

WELCOME

FROM JEAN DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT & CEO



The Los Angeles Master Chorale prides itself on representing the “voices of L.A.” and being an integral part of the city’s cultural life. The start of the new season has affirmed this role, not only here at home, but internationally with our critically acclaimed touring production of Orlando di Lasso’s *Lagrime di San Pietro* directed by Peter Sellars. Following performances at the Ravinia Festival and the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, the company embarked overseas, beginning in October with two sold out concerts at the Melbourne International Arts Festival conducted by Associate Conductor Jenny Wong. *Time Out Melbourne* reviewing the first performance said:

“Sellars has found an ingenious physical form for this music, but it takes a special group of singers to truly embody the heightened extremes of emotion contained within Lasso’s score. The singers seem always crystal clear on the motivations and ideas behind each of Sellars’ tableaux, and by the end they seem to have almost reached the divine.”

The company then traveled to Mexico for a performance in Guanajuato as part of the Festival Internacional Cervantino followed by a performance in Mexico City at the historic and prestigious Palacio de Bellas Artes. It then returned to L.A. for performances at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. Spring will bring more tour dates across the

country and into Europe, showcasing our talented singers on a truly international stage.

Tonight we are thrilled to be back home in Walt Disney Concert Hall for this special performance of Bach’s *Magnificat* paired with Reena Esmail’s *This Love Between Us: Prayers for Unity*, a piece that Grant Gershon, our Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, describes as a “powerful and profound work.” Esmail’s oratorio was written expressly to be paired with the *Magnificat*, and both are imbued with poetry and tap into a sense of social justice and togetherness that I believe will make this concert particularly meaningful. It is especially pleasing to us to be giving the West Coast premiere of Esmail’s *This Love Between Us*. Born and raised in Los Angeles and based here, Esmail infuses her composition with purpose and community, and we are so pleased to marry our voices with her vision tonight. Thank you for joining us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Davi". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jean Davidson, President & CEO

BACH'S MAGNIFICAT

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2018 AT 7 PM
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

GRANT GERSHON
Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

GRANT GERSHON conductor
EMMA-GRACE DUNBAR soprano
JULIA METZLER soprano
ADRIANA MANFREDI mezzo-soprano
JON LEE KEENAN tenor
LUC KLEINER baritone
ELISSA JOHNSTON soprano
SHABNAM KALBASI mezzo-soprano
ADAM FARUQI tenor
ABDIEL GONZÁLEZ baritone
RAJIB KARMAKAR sitar
ROBIN SUKHADIA tabla

MAGNIFICAT IN D MAJOR, BWV 243
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685 - 1750)

I. Magnificat Chorus
II. Ex exultavit spiritus meus Ms. Metzler
III. Quia respexit humilitatem Ms. Dunbar
IV. Omnes generationes Chorus
V. Quia fecit mihi magna Mr. Kleiner
VI. Et misericordia Ms. Manfredi, Mr. Keenan
VII. Fecit potentiam Chorus
VIII. Deposuit potentes Mr. Keenan
IX. Esurientes implevit bonis Ms. Manfredi
X. Suscepit Israel Chorus
XI. Sicut locutus est Chorus
XII. Gloria Patri Chorus

INTERMISSION

THIS LOVE BETWEEN US: PRAYERS FOR UNITY
REENA ESMAIL (B. 1983), WEST COAST PREMIERE

I. Buddhism Chorus
II. Sikhism Ms. Kalbasi, Chorus
III. Christianity Chorus
IV. Zoroastrianism Mr. González, Chorus
V. Hinduism Ms. Johnston, Mr. Faruqi, Chorus
VI. Jainism Chorus
VII. Islam Chorus

*Tonight's concert is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Stephen A. Kanter.
This performance is made possible with generous support from the Dan Murphy Foundation.*

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 Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, and Jean Davidson, President and CEO. Grammy Award-winning composer Eric Whitacre currently serves as the ensemble's Swan Family Artist-in-Residence. Created 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. During the 2018/19 season the Master Chorale will embark on a national and international tour with its acclaimed production of *Lagrime di San Pietro* directed by Peter Sellars and conducted by Gershon and Associate Conductor Jenny Wong. 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.

Praised for its definitive performances, the Los Angeles Master Chorale is also committed to recording the choral repertoire. Its esteemed discography includes seven recordings under Gershon, the most recent being *the national anthems/the little match girl passion* by David Lang on Cantaloupe Records. Albums released under former Music Director Paul Salamunovich on RCM include the Grammy-nominated *Lauridsen: Lux Aeterna*, a recording that helped to secure the work's place as a modern masterpiece. The Master Chorale is featured with Gershon on the soundtracks of many major motion pictures, including most recently *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.

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 presents an annual High School Choir Festival bringing teenagers from around the Southland to perform in Walt Disney Concert Hall. The Festival celebrates its 30th year in 2019. In July 2018 the Master Chorale presented Big Sing California, the largest group singing event in state history, encompassing a concert in Disney Hall that was broadcast live to venues in five other cities in California and also livestreamed online.

THEME AND VARIATIONS

PRAISE AND UNITY

by Thomas May



“The lamps may be different, but the Light is the same: it comes from Beyond.” We encounter these words as set to Reena Esmail’s music in the last movement of *This Love Between Us: Prayers for Unity*. And in its eloquent concision, this text by the 13th century Persian poet and Sufi mystic Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (otherwise known simply as Rumi) sheds light on the inspiration for Esmail’s oratorio. (Indeed, she initially planned to title it *The Light Is the Same*.)

“I’ve always wanted my music to connect people to one another,” she says, and in *This Love Between Us*, Esmail has composed a stunning mosaic that celebrates the unifying connections shared by a variety of Indian religious traditions — traditions that, in an increasingly fractured world, are cynically used to divide people.

Division, partisanship, religious hatred: these became seeds for the Thirty Years’ War — that devastating stage rehearsal for Europe’s later world wars, the first of which was brought to its bitter end exactly a century ago last week. Not quite four decades had passed since the conclusion of the Thirty Years’ War when Johann Sebastian Bach was born.

Yet even in his most devoutly Christian compositions, created within a cultural and political context that was steadfastly Lutheran, Bach expressed a human universality that transcends parochial pieties. His art moves us to the core, regardless of our belief systems, communicating beyond dogma and the distance of centuries.

From a contemporary perspective, the differences between Catholicism and Lutheranism may seem relatively trivial, yet a mere generation before Bach they had led to mass casualties. In his setting of the *Magnificat*, which opens our program, Bach finds a common ground of his own between Protestant

practice and the tradition passed down through the ages from Catholicism.

So how did this deeply devoted Lutheran come to set the Latin *Magnificat*, a text closely associated with the Virgin Mary and with Catholic worship tradition? Indeed, only on comparatively few occasions did Bach use Latin texts — the other major example being, of course, the Mass in B minor, which also may have involved an attempt at ecumenical “outreach” of a sort (as an overture to possible employment by the Catholic court in Dresden). In Leipzig — and such matters varied from one municipality to the next in Protestant lands during this era — Luther’s German translation of the *Magnificat* was sung during regular Vespers. However, the Latin text familiar from its usage by the Roman Catholic Church was retained for such special feasts as Christmas.

Bach’s inaugural year as music director of the churches in Leipzig, in 1723, began too late for him to have a chance to write something fresh for the Easter or Pentecost services, so the first opportunity that presented itself to pull out all the stops for a major feast was at Christmastime. Later, the composer would grow disillusioned with his Leipzig bosses and with aspects of the post that shackled him creatively, but in 1723 he wanted nothing more than to outdo even his own high standards.

According to the scholar Christoph Wolff, Bach envisioned providing an ambitious and expanded *Magnificat* setting for his first Leipzig Christmas to give his new employers — and, of course, the congregation — a dazzling impression of the role he intended that music would play under his tenure: no more dust-off-the-stale-scores of liturgical music, no more uninspired routine.

This was in the context of Bach’s plan to write entire annual cycles that would require a new cantata from his own pen for each Sunday and feast day of the liturgical calendar. His *Magnificat* of 1723, in the key of E-flat major, incorporates other Christmas-related numbers throughout that link it specifically to this time of high festivity. It was the single most ambitious work he had composed to date since starting the post in Leipzig.

Between 1732 and 1735, Bach revisited his original *Magnificat* score and pruned away the extra numbers so that it could be adapted to any feast day Vespers service. He additionally transposed the score to D major — a key with connotations of festivity — and changed some of the instrumentation (for example, flutes instead of recorders). This later score (BWV 243 in the catalogue) calls for solo vocal quintet, five-part choir as well, and an orchestra of flutes, oboes (plus oboe d’amore), trumpets, timpani, violins, viola, and continuo. It is the standard repertory version.

The spirit of expansiveness that guided Bach in his 1723 setting can be seen in the homage he pays to international styles and to musical traditions from the past — all with the goal of establishing a sense of continuity with the present moment in Leipzig.

Also known as the Canticle or Song of Mary, the *Magnificat* is a Latin translation of the Greek text from the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke, where it represents a proclamation of praise by the pregnant Mary during her visitation to her cousin Elizabeth. Far from innocently platitudinous in its praise, the *Magnificat* reads like the manifesto of a social justice advocate. (How exactly do adherents of the “prosperity gospel” explain this particular biblical text?)

Bach divides the prayer into 12 sections, but even the choral movements that call for a full display of performing forces are concise. Such concision powerfully enhances the contrasts between sections and the swiftly moving imagery of Mary’s exultant prayer. Through moment-by-moment word painting and musical symbolism, Bach engages us deeply, unleashing the power of the five-part chorus in the opening section and bringing it back at key moments (such as the “Omnes generationes” and “Fecit potentiam”). Certain emotions triggered by the text activate rhythmic ideas, such as the animated energy in the soprano aria “Et exultavit.” Melodic shapes and instrumental colors enrich the *Magnificat*’s stream of images overall. In “Quia respexit,” the oboe d’amore mixes its distinctive timbre with the first soprano in a more restrained mood, while the alto’s “Esurientes implevit” is luxuriant, almost operatic. But just at the moment when the 1% get their just due and are “sent away empty,” Bach eliminates the charming flutes.

Another fascinating example of his strategic contrasts is seen in the juxtaposition of familiar local tradition with a musical symbol of European-wide learning: Bach weaves a chorale tune from the German *Magnificat* (given to the pair of oboes, which his listeners would have recognized immediately) into the beautiful vocal trio “Suscepit Israel,” which he follows with a contrapuntal chorus that links the fugue with the Law represented by Old Testament prophecy.

At the end of the final chorus (a setting of the “Gloria Patri,” which serves as a kind of cadential prayer to the *Magnificat* text), Bach brings back the festive music with which he had launched the work: resplendent trumpets and timpani with

concerto-like treatment of the vocal lines (playing the role of other instruments in this context). Mary’s song of praise and joy has no beginning or end but echoes timelessly, like the moments of deep intuition conveyed by the canonical texts that Reena Esmail has chosen for her oratorio.

A member of the Indian diaspora born and based in Los Angeles, Esmail draws on her background negotiating different cultural identities to explore the spaces and coherences between them through her music. That experience similarly fuels the composer’s sense of artistic purpose of wanting to connect people from different backgrounds and contexts.

Esmail explains that the Muslim-Catholic-Indian-Kenyan-Pakistani background she gained from her parents has made her all the more sensitive to the need for such connection. “I’ve often felt that my choice to be a Western musician separated me from my cultural heritage. That is why so much of my work now exists between the traditions of Western and Indian classical music.”

Along with earning degrees in composition from Juilliard and Yale, Esmail spent a transformative year in India as a Fulbright Scholar, where she focused on Hindustani musical traditions with the sitarist Gaurav Mazumdar as her mentor. She currently serves as one of two co-composers-in-residence with Street Symphony in downtown Los Angeles (whose founder and artistic director, Vijay Gupta, recently was made a MacArthur Fellow). In September, Gupta premiered Esmail’s *Darshan* for solo violin, another work that responds to models by Bach.

Other projects this season by the increasingly sought-after Esmail, who was named *Musical America*’s “New Artist of the Month” in August 2017, include last week’s performance of her work *Teen Murti* by the Chicago Sinfonietta as part of an orchestral Diwali celebration and, this spring, major world premieres of works commissioned by the Richmond Symphony and Chorus, and by cellist Joshua Roman.

This Love Between Us: Prayers for Unity reimagines the Western format of the oratorio, whose origins are closely associated with the Christian tradition, as a context for exploring deeper connections between the seven major religious traditions found in India. It also responds to the positive message of Bach’s *Magnificat* with a contemporary sensibility of enlightenment.

The connection between both works resulted from the circumstances of a co-commission that Esmail received in 2016 from Juilliard 415 (a program focused on early music practice) and Yale’s Schola Cantorum. She was asked to write a new choral work that would share the program with Bach’s setting. “As a composer, it’s pretty rare to get that kind of commission — which includes composing for so many instruments you haven’t written for before [i.e., for period instruments]. It even gave me a chance to use three natural trumpets!” Esmail says.

This Love Between Us was premiered in New York in 2017 and then presented on a tour to India (in New Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai). Tonight’s West Coast premiere represents a sort of homecoming: not only is the composer a native Angeleno, but she points out that Paul Salamunovich was the choir director of the church she attended growing up (St. Charles Borromeo). “That was the first choir I ever heard, and I’m sure that the first professional choir concert I experienced was the Los Angeles Master Chorale.”

Preparing this performance has been an intricate process, starting back in the summer, Esmail explains. On one level, that process sounds like a metaphor for the connections she seeks out in the oratorio itself. "People from two different cultures and different musical trainings have to figure out new methods and systems of working together. The process is different every time, and that's the beauty of it."

The scoring requires implementing this ideal of working together. It combines a Baroque orchestra (pairs of flutes and oboes/oboes d'amore, a bassoon, three trumpets, timpani, and strings) and Western choir with solo sitar and tabla. The sitarist Rajib Karmakar is originally from India, while the tabla player Robin Sukhadia is an Indian-American who grew up in the United States.

For the parts that call for improvisation using the Indian instruments, Esmail had to find ways of mediating with the precisely-written-out notation used by the Western ensemble. "In a way I feel as if I'm a translator between the leaders of different countries, trying to figure out what value system each person has and how to convey that in a way that is respectful and makes them want to engage with each other. With a cross-cultural collaboration like this, when you want to create a space that allows each person to speak their own language and still be understood, it takes so much more time than the length of a Western orchestral rehearsal."

Esmail culled texts from the seven religious traditions that show how each deals with "the topic of unity, of brotherhood, of being kind to one another." Her family is connected to two of these seven religions (Islam and Christianity), and her training encompasses the study of Hindustani music (which belongs to neither of those religions), she remarks.

But even with this richly cross-cultural background, locating the most fitting such excerpts posed intense challenges. She worked with almost two dozen colleagues to do this and to help with the technical aspects — pronunciation, diction, meaning — as well, since her method of setting the texts involves another kind of union, in that each movement simultaneously presents both the original language of the text and its English version. (The one exception is in the third movement, where Esmail uses a Malayalam translation of the original Greek from a New Testament passage, thus incorporating the language spoken in the southwestern state of Kerala, where Christianity first appeared in India.)

Each of the seven movements of *This Love Between Us* contains what the composer describes as "a unique combination of Indian and Western classical styles." Overall, the musical language spans a continuum from Western classical to Hindustani, with varying mixtures between. Thus, Esmail combines Western choral textures with passages for solo singers who vocalize in an Indian style in different ways throughout the oratorio.

The first movement (Buddhism: text in Sanskrit, from the *Dhammapada*) establishes these two horizons from the start, with powerful tutti gestures from the whole ensemble and chorus, later giving the spotlight to the sitar and tabla. There are references to the style of Sanskrit chanting, though no quotations from actual chant. The second movement (Sikhism: original text in Gurmukhi from the Guru Granth Sahib) introduces a beautiful grace note figure, chromatically inflected, which quotes a Sikh devotional song recommended by one of

the team of colleagues the composer consulted. Esmail observes that this figure is "not necessarily a marker of Sikhism." Rather, she was inspired by this particular song from the Sikh tradition and became fascinated by how such a tiny gesture (the grace note) "can give the whole piece a completely different flavor — like a pinch of a spice."

In the third movement (Christianity: original text "reverse-translated" from New Testament Greek to Malayalam, from *Letter to the Romans*), Esmail makes explicit reference to Bach's *Magnificat* by using the three trumpets that were at her disposal. This is where the oratorio, drawing on Baroque choral style, is most fully anchored in the Western tradition. Its counterpart comes in the fully Hindustani style of the fourth movement (Zoroastrianism: Pahlavi, an earlier form of Persian and a language that is not even spoken anymore, from the *Pahlavi Rivayat*). Scored for solo baritone solo, this is the only movement that is structured in a completely Hindustani classical form: specifically, as a *vilambit bandish*, a composition at a very slow tempo, which would serve as the anchor point for likely 30-45 minutes of improvisation in a Hindustani concert.

The fifth moment (Hinduism: Hindi, combining texts from the *Isha Upanishad* and from the 15th-century Indian mystic poet Kabir) is a love duet for soprano and tenor in basic song form (ABA). A point to note about the simultaneous language treatment here: when the love duet returns in the second "A" section, the voices switch so that the tenor sings in Hindi, the soprano in English. The text from Kabir, whose legacy is claimed by both Hindus and Muslims, gave Esmail the source for her title *This Love Between Us*.

In the sixth movement (Jainism: Ardhamagadhi Prakrit, from the *Acharanga Sutra*), a fiery musical expression predominates, despite the Jains' association with radical peacefulness. "I wanted to include a counterpoint to the other parts of the oratorio that are often so warm and soft, with a text setting out things that are forbidden" — restrictions intended to pave the way to harmonious living.

The seventh movement (Islam: Persian, the poetry of Rumi, including "affirming phrases from other religions"), which concludes the work, shares the poet's message that liberation will come if you "concentrate on the essence/concentrate on the light." Here and in the Hinduism movement, Esmail sets the words of "poets who write through the lens of their religion" — with Rumi representing the Islamic perspective, since it would be blasphemous to set a text from the Koran to music. This movement contains longer passages of choral a cappella writing, changing keys constantly. The sitar and tabla meanwhile improvise freely in a Hindustani raga (i.e., a pre-established melodic framework) known as *Raag Vachaspati* during sections that are settled in a single tonal center.

Esmail worked on the oratorio in 2016 during a period she says felt very dark because of the outcome of U.S. presidential election, and she recalls that her belief in the necessity of art was reinforced, above all its role as "a way to rehabilitate our society." *This Love Between Us* culminates with "Amen"-like phases, prayer cadences from these varied traditions, overlapping in layers of hope and harmony.

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

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE AND ORCHESTRA

SOPRANO

Tamara Bevard
Emma-Grace Dunbar
Harriet Fraser
Alannah Garnier
Kelci Hahn
Ayana Haviv
Karen Hogle Brown
Elissa Johnston
Caroline McKenzie
Jennifer Paz
Bethanie Peregrine
Holly Sedillos
Suzanne Waters
Elyse Willis
Andrea Zomorodian

ALTO

Garineh Avakian
Aleta Braxton
Amy Fogerson
Shabnam Kalbasi
Sharmila Lash
Sarah Lynch
Adriana Manfredi
Cynthia Marty
Margaurite Mathis-Clark
Julia Metzler
Alice Kirwan Murray
Laura Smith Roethe
Jessie Shulman
Leslie Inman Sobol
Niké St. Clair
Kimberly Switzer
Tracy Van Fleet

TENOR

Matthew Brown
Bradley Chapman
Adam Faruqi
Timothy Gonzales
Jon Lee Keenan
Dermot Kiernan
Charlie Kim
Shawn Kirchner
Bryan Lane
Charles Lane
Michael Lichtenauer
Anthony Ray
Todd Strange
Matthew Thomas
Jimmy Traum

BASS

Derrell Acon
Michael Bannett
David Castillo
Dylan Gentile
Will Goldman
Abdiel González
Scott Graff
David Dong-Geun Kim
Luc Kleiner
Edward Levy
Ben Lin
Steve Pence
Adrien Redford
Vincent Robles
Mark Edward Smith

VIOLIN I

Joel Pargman,
Concertmaster
Carrie Kennedy,
Associate Concertmaster
Margaret Wooten,
Assistant Concertmaster
Florence Titmus
Leslie Katz
Nina Evtuhov
Liliana Filipovic
Nicole Bush
Armen Anassian
Radu Pieptea

VIOLIN II

Elizabeth Hedman,
Principal
Cynthia Moussas,
Associate Principal
Linda Stone
Steve Scharf
Anna Kostyuchek
Mui Yee Chu
Juliann French

Jean Sudbury

VIOLA

Shawn Mann,
Principal
Andrew Picken,
Associate Principal
Diana Wade
Aaron Oltman
Karolina Naziemiec
Kate Reddish

CELLO

Cecilia Tsan,
Principal
Delores Bing
Nadine Hall
Dane Little

BASSES

Don Ferrone,
Principal
Peter Doubrovsky,

CLARINETS

Geri Rotella,
Principal
Sarah Weisz

OBOES

Leslie Reed,
Principal
Jennifer Cullinan

BASSOON

William May,
Principal

TRUMPETS

David Washburn,
Principal
Ryan Darke
Jennifer Marotta

PORTATIVE ORGAN

Lisa Edwards,
Principal

TIMPANI

Theresa Dimond,
Principal

TABLA

Robin Sukhadia

SITAR

Rajib Karmakar

ORCHESTRA

PERSONNEL

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; Elyse Willis, AGMA Delegate. The players of the Los Angeles Master Chorale Orchestra are represented by the American Federation of Musicians.

GRANT GERSHON

KIKI & 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 18th 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, Ellen Reid, and Chinariy Ung, among many others.

Gershon is the Resident Conductor of LA Opera and most recently conducted the West Coast premiere of Philip Glass' *Satyagraha*. He made his acclaimed debut with the company with *La Traviata* in 2009 and has subsequently conducted *Il Postino*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Florenca 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*). He will make his Dutch National Opera debut conducting the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in performances of *Girls of the Golden West* in March 2019. 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.

In September 2018 he conducted a performance of the Master Chorale's Peter Sellars-directed production of Orlando di Lasso's *Lagrime di San Pietro* at the Ravinia Festival. In May 2019 he will conduct performances of *Lagrime* at the Barbican Centre in London, Sage Gateshead, and Cité de la Musique in Paris.

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.

GUEST ARTISTS

EMMA-GRACE DUNBAR
SOPRANO — BACH

Emma-Grace Dunbar is a native of Southern California and keeps a busy performance schedule in both opera and concert. She has performed with companies across the United States including LA Opera, the Pacific Symphony, San Diego Opera, the New York Philharmonic, and Utah Festival Opera. Her operatic roles include Kathie in *The Student Prince*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance*, and Belinda in *Dido & Aeneas*. Ms. Dunbar earned a Master's degree in Vocal Arts from the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music and a Bachelor's degree in Music from Westminster Choir College. She has been the recipient of several awards from organizations including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the California Women's Chorus, the Michael Ballam Concorso Lirico Competition, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

ADAM FARUQI
TENOR — ESMail

Adam Faruqi has been a member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale since 2015. He sings in a number of other ensembles, including the LA Opera Chorus, the San Fernando Valley Master Chorale, Camerata Rus, and Concerto NoHo. Adam received a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Southern California, where he was honored with the Opera Award. Adam is a gamer, a polyglot, a flaneur, and a public transit enthusiast.

REENA ESMail
COMPOSER

Indian-American composer Reena Esmail works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together by creating equitable musical spaces. Esmail holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School (BM'05) and the Yale School of Music (MM'11, MMA'14, DMA'18). Her work is performed regularly throughout the U.S. and abroad, and has been programmed at Carnegie Hall, the Barbican Centre in London, Schloss Esterhazy in Hungary, and throughout India. Esmail received a 2011-12 Fulbright-Nehru Scholarship to study Hindustani music in India, where she was a student of Gaurav Mazumdar, and was also a 2011 INK Fellow (in association with TED). Esmail's doctoral thesis is entitled *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians*. Her Hindustani vocal teachers include Srimati Lakshmi Shankar and Saili Oak. Esmail is an Artistic Director of Shastra, connecting the great musical traditions of India and the West. She is also the co-composer-in-residence with Street Symphony, where she works with communities experiencing homelessness and incarceration in Los Angeles.

ABDIEL GONZÁLEZ
BARITONE — ESMail

Puerto Rican baritone Abdiel González has been praised for his "rich, lush baritone" and for having a "superb voice, which commanded the stage." He has appeared as a concert soloist under the batons of Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Grant Gershon, to name a few. He is equally at home on the operatic stage, having performed over 30 roles, as well as on film and television, having sung in over 20 films, including *Coco*, *Frozen*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, and *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. Recently he had the pleasure of singing the bass solos in Beethoven's Mass in C in Rancho Palos Verdes, Beethoven's 9th at La Sierra University as well as recording the role of Thermus in Harrison's *Young Caesar* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He was also a soloist in Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Boca del Rio Philharmonic Orchestra in Veracruz, Mexico for under the baton of Jorge Mester for the inaugural concert of their new concert hall, a concert attended by the President of Mexico.

GUEST ARTISTS

ELISSA JOHNSTON
SOPRANO — ESMAIL



Cited by *The New York Times* for her “especially lovely” singing, in April Elissa Johnston made her Carnegie Hall debut with Pacific Symphony under Carl St. Clair, singing the soprano role of Sarada Devi in Philip Glass’ *The Passion of Ramakrishna*, as part of Carnegie’s year-long celebration of Philip Glass’ 80th birthday. Other recent appearances include Handel’s *Israel in Egypt* and Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* with the LA

Master Chorale, Dvorak’s *Ciganske melodie* at Le Salon de musiques, and performances of SPIRAL XII and AURA, both by Chinary Ung in San Diego and Syracuse. Elissa has appeared as guest soloist with the Pacific Chorale under conductor John Alexander in Brahms’ *Requiem* and Poulenc’s *Gloria*, with the Long Beach Symphony under conductor Gemma New in Mahler’s *4th Symphony* and Samuel Barber’s *Knoxville, Summer of 1915*, and with Quator Diotima at Jacaranda Music, singing Schoenberg’s String Quartet No. 2. Highlights of the coming season include Haydn’s *Creation* with Pacific Chorale and Symphony under Robert Istad and performances of the touring Peter Sellars production of *Lagime di San Pietro*.

RAJIB KARMAKAR
SITAR — ESMAIL



Rajib Karmakar is a Los Angeles based performance artist, composer, and educator. Rajib has performed in many countries including India, USA, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, for the Ministry of Spain (Spain), the Ottawa Council for Arts (Canada), Boom Festival (Portugal), Festival of India (USA and Canada), NAMM (Los Angeles), Theatre Rogue Du Conservatoire (Montreal), National Arts Center (Ottawa), Straz Center

(Tampa), Castello Di Romeo (Italy), Shrine Auditorium (Los Angeles), and many more. He has played in various projects for Disney, Sony, Universal, A&E Network and others and has also been an artist-in-residence for various colleges and universities. Rajib’s versatility and ability has allowed him to adapt his skills and knowledge to his various world music projects with his own creation “Mayur Tantri,” the world’s first double-necked sitar. Rajib received his MFA in Music from California Institute of the Arts and currently he is the Artistic Director of the Los Angeles International Music and Arts Academy.

SHABNAM KALBASI
MEZZO-SOPRANO — ESMAIL



Currently in her second season with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, mezzo-soprano Shabnam Kalbasi made her solo debut in *Israel in Egypt* in February 2018. 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.

JON LEE KEENAN
TENOR — BACH



Jon Lee Keenan, a native of Las Vegas, Nevada, was influenced at a young age by his father, a versatile saxophonist, cultivating 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 LA Master Chorale include the role of “Evangelist” in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, and tenor solos in Handel’s *Messiah*, and Hugo Distler’s *The Story of Christmas*. Jon has helped create several new characters through collaborations with The Industry including Clyde Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde* (music by Andrew McIntosh). Recent highlights include appearances with the 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 *War of the Worlds*. Upcoming appearances include John Cage’s *Europas* with the LA Philharmonic and The Industry, and *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* with the San Diego Opera.

GUEST ARTISTS

LUC KLEINER
BARITONE — BACH



Singer and composer Luc Kleiner continues to shape a pluralistic musical identity in Los Angeles, where he performs frequently with the LA Master Chorale and LA Philharmonic. Luc’s musicianship was fostered from an early age by his mother, a notable early childhood music educator and globally-renowned teacher trainer. After a transcendent experience performing at Tanglewood’s Young Artist program, and influential

summers working at Idyllwild Arts Festivals, Luc further pursued the voice, studying with Tim MacDougall at Cal State Long Beach. In 2017, Luc earned a Master’s degree in Performance and Composition from California Institute of the Arts, where he studied composition and intonation with Wolfgang von Schweinitz. Luc currently maintains private voice studios and adjunct-faculty membership at several community colleges, meanwhile excavating treasuries of new and original experimental music interleaving aesthetics of Pop, Concert, Virtuality, and Philosophy. He is an active participant in the Oregon Bach Festival and Bach Akademie Charlotte.

JULIA METZLER
SOPRANO — BACH



Los Angeles-based soprano Julia Metzler is an active opera singer and concert soloist. Her recent and upcoming roles include Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Mrs. P in *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, Micaëla in Bizet’s *The Tragedy of Carmen*, and the title role in Gustav Holst’s *Savitri*. Ms. Metzler has performed as a soloist with both the LA Philharmonic and with the Master Chorale, most

recently in Bach’s *Magnificat* and Handel’s *Messiah*. A frequent opera competitor, Ms. Metzler was a 2018 Metropolitan Opera National Council Awards National Semi-Finalist. In 2011, Ms. Metzler participated in the I Sing International Festival, a summer program designed to introduce western singers to Mandarin as a lyric language. She has subsequently sung at the National Center for Performing Arts with the China National Symphony Orchestra, the Hangzhou Grand Theater, the Suzhou Culture and Arts Centre, and the Great Hall of the People in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Ms. Metzler holds degrees in vocal performance from San Francisco Conservatory of Music and from UCLA.

ADRIANA MANFREDI
MEZZO-SOPRANO — BACH



Adriana Manfredi, mezzo-soprano, completed music studies at Oberlin College and Conservatory and CalArts. Currently on the rosters of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Los Angeles Opera Chorus, she enjoys singing chamber music, art song, opera, and new music. Recent solo credits include Berg’s *Lyric Suite* (Diotima Quartet; Jacaranda Music), as well as appearances at the Hear Now Festival, Ravinia Festival, LA

Philharmonic, and as featured soloist on the David Lang/ Calder Quartet/ LA Master Chorale album *the national anthems*. Her voice can also be heard in such feature film soundtracks as *Wreck-It Ralph*, *Big Hero 6*, *Minions*, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, and *Frozen*.

ROBIN SUKHADIA
TABLA — ESMAIL



A Master in Fine Arts graduate from the World Music program at the California Institute of the Arts, Robin Sukhadia studied under the virtuoso tabla maestro Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri at CalArts and the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael, California. He performs extensively, in both classical and contemporary contexts, and has developed innovative music education programs at the Mahatma Gandhi

Ashram in Ahmedabad, the Weill Institute at Carnegie Hall, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Grammy Museum, Machine Project in Los Angeles, and Shree Mangal Dvip Boarding School in Kathmandu, Nepal. In 2011, he completed a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship in India, where he developed six music education programs across India and Nepal, each serving children in some of the poorest regions and communities of South Asia. Robin currently serves as an Advancement Officer for The Colburn School, considered among the world’s foremost institutions for music education.

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IN MEMORIAM

STEPHEN A. KANTER, M.D.
DECEMBER 24, 1939 - SEPTEMBER 5, 2018

Stephen Kanter, M.D., a long-serving member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale Board of Directors, passed away on Wednesday, September 5, 2018. Born on December 24, 1939, in Rhode Island, Dr. Kanter received his B.A., magna cum laude with high honors, from Brown University in 1960 and his M.D. from New York University School of Medicine in 1964.

He had originally intended to specialize in neurological surgery, but his surgical training was interrupted by a call to military service with the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps in the mid-1960s, when he served both in the field and afloat. After military service, he practiced medicine, specializing in diagnostic radiology with expertise in angiography and interventional radiology, as well as more current and innovative imaging technologies. In his over 40 years of practice Dr. Kanter held leadership positions in departments representing the full gamut of practice environments — academic, private practice, health

maintenance, and finally, over 20 years with the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services.

Dr. Kanter had a strong personal commitment to non-profit organizations, especially in music and the arts. In addition to serving on the Board of the Master Chorale from 2008 to 2018, over the course of his volunteer career as a self-described “non-profit meddler” he served on the boards of the Armory Center for the Arts, Boston Court Theatre, Coleman Chamber Music Association, the Historical Society of Southern California, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, The Music Center-Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County, Pacific Asia Museum, and the Pasadena Conservatory of Music, among others.

He is survived by his brother, Stanley Kanter of Barrington, Rhode Island.



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The Los Angeles Master Chorale established the Roger Wagner Society to honor and recognize donors who have expressed their commitment to the art of choral music through a planned or endowment gift. Through this support, Society members ensure the long-term 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 Master Chorale in 1964 and served as its Music Director until 1986.

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Stage Manager
Ronald Galbraith
Master Carpenter
John Phillips
Property Master
Terry Klein
Master Electrician
Kevin F. Wapner
Master Audio/Video

MEDIA PARTNERS



ListenUp! with artists and KUSC's Alan Chapman can be heard online after the concert at 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.

NOVEMBER

THU 01 NOV / 7:30 p.m.

Satyagraha
LA OPERA
@ Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
Thru 11/4

THU 01 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

Mälkki, Reich & Mahler
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

THU 01 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

Dear Evan Hansen
CENTER THEATRE GROUP
@ Ahmanson Theatre
Thru 11/25

THU 01 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

Valley of the Heart
CENTER THEATRE GROUP
@ Mark Taper Forum
Thru 12/9

THU 01 NOV / 8:30 p.m.

Margaret Leng Tan
REDCAT
@ Roy And Edna Disney /
CalArts Theater

THU 01 NOV / 11:00 a.m.

*Grand Park's LUNCH À LA PARK:
Food Trucks*
@ Grand Park
Every Tue/Wed/Thu

SAT 03 NOV / 11:00 a.m.

*Grand Park's Downtown
Dia De Los Muertos: Altars + Arts*
GRAND PARK
Thru 11/4

FRI NOV 01 / 12:15 p.m.

*Grand Park's LUNCH À LA PARK:
Yoga reTREAT*
@ Grand Park
Every Wed/Fri

SAT 03 NOV / 3:00 p.m.

The 2018 Eyeworks Festival
of Experimental Animation
REDCAT
@ Roy And Edna Disney /
CalArts Theater

SUN 04 NOV / 7:30 p.m.

L'Arpeggiata
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

MON 05 NOV / 8:30 p.m.

Raha Raissnia:
Expanded Film Performances
REDCAT
@ Roy And Edna Disney /
CalArts Theater

TUE 06 NOV / 7:30 p.m.

*Joni 75: A Birthday Celebration
Live at the Dorothy Chandler
Pavilion*
THE MUSIC CENTER
Thru 11/07

THU 08 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

The Tempest
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 11/10

FRI 09 NOV / 8:30 p.m.

Carmina Escobar: Pura Entraña
REDCAT
@ Roy And Edna Disney /
CalArts Theater
Thru 11/10

SUN 11 NOV / 7:30 p.m.

West-Eastern Divan Orchestra
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

MON 12 NOV / 8:30 p.m.

Vivian Ostrovsky:
L'humour du geste
REDCAT
@ Roy And Edna Disney /
CalArts Theater

TUE 13 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

European Avant-Garde
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

THU 15 NOV / 8:30 p.m.

Kaneza Schaal: *JACK &
REDCAT*
@ Roy And Edna Disney /
CalArts Theater
Thru 11/17

FRI 16 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

Cameron Carpenter Plays
Saint-Saëns
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 11/18

SAT 17 NOV / 7:30 p.m.

Hansel and Gretel
LA OPERA
@ Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
Thru 12/15

SUN 18 NOV / 7:00 p.m.

Bach's Magnificat
LA MASTER CHORALE
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

FRI 23 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

Stanley Kubrick's Sound Odyssey
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 11/25

SAT 24 NOV / 11:00 a.m.

Toyota Symphonies for Youth:
Brahms and His First Symphony
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 12/1

MON 26 NOV / 5:00 p.m.

L.A. County Tree Lighting
GRAND PARK

WED 28 NOV / 7:30 p.m.

Music 101: A Symphonic
Spectacular
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

WED 28 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

Come From Away
CENTER THEATRE GROUP
@ Ahmanson Theatre
Thru 01/06/19

THU 29 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

Ellen Reid: *p r i s m*
REDCAT
@ Roy And Edna Disney /
CalArts Theater
Thru 12/02

FRI 30 NOV / 8:00 p.m.

"Pathétique" with MTT
LA PHIL
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall
Thru 12/02