red Sea and the Israelites’ rejoicing at being delivered from the pursuing Egyptians. A brief, harmonically wide-ranging instrumental introduction followed by a short chorus leads into the glorious statement of the oratorio’s central message, set for double chorus: “I will sing unto the Lord.” Handel recapitulates its jubilant theme at the conclusion.

The rest of Part Three recounts the sea crossing from different perspectives, interpolated with reflections on the power of divine intervention. Handel adds another kind of variety by incorporating a handful of arias and duets. There is likewise remarkable diversity in Handel’s depictions of “water music,” from the deceptively lulling phrases of “The depths have covered them” and the vivid use of registral contrasts in “And with the blast of Thy nostrils” to the undulating flow of the soprano’s aria “Thou didst blow with the wind” to describe this supernatural phenomenon.

“It’s easy to be dazzled by the pictorial aspect of Handel’s depiction of the various plagues,” observes Gershon. “But now when I approach *Israel in Egypt*, I look more toward Part Three and all the different ways that we can give thanks for this miracle — and for this restoration of homeland and identity. It is the Passover story, and it is so resonant because this is the story that has given hope to so many peoples over the centuries.”

*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 widely recognized as the country's leading professional choir 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 Kiki and David Gindler Artistic Director Grant Gershon and President and CEO Jean Davidson. Founded by legendary conductor Roger Wagner in 1964, it is a founding resident company of The Music Center and choir-in-residence at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Chorister positions are highly sought-after and the fully professional choir is a diverse and vocally dynamic group showcasing the many voices of L.A.

Presenting its own concert series each season, the Los Angeles Master Chorale performs choral music from the earliest writings to contemporary compositions striking a balance between innovation and tradition. It also frequently performs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Disney Hall and the Hollywood Bowl. The Master Chorale has been awarded three ASCAP/Chorus America Awards for Adventurous Programming

as well as Chorus America's prestigious Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence. In 2017 it was inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame. The Master Chorale has appeared frequently on film scores and soundtracks, most recently *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* at the request of composer John Williams.

Committed to community engagement and fostering music education in schools, the Los Angeles Master Chorale's education programs include Voices Within residencies that encourage students to write and perform their own songs, and an expansive Oratorio Project for high school students. The Master Chorale also presents an annual High School Choir Festival, which brings teenagers from around the Southland to perform in Walt Disney Concert Hall. In June 2016, the Master Chorale hosted Big Sing L.A., bringing people of all ages and abilities to Grand Park for a communal singing event. In 2018, this initiative will expand with Big Sing California engaging singers from throughout the state. [lamasterchorale.org](http://lamasterchorale.org)

SATURDAY, MARCH 17 - 8 PM  
SUNDAY, MARCH 18 - 7 PM (GALA PERFORMANCE)

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# LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE AND ORCHESTRA

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April Amante  
 Tamara Bevard  
 Christina Bristow  
 Emma-Grace Dunbar  
 Hayden Eberhart  
 Claire Fedoruk  
 Rachelle Fox  
 Harriet Fraser  
 Kelci Hahn  
 Ayana Haviv  
 Karen Hogle Brown  
 Elissa Johnston  
 Deborah Mayhan  
 Caroline McKenzie  
 Anna Schubert  
 Courtney Taylor  
 Rebecca Tomlinson  
 Suzanne Waters  
 Sunjoo Yeo  
 Andrea Zomorodian

## ALTO

Garineh Avakian  
 Rose Beattie  
 Leanna Brand  
 Janelle DeStefano  
 Amy Fogerson  
 Michele Hemmings  
 Callista Hoffman-Campbell  
 Shabnam Kalbasi  
 Sharmila Lash  
 Sarah Lynch  
 Adriana Manfredi  
 Cynthia Marty  
 Eleni Pantages  
 Laura Smith Roethe  
 Jessie Shulman  
 Leslie Inman Sobol  
 Niké St. Clair  
 Nancy Sulahian  
 Ilana Summers  
 Tracy Van Fleet

## TENOR

Matthew Brown  
 Bradley Chapman  
 Adam Faruqi  
 Steven Harms  
 Blake Howard  
 Jon Lee Keenan  
 Charlie Kim  
 Shawn Kirchner  
 Bryan Lane  
 Charles Lane  
 Michael Lichtenauer  
 Joseph Lopez  
 Sal Malaki  
 Matthew Miles  
 Anthony Ray  
 Todd Strange  
 Matthew Thomas  
 Jimmy Traum  
 Nate Widelitz

## BASS

Michael Bennett  
 Mark Beasom  
 Michael Blanchard  
 Reid Bruton  
 John Buffett  
 Dylan Gentile  
 Will Goldman  
 Abdiel Gonzalez  
 Scott Graff  
 James Hayden  
 David Dong-Geun Kim  
 Luc Kleiner  
 Chung Uk Lee  
 Scott Lehmkuhl  
 Edward Levy  
 Ben Lin  
 Brett McDermid  
 Jim Raycroft  
 Vincent Robles  
 Shuo Zhai

## VIOLIN I

Joel Pargman,  
*Concertmaster*  
 Carrie Kennedy,  
*Associate Concertmaster*  
 Margaret Wooten,  
*Assistant Concertmaster*  
 Florence Titmus  
 Leslie Katz  
 Nina Evtuhov  
 Liliana Filipovic  
 Nicole Bush  
 Tamara Hatwan  
 Ina Veli

## VIOLIN II

Elizabeth Hedman, *Principal*  
 Cynthia Moussas,  
*Associate Principal*  
 Linda Stone  
 Steve Scharf

## VIOLA

Anna Kostyuchek  
 Mui Yee Chu  
 Juliann French  
 Jean Sudbury  
 Shawn Mann, *Principal*  
 Andrew Picken,  
*Associate Principal*  
 Brett Banducci  
 Diana Wade  
 Dmitri Bovaird  
 Karolina Naziemiec

## CELLO

Cecilia Tsan, *Principal*  
 Dane Little,  
*Associate Principal*  
 Delores Bing  
 Nadine Hall

## BASS

Don Ferrone, *Principal*  
 Peter Doubrovsky

## OBOE

Leslie Reed, *Principal*  
 Michele Forrest

## BASSOON

William May, *Principal*  
 William Wood

## TRUMPET

David Washburn, *Principal*  
 Marissa Benedict

## TROMBONE

William Booth, *Principal*  
 Al Veeh  
 Terry Cravens

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## TIMPANI

Theresa Dimond, *Principal*

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*The singers of the Los Angeles Master Chorale are represented by the  
 American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO; Leanna Brand, AGMA Delegate.*

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



# GRANT GERSHON

KIKI AND DAVID GINDLER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Hailed for his adventurous and bold artistic leadership and for eliciting technically precise and expressive performances from musicians, Grant Gershon is currently in his 17th 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 the Resident Conductor of LA Opera. He made his acclaimed debut with the company with *La Traviata* in 2009 and has subsequently conducted *Il Postino*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, *Wonderful Town*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and *The Pearl Fishers*. In November 2017 he conducted the world premiere of John Adams' *Girls of the Golden West* for San Francisco Opera with "rhythmic buoyancy and vigor" (*Classical Voice North America*). *Girls of the Golden West* was directed by Peter Sellars, with whom Gershon

collaborated on the Master Chorale's acclaimed production of Orlando di Lasso's *Lagrime di San Pietro* that will tour the U.S. and internationally in the 2018/19 season. In New York, Gershon has appeared at Carnegie Hall and at Trinity Wall Street, as well as on the *Great Performers* series at Lincoln Center. Other major appearances include performances at the Ravinia, Aspen, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Salzburg and Vienna Festivals. 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 recordings with the Master Chorale and two live performance albums. He has also led the Master Chorale in performances for several major motion pictures soundtracks including *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* at the request of composer John Williams.

Mr. Gershon was named Outstanding Alumnus of the Thornton School of Music in 2002 and received the USC Alumni Merit Award in 2017. He is a member of the Board of Councilors for the Thornton School and the Board of Directors of Chorus America.

# KEVORK MOURAD

VISUAL ARTIST



Kevork Mourad was born in Kamechli, a town in the upper reaches of Syria. Of Armenian origin, he received his MFA from the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts in Armenia, and he now lives and works in New York.

He is represented by Galerie Claude Lemand in Paris, and Rafia Gallery in Dubai. He has had solo exhibitions around the Middle East and the United States, including at the Doris Duke Shangrila Center for Islamic Arts in Honolulu, and has participated in Art Moment 2014 in Budapest, Hungary. His digital piece, *The Map of Future Movements*, toured as part of a group exhibition in Jerusalem and Ramallah, and was in the 2010 Liverpool Biennial. He has several pieces in the permanent collection of the World Bank.

Through spontaneous painting/animation — a combination of art and music — he has worked with many world-class musicians. His past and current projects include the *Cirène* project with members of Brooklyn Rider at the Metropolitan Museum, the multimedia play *Lost Spring* (2015) with Anaïs Alexandra Tekerian at the MuCEM and National Sawdust, *Gilgamesh* (2003) and *Home Within* (2013) with Kinan Azmeh, which have toured the world, performances with the Silk Road Ensemble at the Nara Museum, Japan, and the Rubin Museum of Art, among others, Lembit Beecher's *I Have No Stories to Tell You*, commissioned by Opera Philadelphia, *Master Peter's Puppet*

*Show* (2015) with The Knights at Tanglewood, and *Barbed Wire* (2015), with Issam Rafea, commissioned by The Space, UK.

He has performed at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Chelsea Museum of Art, the Bronx Museum of Art, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Chess Festival of Mexico City, Morgenland Festival, Le Festival du Monde Arabe in Montreal, the Stillwater Festival, the Art Institute of Chicago, Harvard University, Lincoln Center Atrium, the American Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Central Park's Summerstage, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, and the ElbPhilharmonie in Hamburg. He had two major works exhibited at the Rose Art Museum in Boston and also recently exhibited at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto.

He was awarded the Robert Bosch Stiftung Prize for Animation in 2016, with animator Waref Abu Quba, for their film *Four Acts for Syria*, which will appear in 2018.

He has been commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to create a performance piece for their 2018 exhibition about historic Armenia.

He is a member, as a visual artist, of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, and he appears in the recent documentary about the group, *The Music of Strangers*.

# 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, Unsuk Chin, and Lachenmann. Last season Elissa sang Schoenberg’s String Quartet No. 2 with Quator Diotima at Jacaranda Music, Mozart’s Requiem with the Long Beach Symphony, Stravinsky’s *Les Noces*

with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and Samuel Barber’s *Hermit Songs* at Le Salon de Musiques. Elissa has appeared as guest soloist with the Pacific Chorale under conductor John Alexander in Brahms’ Requiem, with the Long Beach Symphony under conductor Gemma New in Mahler’s 4th Symphony and Samuel Barber’s *Knoxville, Summer of 1915*, and with the San Luis Obispo Symphony in Mahler’s 2nd Symphony. In April 2018, Elissa will appear with Pacific Symphony under Carl St. Clair in Philip Glass’ *The Passion of Ramakrishna* at Carnegie Hall, as part of Carnegie’s year-long celebration of Philip Glass’ 80th birthday.

## ANNA SCHUBERT SOPRANO



Anna Schubert performs regularly, as a soloist and an ensemble singer, in Los Angeles. Her concert soloist highlights include Handel’s *Messiah* and *Alexander’s Feast*; Mozart’s Requiem, *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, *Exsultate Jubilate*, and Mass in C Minor; and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. In the opera realm, she has performed the roles of Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Madame Herz (*The Impresario*), Suor Genovieffa (*Suor Angelica*), and premiered the role of “L” in Anne LeBaron’s *LSD: The Opera*. Recently, she debuted with Opera Omaha, singing the role of Controller in Jonathan Dove’s *Flight*. She is thrilled to begin 2018 by making her debut with the LA Phil, singing in the Street Chorus of Bernstein’s *Mass*, under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel.

Anna is also an active studio singer and can be heard in various film/TV soundtracks, including *Minions*, *Creed*, *Keanu*, *The Accountant*, *Sing*, and *X-Men: Apocalypse*. She is a graduate of Chapman University, where she was a Provost Scholar, as well as the Aspen Summer Music Festival and School.

Anna is also an active studio singer and can be heard in various film/TV soundtracks, including *Minions*, *Creed*, *Keanu*, *The Accountant*, *Sing*, and *X-Men: Apocalypse*. She is a graduate of Chapman University, where she was a Provost Scholar, as well as the Aspen Summer Music Festival and School.

## SHABNAM KALBASI MEZZO-SOPRANO



Currently in her first season with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, mezzo-soprano Shabnam Kalbasi is making her solo debut in *Israel in Egypt*. She has received awards from the George London Foundation, Metropolitan Opera’s National Council Auditions, Palm Springs Opera Guild, and the Vocal Arts D.C. Competition.

Shabnam has performed at The Broad Stage Concert Series, Venture Opera, Opera Memphis, and made her recital

debut at the Kennedy Center. She sang Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* with Prelude to Performance and debuted the role of “Union Organizer” in the world premiere of Juliet Palmer’s *Sweat* at Brooklyn’s National Sawdust.

A two-season Apprentice Artist and Canning Memorial Award recipient with Santa Fe Opera, Shabnam sang Contessa Ceprano in *Rigoletto* and Olivia in Jennifer Higdon’s Grammy-nominated, *Cold Mountain*. Ms. Kalbasi has also appeared as a soloist in the Los Angeles Bach Festival, was a Stern Fellow at SongFest, and sang several seasons with LA Opera’s outreach program.

## NIKÉ ST. CLAIR MEZZO-SOPRANO



Niké has a M.M. in Music Education, Theory and Choral Conducting from the Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary, her native country. She has earned M.M. and Doctorate degrees in Choral Conducting at USC. Currently she teaches Musicianship at Azusa Pacific University and conducts the choirs and teaches Musicianship at Cal Poly Pomona. Additionally, Niké is the Director of the Sanctuary Choir at the La Verne Church of the

Brethren in La Verne. She has performed the mezzo solos in JS Bach’s *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions*, *Magnificat*, B-Minor Mass; CPE Bach’s *Magnificat*; Mozart’s Requiem; Mahler’s Second Symphony; Stravinsky’s *Les Noces*; Handel’s *Messiah*, *Dixit Dominum*, and *Alexander’s Feast*. She toured with LA Phil performing John Adams’ *Gospel According to the Other Mary* and was part of the choir for Orlando di Lasso’s *Lagrime di San Pietro*. The highlights of Niké’s film scores include: *Avatar*, *Big Hero 6*, *Ice-Age*, *Godzilla*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, *X-Men*, *Transformers*, *Jumanji*, and *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.

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# GUEST ARTISTS

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## JON LEE KEENAN TENOR



Jon Lee Keenan is a native of Las Vegas, Nevada. Influenced at a young age by his father, a versatile saxophonist, Jon cultivated an interest for a variety of musical styles. In 2005, Jon moved to Southern California to pursue a career in classical singing and a degree in Vocal Arts at the USC Thornton School of Music. Recent highlights with the Los Angeles Master Chorale include the role of “Evangelist” in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, and solos

in Handel’s *Messiah*, and Hugo Distler’s *The Story of Christmas*. In recent seasons, Jon has helped create several new exciting characters through collaborations with The Industry including Clyde Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde* (music by Andrew McIntosh) and “Little Monk” in Brecht’s *Galileo* (music by Andy Akiho). This season’s highlights include appearances with Orange County’s Pacific Chorale as the role of “Evangelist” in Bach’s *St. John Passion*; tenor soloist in Mozart’s *Laut Verkünde unsre Freude* conducted by Gustavo Dudamel; and the role of “Gunner” in the widely-acclaimed operatic premiere of Orson Welles’ *War of the Worlds* featuring music by Annie Gosfield and directed by Yuval Sharon for the LA Philharmonic.

## DAVID DONG-GEUN KIM BARITONE



Baritone David Dong-Geun Kim studied with David Adams at College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, Ohio, and James Taylor Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University. As a soloist specializing in Baroque church music, David has worked with many renowned conductors such as Helmuth Rilling, who invited him to the Taipei Bach Festival for performances of the *St. John Passion*, and Philipp Amelung with whom he sang two

concerts of Bach’s Christmas Oratorio at Thomaschirche Leipzig. He appeared as a festival soloist at the Oregon Bach Festival in 2009 and 2010. He is featured on a recording of Mendelssohn and Bach’s *Magnificat* settings, conducted by Simon Carrington, which was released in 2009. Since settling in Los Angeles in 2014, David has been extending his career as an oratorio soloist, choral conductor, and music arranger. He serves as a choir director at YoungNak Church and for the Bliss Youth Chamber Orchestra. He is a proud member of Los Angeles Master Chorale.

## CHUNG UK LEE BASS



Korean-born conductor and bass baritone Chung Uk Lee studied with Dr. Young-Jo Lee and holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition and Music Theory from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. Since moving to Los Angeles, he studied orchestra conducting with Hans Beer, voice with Bard Suverkrop, and choral music with Dr. William Dehning. He holds a Masters of Music in Choral Music at University of Southern California.

While studying at USC, he was awarded a full scholarship and also he was assistant conductor of the University Chorus and taught choral conducting. As a singer, he has precise pitch and a warm, rich voice. He sang the role of Kezal in Smetana’s *Prodná nebesta* with the USC Opera, and has been a soloist in performances of Handel’s *Messiah*, Kodaly’s *Budvari Te Deum*, two late Haydn masses, J.S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, and Verdi’s *Requiem* at USC. As a member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale he has sung bass solo for *Messiah* and *St. Matthew Passion* performances. He is the music director of the Los Angeles Chamber Choir, and the California Children’s Choir.

## AZRA KING-ABADI LIGHTING DESIGNER



Azra King-Abadi is a Los Angeles based theatre artist specializing in lighting and costume design. Azra trained at Concordia University and received her BFA in Fine Arts, Specialization in Theatre Design. Later she attended Cal State Long Beach where she received her MFA in Lighting Design, and was awarded the APSIH for academic excellence in graduate studies.

She has been working as a freelance designer in the Los Angeles area for the past five years. She has worked at many prestigious and historic companies such as the LA Opera, Long Beach Opera, LA Phil and Central City Opera, as well as designing for distinguished educational programs such as The Colburn School, USC Thornton Opera department and Cal Poly Pomona. She has also acted as the resident Assistant Lighting Designer at the LA Opera for the last five seasons. Azra was the lighting designer of the Master Chorale’s first Hidden Handel presentation, *Alexander’s Feast*.

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Philip A. Swan  
Laney Tychentin  
Tracy Van Fleet  
**Emeritus**  
Marshall A. Rutter  
**Honorary**  
Morten J. Lauridsen  
Clifford A. Miller

*\*Ex-Officio*

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## ADMINISTRATION

Grant Gershon  
*Kiki and David Gindler Artistic Director*

Jean Davidson  
*President & CEO*

**Artistic Staff**  
Jenny Wong  
*Associate Conductor*  
Eric Whitacre  
*Swan Family Artist-in-Residence*

Lisa Edwards  
*Pianist/Musical Assistant*

**Artistic Production & Operations**  
Andrew Brown  
*Chief Operating Officer*  
Kevin Koelbl  
*Director of Artistic Production*  
Susie McDermid  
*Production Manager*

**Development**  
Elizabeth Greenway  
*Chief Advancement Officer*  
Lindsey Lansburgh  
*Associate Director, Individual Giving*  
Brian Tillis  
*Special Events Manager*

**Finance & Administration**  
Steven Neiffer  
*Chief Financial Officer*  
Allie Fukushima  
*Accounting and Compensation Specialist*

Esther Palacios  
*Executive Assistant/Board Liaison*

**Education**  
Lesili Beard  
*Education Programs Manager*  
Doug Cooney  
*Teaching Artist*  
Amy Fogerson  
*Teaching Artist*  
Alice Kirwan Murray  
*Teaching Artist*

David O  
*Teaching Artist*  
Brett Paesel  
*Teaching Artist*

**Marketing & Public Relations**  
Patrick Brown  
*Director of Marketing*  
Jennifer Scott  
*Director of Public Relations*  
Adrien Redford  
*Audience Engagement Coordinator*

**Consultants**  
Base Design  
*Design Firm*  
Dream Warrior Group  
*Web Design*  
Smash Event  
Gerry Huffman  
Singer-Lewak  
*Auditor*  
Jackson Lewis  
*Counsel*

Theater Direct  
*Ticket Services*  
Janet Lomax  
*Grants Writer*

**Walt Disney Concert Hall**  
Greg Flusty  
*House Manager*  
Jeff Wallace  
*Stage Manager*  
Ronald Galbraith  
*Master Carpenter*  
John Phillips  
*Property Master*  
Terry Klein  
*Master Electrician*  
Kevin F. Wapner  
*Master Audio/Video*

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## MEDIA PARTNERS



ListenUp! with artists and KUSC's Alan Chapman can be heard online after the concert at [lamasterchorale.org](http://lamasterchorale.org).

Your use of a ticket acknowledges your willingness to appear in photographs taken in public areas of the Music Center and releases the Center and its lessees and others from liability resulting from use of such photographs. Use of any phones, cameras or recording devices is prohibited during the performance.

Program and artists subject to change. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of House Management.

Members of the audience who leave during the performance will be escorted back into the concert hall at the sole discretion of House Management

# FEBRUARY

**THU 01 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

*Water by the Spoonful*  
CENTER THEATRE GROUP  
Ahmanson Theater  
Thru 3/11

**THU 01 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

Bernstein's Mass  
with Dudamel  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 2/4

**FRI 02 FEB / 12:15 p.m.**

**EVERY WED/FRI**  
¡LUNCHTIME! Yoga reTREAT  
GRAND PARK

**SAT 03 FEB / 7:30 p.m.**

*Candide*  
LA OPERA  
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion  
Thru 2/18

**TUE 06 FEB / 7:30 p.m.**

Renee Fleming in Recital  
LA OPERA  
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

**TUE 06 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

Chamber Music  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall

**WED 07 FEB / 11:00 a.m.**

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

**THU 08 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

Composer Salonen: Concertos  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 2/11

**THU 08 FEB / 8:30 p.m.**

Okwui Okpokwasili:  
*Poor People's TV Room*  
REDCAT  
Roy And Edna Disney/  
Calarts Theater

**SUN 11 FEB / 7:00 p.m.**

Israel in Egypt  
LOS ANGELES  
MASTER CHORALE  
Walt Disney Concert Hall

**MON 12 FEB / 8:30 p.m.**

Morton Subotnick  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
*Silver Apples on the Moon*  
REDCAT  
Roy And Edna Disney/  
Calarts Theater

**TUE 13 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

Chamber Music: All-Beethoven  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall

**FRI 16 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

Composer Salonen:  
*Wing on Wing*  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 2/18

**FRI 16 FEB / 8:30 p.m.**

Kevin Young, Reading  
REDCAT  
Roy And Edna Disney/  
Calarts Theater

**SAT 17 FEB / 8:30 p.m.**

Eve Belgarian  
Selections of *Book of Days*  
REDCAT  
Roy And Edna Disney/  
Calarts Theater

**SUN 18 FEB / 7:30 p.m.**

Peter Richard Conte in Recital  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall

**TUE 20 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

Green Umbrella:  
Adams Conducts  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall

**FRI 23 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

Muhly & Mussorgsky  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 2/25

**SAT 24 FEB / 11:00 a.m.**

Toyota Symphonies for Youth  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 3/10

**SAT 24 FEB / 7:30 p.m.**

Orpheus and Eurydice  
LA OPERA  
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

**SUN 25 FEB / 7:30 p.m.**

Trifonov & Babayan  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall

**WED 28 FEB / 8:00 p.m.**

The Oscar® Concert  
LA PHIL  
Walt Disney Concert Hall