MASTER CHORALE

WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL



CHRISTMAS AT WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

DECEMBER 2019 GRANT GERSHON KIKI & DAVID GINDLER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



WELCOME

FROM ELIZABETH GREENWAY, CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER



William Sydney Porter, better known by his pen name O. Henry, wrote, "When one loves one's Art, no service seems too hard." At the Los Angeles Master Chorale, we take this to heart, especially at this time of year. Our teaching artists have been working in local classrooms for weeks to guide 150 5th graders through the process of co-creating their own original songs as part of our 2019-20 Voices Within program. Many students have never had the experience of singing out loud, not to mention being exposed to concepts such as melody and rhythm. For some, English is a second language, and program activities often stretch their communication skills into unfamiliar territory. The Master Chorale artists who implement Voices Within wouldn't have it any other way. Their efforts to nurture foundational abilities for lifelong success are rewarded again and again by the enthusiasm of participating students as they build knowledge, confidence, and a real sense of community in their music-making.

Following a virtuosic season-opening performance of Bruckner's Mass in F Minor and *Oceana* by Osvaldo Golijov this October, the singers and orchestra musicians of the Master Chorale have been hard at work with Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, and Jenny Wong, Associate Conductor, to prepare these holiday concerts to share with you. Morten Lauridsen's iconic *O Magnum Mysterium*, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this season, has a special provenance. The work was commissioned in 1994 by Master Chorale founding board member and director emeritus Marshall Rutter as a gift for his wife Terry Knowles, the Master Chorale's former president and CEO. We are grateful for this deeply personal music, and to the generous community of friends and family members who made special contributions in honor of Terry and Marshall to support our anniversary performance.

This December, we are delighted to present the world premiere of *The Gift of the Magi* by our Swan Family Artist-in-Residence, Eric Whitacre. Inspired by O. Henry's short story, *The Gift of the Magi* is a consummate illustration of love being greater than possession, that there is a true gift in giving.

As you make your holiday gift-giving plans, I hope you will consider making a charitable donation to support the Master Chorale. Our fall Annual Fund campaign aims to raise \$200,000 by December 31st for our singular music education and concert programming. Become a Friend of the Los Angeles Master Chorale with a tax-deductible contribution of \$99 or more to enjoy wonderful community events and benefits all year. Gift memberships are also available. You can donate by mail, online at lamasterchorale.org/donate, or by phoning our Friends line at 213-972-4355.

The Los Angeles Master Chorale is honored to serve our community through the art form that we love. Your gifts of time and treasure make this hard work possible. May *The Gift of the* $M\alpha gi$ inspire all of us in this season of giving. "Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest," O. Henry concludes. "Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi."

Thank you for sharing the holidays with us.

Elizabeth Greenway Chief Advancement Officer



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2019 AT 8 PM SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2019 AT 2 PM WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

GRANT GERSHON Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

ERIC WHITACRE, conductor LISA EDWARDS, piano JOHN WEST, organ

Caroling, Caroling Alfred Burt (1920-1954)
Carol of the Bells
.ux Aurumque Eric Whitacre (b. 1970) Suzanne Waters, soprano
t's the Most Wonderful Time of the YearEddie Pola (1907-1995) George Wyle (1916-2002) arr. Hawley Ades (1908-2008)
Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer (Sing-Along)
ilent NightFranz Gruber (1787-1863) arr. David O (b. 1970)
Brightest and Best
Santa Claus Is Coming to Town (Sing-Along)
) Holy Night Adolphe Adam (1803–1856) arr. John Rutter (b. 1945)
ליש What a Beautiful City Traditional Spiritual Shawn Kirchner, piano arr. Shawn Kirchner

INTERMISSION

FESTIVAL OF CAROLS

The Gift of the MagiEric Whitacre

Della Laurence Servaes
Jim David Castillo
Sheila Suzanna Guzman
Mrs. Sinclair April Amante
Shopkeeper Mark Edward Smith

Stage direction and costuming by Lisa Kable-Blanchard

Scene 1.	A Large Department Store
	Della, Jim, Customers
Scene 2.	Watch Storefront
	Della, Shopkeeper
Scene 3.	Salon
	Della, Sheila, Mrs. Sinclair
Scene 4.	Home
	Della, Jim

This program is made possible with generous support from The Blue Ribbon.

The Los Angeles Master Chorale's Swan Family Artist-in-Residence is made possible by the Swan Family Trust.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

LUX AURUMQUE

Poem by Edward Esch Translated into Latin by Charles Anthony Silvestri

Lux, Calida gravisque pura velut aurum Et canunt angeli molliter Modo natum. Light, Warm and heavy as pure gold And the angels sing softly To the new-born baby.

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER (SING-ALONG)

You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, you know Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen, But do you recall The most famous reindeer of all?

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Had a very shiny nose And if you ever saw it You would even say it glows All of the other reindeer Used to laugh and call him names They never let poor Rudolph Join in any reindeer games!

Then one foggy Christmas Eve, Santa came to say, "Rudolph with your nose so bright, Won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"

Then how all the reindeer loved him, As they shouted out with glee, "Rudolph the red-nose Reindeer You'll go down in history!"

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN (SING-ALONG)

You better watch out, you better not cry, better not pout, I'm telling you why: Santa Claus is coming to town! He's making a list, checking it twice, gonna find out, who's naughty and nice. Santa Claus is coming to town. He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good so be good for goodness sake. You better watch out, you better not cry, better not pout, I'm telling you why: Santa Claus is coming to town!

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

SOPRANO

April Amante Tamara Bevard Emma-Grace Dunbar Claire Fedoruk Harriet Fraser Hilary Fraser-Thomson Alannah Garnier **Colleen Graves** Kelci Hahn Ayana Haviv Marie Hodgson Karen Hogle Brown Virenia Lind Amy Caldwell Mascio Deborah Mayhan Caroline McKenzie Jennifer Paz Beth Peregrine Holly Sedillos Carrah Stamatakis Courtney Taylor Rebecca Tomlinson Suzanne Waters Elyse Willis Sunjoo Yeo Andrea Zomorodian

ALTO Elizabeth Anderson Garineh Avakian Lesili Beard Rose Beattie Sarah Beaty Aleta Braxton Monika Bruckner Janelle DeStefano Amy Fogerson **Michele Hemmings** Callista Hoffman-Campbell Shabnam Kalbasi Sharmila G. 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 Ilana Summers Kimberly Switzer Tracy Van Fleet

TENOR Matthew Brown Bradley Chapman Pablo Corá Timothy Gonzales Steven Harms Blake Howard Jon Lee Keenan Dermot Kiernan Charlie Kim Shawn Kirchner Bryan Lane Charles Lane Michael Lichtenauer JJ Lopez Sal Malaki Matthew Miles Robert Norman David Rakita Edmond Rodriguez Todd Strange Matthew Thomas Matthew Tresler

BASS

Michael Bannett Joe Bazyouros Mark Beasom Michael Blanchard Reid Bruton Tim Campbell David Castillo Kevin Dalbey Dylan Gentile Will Goldman Abdiel Gonzalez Scott Graff James Hayden David Dong-Geun Kim Luc Kleiner David Kress Edward Levy Matthew Lewis Ben Lin Brett McDermid Steve Pence Jim Raycroft Doug Shabe Mark Edward Smith David Williams Shuo Zhai

The singers of the Los Angeles Master Chorale are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, Elyse Willis, AGMA Delegate.

ERIC WHITACRE

SWAN FAMILY ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE



Grammy-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre is one of the most popular musicians of our time. His concert music has been performed throughout the world by millions of amateur and professional musicians, while his ground-breaking Virtual Choirs have united singers from over 110 different countries. A graduate of The Juilliard School, Whitacre is the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Swan Family Artist-in-Residence, and was composer in residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University.

As conductor of the Eric Whitacre Singers, he has released several chart-topping albums, including 2010's bestselling *Light and Gold*. A sought-after guest conductor, Whitacre has conducted choral and instrumental concerts around the globe, including sold-out concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra. In addition to several collaborations with legendary Hollywood composer Hans Zimmer, he has worked with British pop icons Laura Mvula, Imogen Heap, and Annie Lennox. A charismatic speaker, Eric has given keynote addresses for many Fortune 500 companies and global institutions, including Apple, Google, the World Economic Forum in Davos, the United Nations Speaker's Programme, and two mainstage TED talks.

GUEST ARTISTS

LAURENCE SERVAES DELLA



The Belgian soprano Laurence Servaes has premiered several operas and new performed her concert repertoire all over Europe. She sang the role of the Nurse in the contemporary opera Shell Shock by Nicholas Lens at the Philharmonie de Paris and premiered Juliette in Paternel by Frank Nuyts. She sang Pamina in Mozart's Die Zauberflöte, Aréthuse

in Charpentier's *Actéon*, Damigella in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and Romy Schneider in *Elle est moi und töte mich* by Joris Blanckaert.

She has been the soloist in C.P.E. Bach's *Magnificat* with the NFM Leopoldinum Orkiestry Kameralnej at the Berliner Philharmonie; *Christus-Oratorium* (J.S. Bach) with Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin; Mozart's *Davide Penitente* with Sigiswald Kuijken; J.S. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Lautten Companey; Mozart arias with the European Philharmonia; J.S. Bach's *St. John Passion* with Aspetti Musicali; Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*; and Telemann's *St. Luke Passion* with Michael Scheck. She has also been soloist on a concert series with several of J.S. Bach's works conducted by Paul Agnew.

DAVID CASTILLO



New Orleans native David Castillo joined the Los Angeles Master Chorale in 2013 and served as a soloist in the world premiere of Shawn Kirchner's *Songs of Ascent*, the *Messiah* Sing-Along, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and *Alexander's Feast*. As a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Castillo performed in Bernstein's *Mass* with Gustavo Dudamel, John Cage's *Europeras 1 & 2*, and in the

world premieres of Louis Andriessen's *Theatre of the World and War of the Worlds*.

An inaugural company member of The Industry, Castillo was featured in *Hopscotch, Bonnie and Clyde, Galileo, and Nimbus*. He joined Jay Carlon for his L.A. Dance Project residency as co-producer and narrator of FLEX. With William Nedved and *Project Runway* winner Kentaro Kameyama, Castillo served as producer and as Lee "Alexander" McQueen in *The Passion of McQueen,* and as Perseus in *Medusa* at the Getty Villa with Deaf West Theatre. As a producer, David created a multi-sensory production of *Seven Deadly Sins*.

SUZANNA GUZMAN SHEILA



Suzanna Guzmán, mezzo-soprano and television host, is an original Associate Artist of LA Opera, performing roles in over 400 performances. She's appeared as soloist around the world, including the Metropolitan, Washington National, and Houston Grand operas, and Opera de Genève, to name a few. Known for the title role in Bizet's *Carmen*, she's a 2019–20 company member of The Industry,

has received a Grammy nomination for her collaboration with Southwest Chamber Music and an Emmy nomination for hosting the 59th Los Angeles County Holiday Celebration. Her awards include Honorary Doctor of Music from Occidental College, Lifetime Achievement Award from Nederlander Association, Mentor of the Year Award from the Hispanic Scholarship Foundation, and the 2017 Presidents Award from the Neighborhood Music School. Upcoming engagements include the Southern California premiere of *Bless me, Ultima*; Doña Rosa in Daniél Catán's *II Postino* with Santa Barbara Opera; and the Mother Abbess in *Sound of Music*. She will perform the title role for the 17th time in 2019 of Dios Inantzin in *La Virgen de Tepeyac* with Latino Theatre. On December 24, she hosts the 60th Annual Los Angeles County Holiday Celebration on PBS.

APRIL AMANTE MRS. SINCLAIR



A native of Southern California, soprano April Amante is a versatile professional singer, regularly performing solo ensemble and repertoire ranging from early music to contemporary musical theater. She was most recently the soprano soloist for the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Messiah Sing-Along at Walt Disney Concert Hall in December 2018. She has performed and covered mainstage

roles with Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Opera San Luis Obispo, Pacific Opera Project, and the Los Angeles Opera Outreach Program. Favorite roles performed include Laurey (*Oklahoma*), Johanna (*Sweeney Todd*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Frasquita (*Carmen*), and Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*).

In addition to her performance credits, Amante was a semi-finalist in the 2019 Loren Zachary Opera Competition, the 2018 Lyra New York Mozart Vocal Competition (Opera Category), the 2018 James Toland Vocal Arts Competition, and in the 29th International Nuits Lyriques de Marmande Competition in Marmande, France. April received a Bachelor of Music magna cum laude in Vocal Performance from California State University-Northridge and a Master of Music from the University of Arizona. She currently studies with Isabel Bayrakdarian.

MARK EDWARD SMITH SHOPKEEPER



Mark Edward Smith is living his dream working as an actor and singer in Los Angeles. He has worked in television, film, and on concert stages throughout North America and Europe. Bass with the Los Angeles Master Chorale for 14 seasons, he has sung on dozens of blockbuster film scores, including La La Land, Minions, Star Wars: The Last Jedi, and Jumanji. He is a

versatile artist who has recorded or performed live with Sting, Sheryl Crow, Herbie Hancock, Vinx, Vonda Shepard, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic. As an actor, he's been in over eight dozen national television commercials, and top-rated dramas and comedies, from *Everybody Loves Raymond* to *Ray Donovan*. Mark is a Kansas City native who received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Stephens College. Prior to that, he attended the University of Missouri to study viola and voice on scholarship. When his schedule permits, he loves to play violin or viola with the Santa Monica Symphony.

LISA KABLE-BLANCHARD DIRECTOR



Lisa is delighted to make her directing debut with the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Lisa has been a member of the Production Staff at the LA Opera since 2001, working on over 70 productions as a Stage Manager, and most recently Assistant Director. Highlights include work on John Doyle's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, Achim Freyer's *Ring Cycle*, Barry Kosky's *La Boheme* and

Magic Flute, and Phelim McDermott's *Akhnaten*. For 10 years, she has enjoyed collaborating with opera professionals and community members on LA Opera Connects' productions at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels, including two world premiere operas. Lisa holds a Master of Music from USC and a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Physics from Williams College. Lisa lives in Eagle Rock with her husband and two sons. She wishes to thank Eric Whitacre and Grant Gershon for the opportunity to bring Gift of the Magi to life here at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, and punctuate 2019 with love and joy.

LISA EDWARDS PIANO

> Lisa Edwards is a widely sought-after pianist, keyboard collaborator, and teacher based in Los Angeles. She is currently beginning her 17th season as pianist and music assistant at the Los Angeles Master Chorale under the direction of Grant Gershon. Positions held include faculty artist at ldyllwild Summer Arts, pianist for Vox Femina in Los Angeles, organistpianist at San Marino Community

Church, organist-pianist at Stephen S. Wise Temple, and pianist at Congregation Kol Ami in West Hollywood. She is in demand as a guest artist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and other professional area orchestras and choruses. Edwards can be heard on two Nonesuch recordings of Steve Reich's music: (You Are) Variations and Daniel Variations. Obtaining her Master of Music degree in Keyboard Collaborative Arts at the University of Southern California, she graduated with honors, and earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance at the University of North Texas.

JOHN WEST ORGAN



International performing artist John West received his Master of Music with Honors from the New England Conservatory of Music. His initial organ studies began at the age of 13 under the tutelage of Richard Purvis at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

West has toured extensively throughout the world with performances in the U.S.S.R., the far northern reaches of

Alaska and Canada, South America, and throughout the United States, including Puerto Rico. His performance credits include solo appearances with the New York Philharmonic and the Pasadena Symphony. With the American Guild of Organists he has been a featured artist of the Region IX Convention and the 2004 National Convention.

In the fall of 1995, West performed as a featured vocalist in New York with Patti LuPone on Broadway. In February 2000, he was the solo featured artist for the longest running radio show for the organ, *Pipedreams* with Michael Barone. West has two solo organ compact discs, *Rev'd Up Organ!* and *The Roar of The Furies & The Sounds of Sirens*.

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019 AT 7 PM WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

GRANT GERSHON Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE ORCHESTRA

GRANT GERSHON, conductor SUZANNE WATERS, soprano ADRIANA MANFREDI, mezzo-soprano

O Magnum Mysterium......Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611) Gaude Maria.......William Byrd (c. 1543–1623) The Faire Starre (West Coast Premiere)Nico Muhly (b. 1981) Part One : Text, "The Rapture" by Thomas Traherne

Part Two: Text, "John of Grimestone" by Anon.; modern translation by Eleanor Parker Ilana Summers, mezzo-soprano; Adam Faruqi, tenor; Luc Kleiner, baritone

Part Three: Text, "On the Blessed Virgin's Bashfulnesse" by Richard Crashaw

INTERMISSION

O Magnum Mysterium Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)
Threads of Joy
In the Bleak MidwinterGustav Holst (1874–1934) arr. Jasper Randall (b. 1974)
Venite, AdoremusDan Forrest (b. 1978) Andrea Zomorodian, soprano; Adrien Redford, baritone
O Magnum Mysterium (b. 1957)
Glorious, Glorious
Sweet Was the Song
O Magnum Mysterium (b. 1943)

This program is made possible with generous support from the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, and Laney and Tom Techentin, Marjorie Lindbeck, Weta and Allen Mathies, and Deborah F. Rutter in honor of Terry Knowles and Marshall Rutter.

MYSTERIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS: CELEBRATING A CONTEMPORARY CLASSIC AND NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE NATIVITY

by Thomas May

The chant text O Magnum Mysterium was compiled more than a thousand years ago. This prayer-poem, which is associated with the Matins for Christmas Day, has inspired an array of composers across the centuries from both inside and outside the Church.

One of the most astonishing chapters in that rich history is directly connected to the Los Angeles Master Chorale—and to a composer who was just at the beginning his residency with the ensemble when the singers first unveiled his *O Magnum Mysterium* a quarter century ago. Morten Lauridsen wrote his setting of this text with the aim of conveying "a transforming spiritual experience," as he has described it. The results also helped transform the landscape of contemporary choral music.

The words of O Magnum Mysterium praise the Virgin Mary and her role as a humble human being who gives birth to Jesus, the incarnation of the divine. Yet, what Lauridsen creates is a piece that transcends boundaries of religious belief and resonates "deeply into the core of the listener," to quote the composer again. The piece has proved itself to be relevant to all seasons.

Tonight's program pays tribute to this landmark of the Master Chorale's repertoire by placing it in a context alongside a diversity of other contemporary composers. An additional focus of the concert is the West Coast premiere of Nico Muhly's cantata *The Faire Starre*. Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, explains that Mary's role in the nativity story emerged as a unifying theme when he decided to juxtapose these works from two different generations of composers at work today. He adds: "Both of these pieces also owe a debt to music of the Renaissance," a connection that is explored by the two motets that open the program.

In 1572, Tomás Luis de Victoria (c. 1548–1611) published his first book of motets. It included what has become one of the canonical settings of *O Magnum Mysterium*. A leading figure of sacred music in his native Spain during the Counter-Reformation, Victoria wrote this piece early in his career, when he was a singer and organist in Rome. It's even possible that he studied with Palestrina, the Renaissance master who dominated Roman sacred music at the time. The Spaniard's brief four-part setting of the prayer—one of his most treasured motets, which he later used as the basis for a mass—has inspired many successors, including Lauridsen.

Victoria himself became an early adapter of Palestrina's style of polyphony, as heard in the stirring complexity he builds with such assurance after beginning with the simplest of gestures (the falling and rising interval of a bare fifth, sung at the outset by the sopranos). The concluding Alleluia gains momentum from the sudden shift to triple meter. The violent cycles of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation harbored special dangers for artists. Though a Catholic in the England of the Tudor Reformation, William Byrd (c. 1540–1623), Victoria's contemporary, became a key architect of the English choral style. His career embodies how historical, biographical, and aesthetic factors are woven together to form an intricate polyphony of influences.

Byrd managed to stay in favor with Elizabeth I, even serving as a member of the Chapel Royal, but he led a dangerously doublesided life as a composer. While contributing music for the Anglican liturgy and even patriotic pieces, he risked denunciation for treason.

Gaude Maria (*Rejoice Mary*) dates from later in his career, when Byrd had retired from the court, but not from musical-political statements of protest. This motet for five voices reflects his intense yet serenely poised devotion. It appeared in 1605 in the first volume of the *Gradualia*, his compendium of music intended for important Catholic feast days. But in the wake of renewed anti-Catholic fervor triggered by the failed Gunpowder Plot against Parliament that year, the mere fact of owning a copy could lead to arrest. *Gaude Maria* reflects on Mary's joy at fulfilling the role announced to her by the archangel Gabriel.

As with Lauridsen, the Master Chorale has commissioned and recorded music by Nico Muhly. *The Faire Starre* is a cocommission with the New York City-based Choir of Trinity Wall Street and Minneapolis's VocalEssence, which gave the world premiere on December 1st of last year.

Muhly sang in an Episcopalian boys' choir, absorbing the sound world of the great Anglican choral tradition as a second language. It's one of several threads he has woven into a refreshingly original and arresting voice. These also include what he learned from his mentorship by Philip Glass, and his studies with John Corigliano and the late Christopher Rouse.

Muhly was the youngest composer in the Metropolitan Opera's history to be commissioned by the company. His particular gift for vocal and choral music comes to the fore in *The Faire Starre*, a cantata that retells the nativity story from unexpected musical and textual perspectives. Muhly assembled his libretto from two 17th-century English metaphysical poets as well as from a longer text compiled by the 14th-century Franciscan friar known as John of Grimeston.

Cast in three parts and scored for four-part choir and a chamber ensemble of strings, oboes, piano, and percussion, *The Faire Starre* is framed by two shorter poems: "The Rapture" by Thomas Traherne, a devout Angelican poet, and Richard Crashaw's "On the Blessed Virgins Bashfulnesse." Like an altarpiece triptych, Parts I and III are significantly smaller in scale than the large middle panel, the arresting lullaby compiled by Grimestone in 1372.

Part I is "fiery and bright and dissolves into abstraction," Muhly writes. He refers to the medievalist Eleanor Parker's observation that the central lullaby is strange because "it is framed by an unnamed and lonely narrator, who has a vision of a mother and her child, who are never named. We slowly learn that this is Mary and Jesus, and he asks her to sing him a lullaby. In doing so, she narrates realistically her terrifying encounter with Gabriel, and the night of Christ's birth."

Muhly explains: "There is a false ending here, a set of three chords repeated in a wild, romantic way. At that point, the lullaby flips around, and Jesus then foretells his life, from teaching in the temple to crucifixion and resurrection. The refrain, 'lullay, lullay, la, lullay, my dere moder, lullay,' which appears often in my setting, repeats the text in the traditional fashion, but the melody itself bends as the prophecy gets darker, and then, at the end, releases into a pure and pastoral F major lilting version."

The short Part III "begins with wordless pulses from the chorus, and an insect-like collection of gestures in the winds and strings. The text implies that mankind used to look towards the heavens, but that now, Mary shows us that heaven is to be found in her downwards glance towards the child on her lap. The ecstatic, romantic chords from Part II appear, but here fragmented and dissolving back into steady pulses."

Representing another contemporary perspective on OMagnumMysterium is the setting that the American composer Jennifer Higdon made in 2002. Higdon, who won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for her Violin Concerto, sets the Marian prayer for four-part choir, a pair of flutes, and percussion (playing chimes and two crystal glasses tuned to the same notes that open Victoria's setting).

Beginning with a meditation on the wonder-filled first syllable ("O"), Higdon first sets the original Latin text, which alludes to images from medieval tradition (the role of animals as innocent bystanders to Jesus' humble birth) as well as from Luke's gospel account (the section beginning "Beata Virgo"). She then sets the entire text in English, switching at the beginning of this section from the glasses to chimes.

Last March, the Master Chorale featured *How to Go On* by Dale Trumbore, a former student of Morten Lauridsen at the University of Southern California. Already widely performed around the country, *How to Go On* is what Trumbore has called her "secular requiem" and sets texts by three living American poets on themes of loss and mortality. One of the poets, Laura Foley, authored the 2006 collection *Syringa*, from which Trumbore chose the poem she sets in *Threads of Joy* (composed for the 2016-17 Hopkins High School Choir Program).

Of her four-part a cappella piece, Trumbore writes: "I've always loved when songs about happiness are set in a minor key (think 'Feeling Good' by Nina Simone); the harmonic language acknowledges that we can't have joy without recognizing its opposite. *Threads of Joy* has similar undertones. Not just an exultation of happiness, it recognizes how we emerge from darkness and pain back into light, and the music captures this duality in ever-shifting, prismatic harmonies."

In Glorious, Glorious, Trumbore turns to that most iconic of yuletide sources, Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol,

published in 1843. *A Christmas Carol* and itself the font of so much of the imagery that has been coopted by the modern celebration of Christmas, but in Dickens's narrative, gift-giving is intended to have spiritual significance.

Also set for four-part a cappella mixed choir, Trumbore's 2015 piece uses excerpts from the final scene of Dickens's story: chiming bells awaken Ebenezer Scrooge from his shattering encounters with the three ghosts, and he determines from that point forward to celebrate the genuine meaning of Christmas. Trumbore remarks that the message behind this story is timeless: "resolve to honor the past, present, and future by living a joyful, compassionate life every day."

"A Christmas Carol" was the original title of the Christina Rossetti poem we know from holiday time as *In the Bleak Midwinter*, published in 1872. The poem, so haunting yet difficult to set to congregational music on account of its metrical shifts, inspired Gustav Holst (1874–1934) to transform it into a modern Christmas carol.

We hear another transformation on this concert: Jasper Randall's contemporary adaption of the original version. In Randall's arrangement for mixed chorus, which was premiered in 2016 by the Los Robles Master Chorale, a brief prelude of lulling open fifths forms a backdrop for the familiar tune (sung by a solo soprano). The vocal texture gradually expands to include the male voices.

A prominent figure among the younger generation of choral composers, Dan Forrest credits Alice Parker for teaching him "to value lines above all else" and "to help them go where they really want to go." In *Venite, Adoremus*, the lines inevitably find their way to the glorious emergence of the traditional tune at the climax of Forrest's original setting from 2010. Attributions range widely both for the text (in its Latin and English versions) and for the hymn tune of this carol. Using a four-part a cappella choir, Forrest carefully weaves a choral texture from little pieces of the original tune, evoking motet style.

Still another viewpoint on *O Magnum Mysterium* is presented by the composer and conductor César Alejandro Carrillo. Born in 1957 in Caracas, Carrillo has pursued a career focused on choral music. Gershon explains that he was attracted to Carrillo's four-part setting (published in 2000) in particular because of his "clean, jazz-influenced harmonies" and fluent approach to writing for the voice. "He knows how to make exactly the right overtones pop out of the harmonic language."

A tenor with the Master Chorale since 2008, native Californian Matthew Brown also composes, arranges, and teaches, and he studied with Lauridsen at the University of Southern California. *Sweet Was the Song*, which sets an anonymous text (dated c. 1590), won a carol-writing contest conducted by VocalEssence. Brown's unusual scoring pairs four-part mixed choir with celeste and shows his fascination with medieval music, especially "the simplicity and earnestness" of its folk expression.

The curious blend of these archaic traits with the celeste (invented in the late 1880s) is intended, Brown notes, to evoke "the atmosphere of mystery that surrounds the nativity, and to craft a tune that could have been sung, perhaps, in a rural street sometime in the 1590s, or even two millennia ago."

In 1994, when Master Chorale co-founder Marshall Rutter asked Morten Lauridsen to write a piece for the upcoming Christmas concert, the respected but not yet widely known composer agreed at once. He immediately sensed that the two-dozen-word text of O Magnum Mysterium was what he wanted to set.

The result turned out to have deeply personal connections. Rutter had commissioned O Magnum Mysterium as a gift for his wife, the Master Chorale's former president and CEO Terry Knowles, since the couple would be celebrating their second wedding anniversary. And for the ensemble's music director at the time, the late Paul Salamunovich, the new piece offered an extraordinary contemporary counterpart to Victoria's motet. He turned to the audience just before conducting the world premiere 25 years ago and predicted that they were about to experience a contemporary rival to Victoria's setting. That prediction has proved true.

The wild success of *O Magnum Mysterium* forever changed Lauridsen's own life, suddenly creating a demand for his music that shows no signs of abating. The sheet music holds the distinction of being the highest-selling item in the history of Theodore Presser, which distributes the work. It has been recorded many times, including, most recently, by the Chamber Choir of Europe for the 2018 anthology *Light Eternal*, Lauridsen's first release on Deutsche Grammophon.

The composer retired from his USC position this past summer and has now relocated permanently to his beloved home in the Pacific Northwest, where he composed *O Magnum Mysterium*. Lauridsen tells of the unending letters he receives to this day, including those from listeners who've just discovered him and composers eager to learn the secret behind this music.

Lauridsen has compared his musical vision to what he experienced with the 1633 painting *Still Life with Lemons, Oranges, and a Rose* by the so-called Spanish Caravaggio, Francisco de Zurbarán. The painting, he writes, "projects an aura of mystery, powerful in its unadorned simplicity, its mystical quality creating an atmosphere of deep contemplation."

Lauridsen set out to achieve the same by using a musical vocabulary rooted in Gregorian chant, "with a constant metric flow and ebb," and by emulating "the constant purity of sacred music found in High Renaissance polyphony" through a simple, direct harmonic language. His homage to masters of the past is no pastiche or pallid imitation but a reminder, needed now more urgently than ever, of a beauty we had forgotten can still exist.

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 Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, and Jean Davidson, President & CEO. 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.

The Master Chorale performs 13 concerts during its 2019-20 season as a resident company of Walt Disney Concert Hall. Performances include Bruckner's Mass No. 3 in F Minor and Osvaldo Golijov's *Oceana*, Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, and Fauré's Requiem. Also on the season are world premieres of music by Gabriel Kahane and Derrick Spiva, and music by Caroline Shaw, Nilo Alcala, Shawn Kirchner, and Diana Syrse as part of a tribute concert to choral legend Alice Parker; the West Coast premiere of Nico Muhly's *The Faire Starre*, co-commissioned by the Master Chorale; music by Dale Trumbore, Morten Lauridsen, and Matthew Brown; and the world premiere of a new score by Emmy Award winner Jeff Beal (*House of Cards*) for the classic 1927 film *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*, directed by F.W. Murnau. Christmas offerings include annual Festival of Carols and *Messiah* performances.

The Los Angeles Master Chorale has performed in more than 500 concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at both Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl, and has toured with the orchestra to Europe and throughout the United States.

Since the 2018–19 season, the Master Chorale has been touring its production of *Lagrime di San Pietro*, directed by Peter Sellars, with performances in London and Paris, and at the Salzburg Festival.

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 Award-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 *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 also presents an annual High School Choir Festival, which brings teenagers from around the Southland to perform in Disney Hall. In May 2019, the High School Choir Festival celebrated 30 years as one of the longest running and wide reaching arts education programs in Southern California. 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 livestreamed online.

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE AND ORCHESTRA

SOPRANO

Tamara Bevard Christina Bristow Emma-Grace Dunbar Claire Fedoruk Harriet Fraser Alannah Garnier Kelci Hahn Karen Hogle Brown Deborah Mayhan Caroline McKenzie Bethanie Peregrine Holly Sedillos Suzanne Waters Elyse Willis Andrea Zomorodian

VIOLINS Roger Wilkie *Concertmaster* Joel Pargman *Associate Concertmaster*

VIOLA Shawn Mann Principal

CELLO Cecilia Tsan Principal

ALTO

Garineh Avakian Janelle DeStefano Amy Fogerson **Michele Hemmings** Sarah Lynch Adriana Manfredi Cynthia Marty Margaurite Mathis-Clark Julia Metzler Laura Smith Roethe Jessie Shulman Leslie Inman Sobol Nike St. Clair Ilana Summers Kimberly Switzer Tracy Van Fleet

TENOR Matthew Brown Bradley Chapman Adam Faruqi **Tim Gonzales** Steven Harms Dermot Kiernan Charlie Kim Charles Lane Michael Lichtenauer JJ Lopez Sal Malaki Anthony Ray Todd Strange Matthew Thomas Matthew Tresler

Mark Beasom Reid Bruton Kevin Dalbey Dylan Gentile Will Goldman Scott Graff James Hayden Luc Kleiner Chung Uk Lee Edward Levy Ban Lin

BASS

Ben Lin Brett McDermid Adrien Redford Jim Raycroft Mark Edward Smith Shuo Zhai

FLUTES Geri Rotter *Principal* Sarah Weisz

OBOES Leslie Reed *Principal* Michele Forrest PIANO/CELESTE Lisa Edwards *Principal*

PERCUSSION Theresa Dimond *Principαl*

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER Brady Steel

LIBRARIAN KT Somero Mark Fugina

The singers of the Los Angeles Master Chorale are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-ClO, 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 beginning his 19th 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 in programs encompassing choral music from the earliest writings and pillars of the repertoire through to contemporary compositions. 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 Chinary Ung, among many others.

During the Master Chorale's 2019-20 season, Gershon leads performances of Bruckner's Mass No. 3 in F Minor and Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, the West Coast premiere of Nico Muhly's *The Faire Starre*, the world premiere of a new soundtrack to the landmark film *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* by Jeff Beal, and music by Gabriel Kahane, Caroline Shaw, and Dale Trumbore. Gershon will also conduct the 2020 High School Choir Festival performances with close to 1,000 students in Disney Hall, providing professional guidance to the next generation of choir singers.

In July 2019, Gershon and the Master Chorale opened the famed Salzburg Festival with *Lagrime di San Pietro*, directed by Peter Sellars, which toured Europe and the U.S. throughout

the 2018–19 season. The performances in Salzburg received standing ovations and rave reviews from such outlets as the *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, which called *Lagrime* "painfully beautiful" (*Schmerzliche schön*). In his review of the premiere of *Lagrime*, Mark Swed of the *Los Angeles Times* noted that the production "is a major accomplishment for the Master Chorale, which sang and acted brilliantly. It is also a major accomplishment for music history."

Gershon is the Resident Conductor of LA Opera, and in this capacity he conducted the West Coast premiere of Philip Glass's Satyagraha in November 2018. He made his acclaimed debut with the company with La Traviata in 2009 and has subsequently conducted II Postino, Madame Butterfly, Carmen, Florencia en el Amazonas, Wonderful Town, The Tales of Hoffmann, and The Pearl Fishers. In 2017, he made his San Francisco Opera debut conducting the world premiere of John Adams's Girls of the Golden West directed by Peter Sellars, who also wrote the libretto, and made his Dutch National Opera debut with the same opera in March 2019. Gershon and Adams have an enduring friendship and professional relationship that began 27 years ago in Los Angeles when Gershon played keyboards in the pit for Nixon in China at LA Opera. Since then, Gershon has led the world premiere performances of Adams's theater piece I Was Looking At The Ceiling And Then I Saw The Sky, premiered his two-piano piece Hallelujah Junction (with Gloria Cheng), and conducted performances of Harmonium, The Gospel According to the Other Mary, El Niño, The Chairman Dances, and choruses from The Death of Klinghoffer.

In New York, Gershon has appeared at Carnegie Hall and at historic Trinity Wall Street, and has performed on the Great Performers series at Lincoln Center and the Making Music series

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

at Zankel Hall. Other major appearances include performances at the Ravinia, Aspen, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Salzburg, and Vienna festivals, the South American premiere of the LA Opera's production of *II Postino* in Chile, and performances with the Baltimore Symphony and the Coro e Orchestra Del Teatro Regio Di Torino in Turin, Italy. He has worked closely with numerous conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, James Conlon, Gustavo Dudamel, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Simon Rattle, and his mentor, Esa-Pekka Salonen.

His discography includes the Grammy Award-nominated recordings of *Sweeney Todd* (New York Philharmonic Special Editions) and Ligeti's *Grand Macabre* (Sony Classical); six commercial CDs with the Master Chorale, including *Glass*- Salonen (RCM), You Are (Variations) (Nonesuch), Daniel Variations (Nonesuch), A Good Understanding (Decca), Miserere (Decca), and the national anthems (Cantaloupe Music); and two live-performance albums, the Master Chorale's 50th Season Celebration recording and Festival of Carols. He has also led the Master Chorale in performances for several major motion pictures soundtracks, including, at the request of John Williams, Star Wars: The Last Jedi.

Gershon was named Outstanding Alumnus of the USC 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

SOPRANO



Suzanne Waters is known for her versatility in live performance and the recording studio. Previous Los Angeles Master Chorale solo performances include Eric Whitacre's *Hurt, Cloudburst,* and *Lux Aurumque,* and Shawn Kirchner's *Songs of Ascent.* Other guest artist appearances include Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Five Images After Sappho* and William Schuman's *In Sweet Music* with the

distinguished Jacaranda concert series. Waters is also a featured soloist on many film scores, including Lady and the Tramp (2019), Dark Phoenix, Men in Black: International, A Dog's Journey, Lego Movie 2, Angry Birds 2, Creed 2, The Nun, Wrinkle in Time, Downsizing, Transformers: The Last Knight, and Despicable Me 3, as well as several television shows, including Watchmen, The Simpsons, Pennyworth, The Tick, S.W.A.T., and Gotham. Additional solos can be heard on a Pixar short film, Lamp Life, a viral trailer for Magic: the Gathering Arena, and Leslie Odom, Jr.'s 2019 single "Under Pressure."

ADRIANA MANFREDI MEZZO-SOPRANO



Adriana Manfredi, who studied at Oberlin Conservatory and California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), deeply enjoys her varied and adventurous musical life. She has performed recently Berg's *Lyric Suite* (Diotima Quartet, Jacaranda Music), appeared at the Hear Now and Ravinia festivals, and been featured on the album *the national anthems* with David Lang, the Calder Quartet, and the Los

Angeles Master Chorale. In 2018–19, she joined the international tour of *Lagrime di San Pietro* (*The Tears of St. Peter*) with the Master Chorale. Her voice can be heard on numerous film soundtracks, including *Frozen, Wreck-It Ralph, Big Hero* 6, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, and *Minions*. She maintains a private teaching studio in Long Beach. Manfredi is a dedicated rhythm tap dancer, early childhood music educator, mother to two sons, and producer of community music gatherings.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019 AT 7:30 PM WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

> GRANT GERSHON Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE ORCHESTRA AUDIENCE AS CHOIR

GRANT GERSHON, conductor JERRY KOHL, guest conductor ANDREA ZOMORODIAN, soprano SHABNAM KALBASI, mezzo-soprano JON LEE KEENAN, tenor ABDIEL GONZALEZ, baritone

MESSIAH GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

Part the First

1. Sinfonia Overture
2. Recitative (Mr. Keenan)
3. Aria (Mr. Keenan)
4. Chorus
5. Recitative (Mr. Gonzalez) Thus saith the Lord
6. Aria (Mr. Gonzalez)But who may abide
7. Chorus
8. Recitative (Ms. Kalbasi) Behold, a virgin shall conceive
9. Aria/Chorus (Ms. Kalbasi) O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
12. Chorus
13. Pifa Pastoral Symphony
14. Recitative (Ms. Zomorodian)There were shepherds abiding in the field
Recitative (Ms. Zomorodian)
15. Recitative (Ms. Zomorodian) And the angel said unto them
16. Recitative (Ms. Zomorodian)And suddenly, there was with the angel
17. Chorus Glory to God in the highest
18. Aria (Ms. Zomorodian) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
19. Recitative (Ms. Kalbasi) Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened

MESSIAH SING-ALONG

20. Aria (Ms. Kalbasi)	He shall feed his flock
Aria (Ms. Zomorodian)	Come unto Him
21. Chorus	His yoke is easy

INTERMISSION

Part the Second

22. Chorus	Behold the Lamb of God
23. Aria (Ms. Kalbasi)	He was despised
24. Chorus	Surely He hath borne our griefs
25. Chorus	And with His stripes
26. Chorus	All we like sheep
27. Recitative (Mr. Keenan)	All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn
28. Chorus	He trusted in God
42. Recitative (Mr. Keenan)	He that dwelleth in heaven
43. Aria (Mr. Keenan)	Thou shalt break them
44. Chorus	Hallelujah

Part the Third

I know that my Redeemer liveth
Since by man came death
By man came also
For as in Adam all die
Even so in Christ
Behold, I tell you a mystery
The trumpet shall sound
Worthy is the Lamb
Amen

JOIN US FOR POST-CONCERT CAROLING IN BP HALL

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE AND ORCHESTRA

S O P R A N O Karen Hogle Brown Kelci Hahn Ayana Haviv Holly Sedillos Elyse Willis ALTO Garineh Avakian Aleta Braxton Michele Hemmings Kimberly Switzer Tracy Van Fleet T E N O R Bradley Chapman Steven Harms Charlie Kim Charles Lane Sal Malaki

BASS Kevin Dalbey Dylan Gentile Luc Kleiner Ben Lin Adrien Redford

VIOLINS I Joel Pargman, *Concertmaster* Carrie Kennedy *Associate Concertmaster* Margaret Wooten *Assistant Concertmaster* Leslie Katz Liliana Filipovic Nicole Bush

VIOLINS II

Elizabeth Hedman Principal Cynthia Moussas Associate Principal Linda Stone Steve Scharf Anna Kostyuchek Mui Yee Chu VIOLAS Shawn Mann *Principal* Andrew Picken *Associate Principal* Brett Banducci Diana Wade

CELLOS Dane Little *Principal* Delores Bing Nadine Hall Margaret Edmondson

BASSES Don Ferrone, *Principal* Peter Doubrovsky OBOES Leslie Reed *Principal* Joseph Stone

BASSOON Wiliam May Principal

TRUMPETS Ryan Darke *Principαl* Steve O'Connor

TIMPANI Theresa Dimond *Principal* HARPSICHORD Lisa Edwards *Principal*

ORGAN William Beck Principal

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER Brady Steel

LIBRARIAN Mark Fugina 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.

GUEST ARTISTS

ANDREA ZOMORODIAN SOPRANO



Recent solo engagements: Purcell's *King Arthur* with Bach Collegium San Diego; Mozart's Requiem, *Exsultate*, *Jubilate* and "Coronation" Mass, Bach Cantatas Nos. 166, 153, 202, 61, 82a, Schubert, and Zemlinsky at Sunset ChamberFest; Beethoven's Mass in C Major, Bach's *Magnificat* and *St. John Passion*, and Vivaldi *Gloria*, all with Musica Angelica and Pacific Chorale; Handel's *Ode for St.*

Cecilia's Day, Carissimi's *Jephte*, Haydn's "Lord Nelson" Mass, Vaughan Williams's Mass in G Minor, Brahms's Requiem, and Bach's Mass in B Minor.

Recent highlights: opening the 2019 Salzburg Festival with the Los Angeles Master Chorale's *Lagrime di San Pietro*, staged by Peter Sellars; a program of Bach and Handel arias with Con Gioia Early Music Ensemble; solo debut (Peri Quartet) in Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and music by Hildegard, "sung with blinding luminosity" (*Los Angeles Times*).

Upcoming engagements: *Messiah* with Long Beach Camerata, *La Serva Padrona* with San Diego Baroque and the continued world tour of *Lagrime di San Pietro*.

SHABNAM KALBASI MEZZO-SOPRANO



In 2018, Kalbasi was the alto soloist for *Messiah* under Grant Gershon with the Los Angeles Master Chorale at Walt Disney Concert Hall and was a soloist for the West Coast premiere of Reena Esmail's *This Love Between Us: Prayers for Unity*. Kalbasi has also performed solos in *Israel in Egypt* and in Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Ellen Reid's world premiere of *Dreams of a New World*.

Kalbasi's voice has been recognized by the George London Foundation, Metropolitan Opera's National Council Auditions, Palm Springs Opera Guild, and Vocal Arts D.C. Competition. She has performed at The Broad Stage, Venture Opera, Opera Memphis, and at the Kennedy Center. Kalbasi sang Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* with Prelude to Performance and debuted the role of Union Organizer in the premiere of Juliet Palmer's opera *Sweat* at Brooklyn's National Sawdust.

A two-season Apprentice Artist and Canning Memorial Award recipient with Santa Fe Opera, Ms. Kalbasi sang Contessa Ceprano in *Rigoletto* and Olivia in Jennifer Higdon's Grammy Award-nominated *Cold Mountain*.



JON LEE KEENAN TENOR

> A native of Las Vegas, Jon Lee Keenan studied voice and jazz bass at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, before relocating to Southern California to pursue a career in classical singing and to study vocal arts at the USC Thornton School of Music.

> In 2007, Keenan joined the Los Angeles Master Chorale and has been featured as a soloist at Walt Disney Concert

Hall in each season since. Recent highlights include the role of Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Magnificat*.

Keenan has helped create several new exciting characters through collaborations with The Industry Los Angeles, including Clyde Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde* (Andrew McIntosh), Little Monk in Brecht's *Galileo* (Andy Akiho), and Gunner in *War of the Worlds* (Anne Gosfeld). Jon recently recorded the role of Gniphos in the Los Angeles Philharmonic's production of Lou Harrison's *Young Caesar*, released internationally in 2018 on The Industry Records.

ABDIEL GONZALEZ BARITONE



Puerto Rican Abdiel Gonzalez has been praised for his rich, lush baritone, a "forceful" voice (*Los Angeles Times*) that commands the stage. He has been a concert soloist under the batons of Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Grant Gershon, to name a few. He has traveled the world singing, most recently to Taiwan in the role of Gaston in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast.* He was the baritone soloist in

Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Boca Del Rio Orchestra in Veracruz, Mexico, for the inaugural concert of a new state-ofthe-art performing arts center. He has performed 36 operatic and Zarzuela roles and can be heard in over 30 films, including *Coco, Frozen, Wreck-It Ralph*, and *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. In December, he will be the soloist for L.A. Symphony's Christmas concert, and in May, he will sing the baritone solos in Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Santa Monica Symphony.

HANDEL'S

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2019 AT 8 PM WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

GRANT GERSHON Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE ORCHESTRA

GRANT GERSHON, conductor APRIL AMANTE, soprano CALLISTA HOFFMAN-CAMPBELL, mezzo-soprano TODD STRANGE, tenor CHUNG UK LEE, baritone

MESSIAH GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

Part the First	
01. Sinfonia	
02. Recitative (Mr. Strange)	Comfort ye my people
03. Aria (Mr. Strange)	Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
04. Chorus	And the glory of the Lord
05. Recitative (Mr. Lee)	Thus saith the Lord
06. Aria (Mr. Lee)	But who may abide
07. Chorus	And He shall purify
07a. Recitative (Ms. Hoffman-Campbell)	Behold, a virgin shall conceive
08. Aria/Chorus (Ms. Hoffman-Campbell and Chorus)	O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
09. Recitative (Mr. Lee)	. For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth
10. Aria (Mr. Lee)	The People Who Walked in Darkness
11. Chorus	For unto us a child is born
12. Pifa	Pastoral Symphony
12a. Recitative (Ms. Amante)	There were shepherds abiding in the field
13. Recitative (Ms. Amante)	And Io, the angel of the Lord
13a. Recitative (Ms. Amante)	And the angel said unto them
14. Recitative (Ms. Amante)	And suddenly, there was with the angel
15 Chorus	Glory to God in the highest
16. Recitative (Ms. Amante)	Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
16a. Recitative (Ms. Hoffman-Campbell)	\ldots Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened
17. Aria (Ms. Hoffman-Campbell)	He shall feed his flock
Aria (Ms. Amante)	Come unto Him
18. Chorus	His yoke is easy

INTERMISSION

Part the Second

Behold the Lamb of God
He was despised
Surely He hath borne our griefs
And with His stripes
All we like sheep
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn
He trusted in God
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow
He was cut out of the land of the living
Why do the nations so furiously rage together
Let us break their bonds asunder
Why do the nations so furiously rage together
Let us break their bonds asunder
He that dwelleth in heaven
Thou shalt break them
Hallelujah

Part the Third

40. Aria (Ms. Amante)	I know that my Redeemer liveth
41. Chorus	Since by man came death
42. Recitative (Mr. Lee)	Behold, I tell you a mystery
43. Aria (Mr. Lee)	The trumpet shall sound
47. Chorus	Worthy is the Lamb
Chorus	Amen

MESSIAH: HANDEL'S ATYPICAL MASTERPIECE

by Thomas May



Early in his career, the well-traveled, cosmopolitan Handel tried his hand at various forms of sacred music, including both the German Passion and the Italian oratorio. But it was to the opera stage that he directed much of his creative energy during his prime —above all to the genre of tragic opera set to Italian librettos (opera seria), with its story lines drawn from mythological or historical figures and its call for dazzling vocal display. *Messiah* actually belongs to a later period of transition, when Handel needed to reinvent himself. Despite his earlier successes writing opera for the London stage, by the late 1730s taste and fashion in his adopted country had shifted significantly. Poor box office sales, increasingly nasty competition and the elaborate sets and pricey singers that were all part of the enterprise eventually made opera an unsustainable business model.

Handel had meanwhile been experimenting with a new brand of oratorio set to English texts—an approach that was rooted to some extent in another significant source of his success in England: his choral music and anthems for British patrons. He developed the English oratorio into a thrilling substitute for opera. Although Handel still had a few more operatic projects up his sleeve, by the time he composed *Messiah* in 1741, he had ceased writing Italian operas altogether and was channeling his muse into oratorios; these he continued to produce over the next decade until blindness overtook the composer.

A handy definition of Handel's English variation on the pre-existing oratorio format appears in the preface to Samson (on which he embarked just two weeks after completing *Messiah* and which is often considered its "twin"). An oratorio, writes

Samson's librettist Newburgh Hamilton, who used Milton's poetic drama Samson Agonistes as his source, is "a musical drama, whose subject must be Scriptural, and in which the Solemnity of Church-Musick is agreeably united with the most pleasing Airs of the Stage"—a genre, in other words, that has it both ways. A sense of moral uplift is juiced along by the entertainment value of opera (but without the expense, costumes, and fussy, overpaid egos). Oratorio had an additional appeal in that it was more acceptable for emerging middle-class audiences wary of the scandal-tinged world of opera.

A CONTROVERSIAL CLASSIC

Messiah's success over the ensuing centuries caused it to eclipse Handel's other works of music drama—operas and oratorios alike—and even gave it a reputation as the quintessential English oratorio. Yet Handel and his librettist, Charles Jennens, took a risk by shaping *Messiah* as they did: in many ways it swerves away from the norm. Indeed, the oratorio initially touched off a controversy that raged for several years back in London, despite the acclaim *Messiah* received when it was first introduced to Dublin audiences at the conclusion of the 1741-42 season. (Handel had been invited to spend that year in Ireland.) The composer seems to have anticipated the resistance it would face when he brought *Messiah* to London in 1743, and so he billed the work simply as a "New Sacred Oratorio."

Messiah's method of setting actual scriptural texts and its evocation of Jesus within a secular genre that could be performed "for diversion and amusement" even triggered charges of blasphemy—although these were leveled against the secular

context of the performances rather than Handel's music itself. Thereafter, the only times Handel led *Messiah* in a non-secular space were in his last years, when he gave midday performances in the newly built chapel of the Foundling Hospital. (The fact that the composer donated proceeds from *Messiah* concerts to charitable causes added to the work's allure.) In any case, this was a short-lived cultural skirmish, and annual performances of *Messiah* during the composer's final decade became a highlight of the season. These always took place in the spring, at Eastertide. It was only after Handel's death that the association of *Messiah* with the Christmas season became firmly embedded.

MESSIAH'S STRUCTURE AND MUSIC

Charles Jennens—a wealthy patron who was nevertheless alienated from contemporary English politics—juxtaposes extracts from both the Old and New Testaments to represent the basic narrative of Christian redemption. Rather than a biographical sketch of the life of Jesus, Messiah concerns the very idea of divinity becoming manifest in human history (hence the lack of the definite article—Messiah, not "The Messiah"—in the title).

There is very little dramatic impersonation of characters: the narrative is indirect and suggestive — and, as has been often noted, downright confusing to anyone not familiar with the implied events involving the life of Jesus. Jennens divides the libretto into three acts (although he calls them "parts"), much like the organization of a Baroque opera. Part One centers around prophecy and the nativity of Jesus, ending with his miracles. This is the part of the oratorio that is most closely tied to the Christmas season. Following its evocation of hope comes a concise retelling of the Passion story of sacrifice in Part Two. Part Three concludes with the implications of Christ's redemption of humanity from the fall of Adam.

Handel was above all a man of the theater, and his operatic genius for establishing the mood to suit a given situation is everywhere apparent. Overall, his musical choices zoom in on the universal emotions that underlie each stage of the Christian redemption narrative. Whereas he typically accomplishes this in the operatic arena through a chain of richly expressive arias, *Messiah* makes use of greater structural diversity. Part One establishes a basic pattern of recitative, aria and chorus, which then allows for further variation in the other two parts. Handel moreover freely avails himself of the full spectrum of international styles, with which his experience had made him well acquainted. *Messiah* draws on an encyclopedic variety of choral textures, interspersing these with a profusion of individually characterized arias. Highly elaborate counterpoint is juxtaposed with homophonic choruses as solid as granite, while majestic French postures and soulful Italianate lyricism further enliven the score. And what an astonishing range of colors Handel's palette contains. Though the actual instrumentation is remarkably economical, Handel uses it with a characteristic genius for reinforcing the pacing of the drama. For example, in Part One he withholds the trumpets until "Glory to God" but then keeps them in the wings again until the "Hallelujah!" chorus at the end of Part Two (which refers not to the moment of Christ's resurrection, as is sometimes mistakenly thought, but to the triumph of redemption).

Handel moreover reveals his mastery of a range of psychological expression that transcends stereotypical Baroque "affects" or moods. In Part One alone, he paints the fathomless darkness of the sense of universal waiting for a savior but also includes the tranquil oasis of the instrumental "Pastoral Symphony" ("Pifa" refers to the music of shepherds) as well as the dancingly exuberant gestures of "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion." Over and over, Handel finds freshly inventive ways to add to the venerable tradition of "painting" words (and their subtexts) through music. One of the pleasures of hearing *Messiah* repeatedly is to discover subtler surprises within the familiar patterns. We immediately sense the "straying" lines of "All we like sheep"—but the same chorus also shifts from a cheerful demeanor into the minor mode to deepen the sense of pathos when the consequences of human failure are depicted.

Amid all this variety, by the end of Part Three Handel has taken us on a journey that will later become familiar—and re-secularized—in the symphonies of Beethoven and his followers: the passage from darkness to enlightenment and final victory. Of course the "Hallelujah!" chorus introduces one of the most remarkable musical challenges a composer could face, which is to avoid a sense of anti-climax in what follows. Yet that's exactly what Handel accomplishes, pressing his inspiration further in the simple, direct affirmation of "I know that my Redeemer liveth" and the soaring certainty of "The trumpet shall sound." And in the choral finale, as the voices weave their threads together in Handel's fugal setting of "Amen," this final word acquires an all-encompassing resonance—a serenely chanted, transporting "Om."

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

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GUEST ARTISTS

APRIL AMANTE SOPRANO



A native of Southern California, soprano April Amante is a versatile professional singer, regularly performing solo and ensemble repertoire ranging from early music to contemporary musical theater. She was most recently the soprano soloist for the Los Angeles Master Chorale's *Messiah* Sing-Along at Walt Disney Concert Hall in December 2018. She has performed and covered mainstage roles with

Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Opera San Luis Obispo, Pacific Opera Project, and the Los Angeles Opera Outreach Program. Favorite roles performed include Laurey (*Oklahoma*), Johanna (*Sweeney Todd*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Frasquita (*Carmen*), and Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*).

In addition to her performance credits, Amante was a semi-finalist in the 2019 Loren Zachary Opera Competition, the 2018 Lyra New York Mozart Vocal Competition (Opera Category), the 2018 James Toland Vocal Arts Competition, and in the 29th International Nuits Lyriques de Marmande Competition in Marmande, France. April received a Bachelor of Music magna cum laude in Vocal Performance from California State University-Northridge and a Master of Music from the University of Arizona. She currently studies with Isabel Bayrakdarian.

CALLISTA HOFFMAN-CAMPBELL MEZZO-SOPRANO



An accomplished soloist and choral singer, this year will mark Hoffman-Campbell's ninth season as a member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. She has most recently been touring domestically and internationally as a member of their production of *Lagrime di San Pietro*, directed by Peter Sellars. She has also sung with the Enlightenment Chamber Music Group, Horizon Group, and Golden

Bridge. Solo work includes Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach B-Minor Mass and *St. Matthew Passion* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the South Bend Symphony Orchestra. She has been a featured artist with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, singing as the alto soloist in Mozart's Requiem under the baton of Maestro Helmut Rilling, and with the Fresno Philharmonic, singing the same work. She can be heard on such films as *Big Hero* 6, *Minions*, *Creed*, *Jumanji*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, and others.



TODD STRANGE TENOR

> Lyric tenor Todd Strange is a wellrounded performing artist specializing in opera, solo concert work, musical theater, and professional choral work. Strange is currently a roster member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the LA Opera, and is a soloist with many regional opera companies and orchestras. Professional highlights include both leading and supporting roles with Long Beach Opera, New York

City Opera, Arizona Opera, Ohio Light Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Stockton Opera, and San Diego Opera. Strange has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and has been featured on various recordings with the orchestra and the Master Chorale; he can be heard performing several lead roles with Ohio Light Opera on Albany Records. Strange has sung on various film scores, including *Sing*, *Us*, *The Lion King*, *Frozen*, *Star Wars: Rogue One*, and *Minions*. Strange had the privilege of working with John Williams on *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.

CHUNG UK LEE BASS



Korean-born conductor and bassbaritone Chung Uk Lee holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition and Music Theory from Yonsei University in Seoul and a Master of Music in Choral Music from the University of Southern California. In Los Angeles, he has studied orchestra conducting with Hans Beer, voice with Bard Suverkrop, and choral music with Dr. William Dehning. During

his period of study at USC, he was awarded a full scholarship, was assistant conductor of the University Chorus, and taught choral conducting.

As a singer, Lee has precise pitch and a warm, rich voice. He sang the role of Kezal in Smetana's *Bartered Bride* with USC Opera, and Handel's *Messiah*, Kodály's *Budavári Te Deum*, two late Haydn masses, J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and Verdi's Requiem at USC. He is a member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and has sung bass solo for Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and Fauré's Requiem.

He is currently the music director of the Los Angeles Chamber Choir and California Children's Choir.



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Featured Events at The Music Center

SUN 01 DEC / 1:00 p.m. August Wilson's Jitney CENTER THEATRE GROUP @ Mark Taper Forum Thru 12/29

SUN 01 DEC / **2:00 p.m.** *The Magic Flute* LA OPERA @ Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Thru 12/15

SUN 01 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Dudamel Conducts Rachmaninoff & Stravinsky LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

MON 02 DEC / 8:30 p.m. Happy Birthday Chick Strand! REDCAT @ Roy and Edna Disney/ CalArts Theater

TUE 03 DEC / 11:00 a.m. *LUNCH À LA PARK: Food Trucks* REDCAT @ Grand Park Every Tue/Wed/Thur

TUE 03 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake CENTER THEATRE GROUP/ THE MUSIC CENTER @ Ahmanson Theatre Thru 1/05/20

WED 04 DEC / 12:15 p.m. LUNCH A LA PARK: Yoga reTREAT @ Grand Park Every Wed/Fri

FRI 06 DEC / 6:30 p.m. Grand Park's Winter Glow 2019 @ Grand Park Thru 12/25

FRI 06 DEC / 8:30 p.m. CalArts Winter Dance: Repertory Right Now! REDCAT @ Roy and Edna Disney/ CalArts Theater Thru 12/07 FRI 06 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Beethoven's *Eroica* LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall Thru 12/08

SAT 07 DEC / 11:00 a.m. Toyota Symphonies for Youth: *The Rite of Spring* LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall Thru 12/14

SAT 07 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Festival of Carols with Eric Whitacre LA MASTER CHORALE @ Walt Disney Concert Hall Thru 12/14

SUN 08 DEC / 7:30 p.m. Los Angeles Children's Chorus LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

MON 09 DEC / 8:30 p.m. Alexandra Cuesta: Camera Notes (Part One) / Notas de Cámara (Parte Uno) REDCAT @ Roy and Edna Disney/ CalArts Theater

TUE 10 DEC / 8:00 p.m. A Tribute to Oliver Knussen LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

TUE 10 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Tchaikovsky & Copland with MTT LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall Thru 12/15

WED 11 DEC / 8:30 p.m. Isaura String Quartet: hum REDCAT @ Roy and Edna Disney/ CalArts Theater

FRI 13 DEC / 8:30 p.m. Reanimating Ancient Worlds: The Short Films of David Lebrun REDCAT @ Roy and Edna Disney/ CalArts Theater SUN 15 DEC / 8:00 p.m. O Magnum Mysterium LA MASTER CHORALE @ Walt Disney Concert <u>Hall</u>

TUE 17 DEC / 8:00 p.m. A Chanticleer Christmas LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

WED 18 DEC / 7:30 p.m. 39th annual *Messiah* Sing-Along LA MASTER CHORALE @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

FRI 20 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Dianne Reeves: Christmas Time is Here LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

SAT 21 DEC / 11:30 a.m. *Holiday Sing-Along* LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

SAT 21 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Handel's *Messiah* LA MASTER CHORALE @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

SUN 22 DEC / 3:00 p.m. White Christmas Sing-Along LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

MON 23 DEC / 8:00 p.m. CeCe Winans LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

TUE 24 DEC / 3:00 p.m. 60th Annual L.A. County Holiday Celebration THE MUSIC CENTER @ Dorothy Chandler P<u>avilion</u>

TUE 31 DEC / 7:00 p.m. New Year's Eve with Kristin Chenoweth LA PHIL @ Walt Disney Concert Hall

TUE 31 DEC / 8:00 p.m. Grand Park + The Music Center's N.Y.E.L.A. GRAND PARK + THE MUSIC CENTER @ Grand Park + The Music Center Plaza

THE MUSIC

CENTER

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