OS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

AND SINFONIA OF LOS ANGELES

JOHN CURRIE • MUSIC DIRECTOR

2 OSEASON 1989-90 — THE 2ND QUARTER CENTURY

ROGER WAGNER, FOUNDER AND MUSIC DIRECTOR LAUREATE

SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 1990 at 8:00 P.M.
CURTAIN RAISER PREVIEW at 7:00 P.M.
with John Currie, Music Director and Stuart Canin
DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

THE PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Text drawn from St. John (chapters 18 7-19) and St. Matthew (chapters 23 7-27) and from other writings by Brockes, Weise and Postel.

Composed at Cothen and Leipzig 1723-24.
Final revision by Bach 1740. Sung in German.
The audience is encouraged to follow the supplied text and translaton.

JOHN CURRIE conducting

- Paul Johnson Evangelist William Fleck Christus Cynthia Westphal Johnson Soprano Brian Asawa Countertenor · Edward Levy Pilate Kevin Dalbey Peter Barbara Hancock Maid . George Sterne Officer Patrick Ridolfi Servant Stuart Canin Concertmaster Sebastian Toettcher Continuo Grant Gershon Harpsichord/Organ

Parts I, II

INTERMISSION

Parts III, IV, V, VI

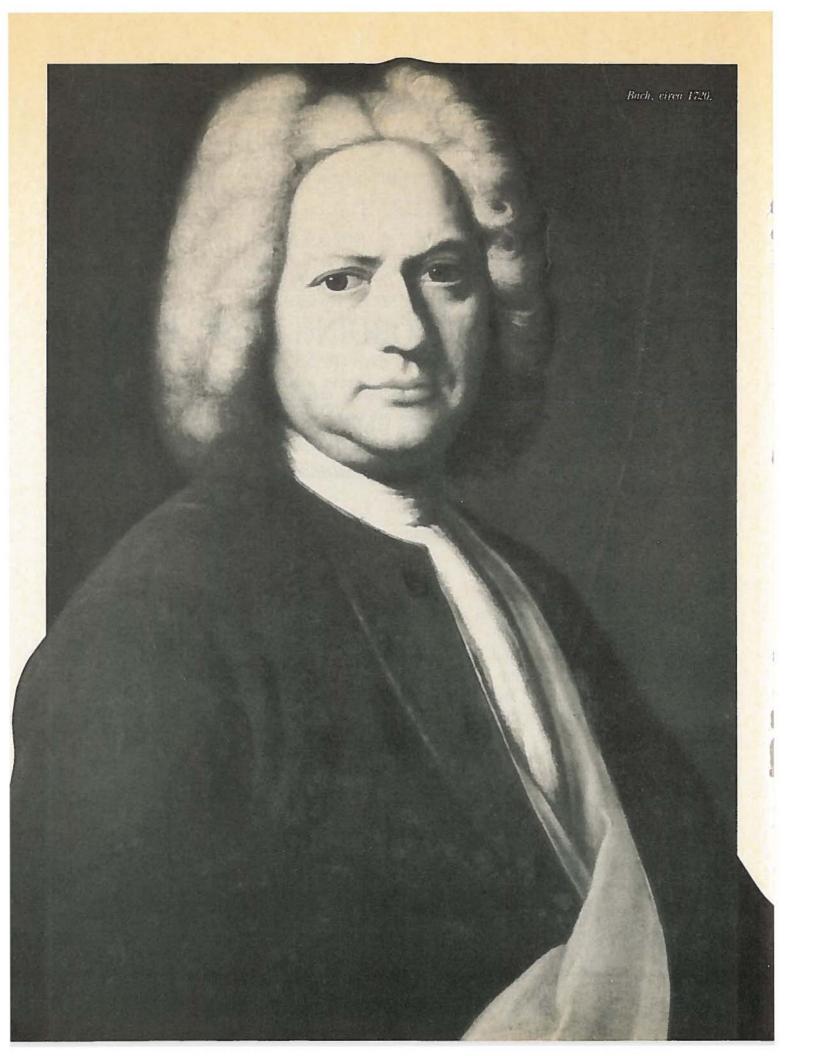
The audience is cordially invited to a post concert reception in the Grand Hall to meet John Currie, the Artists, and members of the Chorale and Sinfonia.

Reception mineral water graciously donated by

SPELLEGRINO

The Los Angeles Master Chorale Association sponsors the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Sinfonia. It does this through the generosity of its volunteer Board of Directors and all those who contribute to The Music Center Unified Fund of the Performing Arts Council. The Los Angeles Master Chorale Associates, a volunteer organization, provides substantial support to the Master Chorale's activities. These concerts are made possible, in part, through the sponsorship of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles County Music and Performing Arts Commission, and through grants from the Cultural Affairs Department of the City of Los Angeles, the California Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Latecomers will not be seated until the first convenient pause in the performance. / Invited guests are welcome backstage after the performance; use performers entrances: Grand Ave. side of Plaza for Pavilion, corner of Temple & Grand for Ahmanson, and rear of theatre for Forum. / Use of tape recorders and/or cameras prohibited in auditorium. / Your use of a ticket constitutes acknowledgement of willingness to appear in photographs taken in public areas of The Music Center and releases The Music Center Operating Co., its lessees and all others from liability resulting from use of such photographs. / Programs and artists subject to change. / Patrons cannot be paged during a performance. Individuals expecting emergency calls must leave their seat numbers with the House Manager.

PERFORMING ARTS L-9



CONDUCTOR'S NOTES by JOHN CURRIE

Of the passions which Bach wrote, only two survive, the *St. John* and the *St. Matthew*. Both are works of unique quality and greatness, and both show Bach as a creator whose taste, technique and feeling for the movement of the dramatic narrative place him above his contemporaries.

As the basis for his text, Bach uses, in the St. John Passion, the poem by Brockes, a Hamburg councillor, as previously set by Mattheson, Kaiser and Handel. But Bach, with sure literary and musical taste, rejects Brockes' metrical version of the narrative, substitutes the less puffed-up words of Luther's Bible, and even incorporates some of the more dramatic gospel incidents which occur in Matthew, but not in John — the crucifixion earthquake, the rending of the veil, and a particularly poignant portrayal of Peter's weeping. Brockes, modified, is retained for the arias.

Musically, the *St. John Passion* is more intimate and less dramatically violent than the *St. Matthew*. The meditative arioso (Betrachte, meine Seel) and the beautiful tenor aria with two violas d'amore (Erwage) have no equivalent in the *St. Matthew*. The character of Christus is gentler, more introverted and less ritualistic in conception. There is no Last Supper scene in the *St. John*.

But what the *St. John* does share with the *St. Matthew* is the superb dramatic flow, in which words of gospel narrative suddenly spark off the first lines of pietistic chorales. (Christ: Why do you strike me? Chorale: O Lord who dares to strike you?).

The St. John Passion was written for Bach's normal resources: a tiny orchestra with a small ensemble of singers. Many effective performances may be given with larger resources, skillfully used, but tonight's performance is given in the spirit of Bach's original, bearing in mind the acoustic of this large secular auditorium. But there will be no attempt to define "roles" in the operatic sense and, as in Bach's performances, both the Evangelist and Christus will sing arias as well as recitatives.

HISTORICAL NOTES BY RICHARD H. TRAME, S.J. PH.D.

In his necrology five Passions are attributed to J.S. Bach. Of these, two, the

St. John Passion and the St. Matthew Passion are complete. A St. Mark Passion survives in eight fragments culled principally from Cantata 198 the Trauer Ode, from Cantata 54, and one movement revised for the Christmas Oratorio. The only known manuscript of the work was destroyed in World War II.

The Saint John Passion was composed during Bach's first year as Cantor in Leipzig during Lent of 1724. Normally, Lent was a "tempus clausum," that season which prohibited in the liturgy concerted music. The Passion was first performed on Good Friday, April 7 of that year in the Saint Nicholas Church. In subsequent



A page from St. John Passion, first performed on Good Friday, 1724.

performances in 1725, 1730, and between 1746 and 1749, Bach made numerous revisions of the work. In 1725 he interchanged, for example, the opening and closing choruses and added some arias which may seem to have been derived from an earlier *Saint Matthew Passion* composed in 1717 at Weimar. Interpolated texts from the Saint Matthew gospel were removed from the 1730 performance, being replaced by a now lost sinfonia. In his fourth and final revision Bach restored the original sequence of numbers but provided for augmented forces.

The Saint Matthew Passion, by way of contrast, he commenced in 1722, performed it first probably in 1727 or 1729. By 1736 it was essentially complete.

The words of Paul Steinitz pertain

equally to both these works. "Bach's music almost throughout both works is of such overwhelming beauty and power that we can readily apprehend the synthesis of liturgy and oratorio or even opera that he achieved in them so infinitely more compelling than did his contemporaries" (The New Oxford History of Music, vol 5, p. 654).

In truth Bach's *Passions* did not spring from his supreme genius without reference to their antecedents. Evidence points to his interest in this form as early as 1714 while at Weimar. He no doubt was familiar with numerous examples of earlier and contemporary settings of all four accounts of the evangelists by such composers as Selle, Schutz, Sebastiani, Keiser, Handel, and Telemann. The latter alone composed in his lifetime four-four settings. Moreover, Bach's predecessor, Kuhnau, had introduced the Leipzig congregations to concerted Passions.

The Passions of Bach's day had grown out of that simple unaccompanied chant setting of the medieval liturgies for Good Friday in which three clerics sang the roles of the Evangelist (a middle range voice), of Jesus (a bass voice), and one for all other individuals (a high voice), while the choir or an accomplished congregation took the part of the Turba or crowd. This chant form, still heard in essence in Catholic churches today, found embellishment and elaboration in the polyphonic forms of the 15th and 16th centuries. In Germany, subsequently, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. two Passion forms had achieved relative permanence. One was the oratorio passion established by Thomas Seele of Hamburg in 1643, the other the passion oratorio. This latter form was the type Kuhnau had introduced into Leipzig in 1721.

The *oratorio passion* adhered to the original structure of the chant passion but the evangelist's narrative was interrupted through the insertion of reflective poetic episodes, instrumental sinfonias, parallel Biblical texts, and madrigal-like verses or hymns.

The passion oratorio, exemplified by Keiser's The Bleeding and Dying Jesus, possessed an original libretto, exhibited a florid operatic style, and was in no way different from his successful operas. It abandoned all use of Scripture in favor of a poetic rendition of the story's episodes sung aria-fashion by male and female



Morning prayers at the home of Johann Sebastian Bach, who was a devout Lutheran.

soloists. It exercised its influence on Bach's *Saint John Passion*, essentially an *oratorio passion*, through allusions to Bohms' setting of Christians Postel's *Saint John Passion* libretto, in two texts cribbed from that work, and in eight texts selected by Bach from Brockes libretto, utilized by Keiser and Handel.

Obviously, though considered by contemporaries an insufferably old-fashioned composer, Bach did not disregard the best developments of his day. As Herz notes, "Loyal to the cantus firmus (the basic traditional melodies) and the scriptural words, Bach opposed the sacred opera as a species of music that in liturgical retrospect had become shallow. By preserving the Biblical text and inserting Lutheran hymn verses, Bach returned the Passion to its liturgical substance. By using both the old and the new Bach created a synthesis which, viewed solely from the textual side, wants to be regarded as religious service rather than poetry."

Bach never lost sight of the fact that the Passion formed the core of the Good Friday liturgy. Quite special to his *Passion* settings are the numerous chorales, solo and ensemble, which he harmonized with consummately sensitive artistry and inserted with unerring fitness and skill into the fabric of the Passion. One may assume that since these chorales con-

stituted the substance of the congregation's musical repertoire, the people participated explicitly in the singing of them or reverberated them to the depths of their souls in spiritual harmony with the singers.

The congregation on that Good Friday of 1724 had been summoned to Services at the St. Nicholas Church by the tolling of the Church bells at 1:15 p.m. The singing of the Passion was interrupted by a lengthy sermon, after which it resumed. Having been together for about five hours, the congregation then reverently returned home

In whatever physical setting the Saint John Passion is performed, its essentially religious and liturgical orientation must be kept in mind, if we are to probe Bach's insights. The meditative ariosos and arias furnished him opportunity to express with intellectual control elements of Lutheran Pietism current at the time, for example, in giving voice to the lamentations of the symbolic "Daughter of Zion." It is, however, in the Evangelist's recitatives and in the words of Jesus and the Turba that Bach with exquisitely deft touches of word-painting and emotional nuances of voice and instrument conveys the essence of his faith and inner conviction in the reality of Christ's redemptive suffering. In the closing Chorale, "Ach Herr, lass dein lieb Engelein," he thrusts us toward the vision of the Resurrection which alone makes the whole previous drama comprehensible.

The Saint John Passion is scored flutes, oboes, Oboe d'amore, Oboes da caccia, bassoon, strings and continuo. While all the choruses but one (-5) utilize the full orchestra in which the winds seldom achieve independence, the arias manifest more individuality of coloring.

Basil Smallman in his book, The Background of Passion Music states by way of summary: "The greatness of the Saint John Passion lies in the vivid visual realism of its dramatic presentation of the story. By means of sharply drawn contrast between the fanatical fury of the crowd and the spiritual calm and detachment of Christ, Bach achieves a powerful and imaginative interpretation of the Gospel tragedy in which a strong link is retained with the religious dramas of medieval times. Disunity in musical structure arises, as we have seen, mainly from the composer's attempt to make an unsuitable text conform entirely to the conventions of the contemporary Oratorio style with its bipartite construction and its liberal use of meditative commentary . . . the Saint John Passion represents an idealized form of the ancient liturgical dramatic type of Passion."

About the Artists



JOHN CURRIE, conductor was born in Scotland and first studied conducting at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music where he gained many awards. Since then his work with choruses and orchestras has become internationally recognized.

He has appeared as guest conductor with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Scarlatti Orchestra of Naples, the Jerusalem Symphony, the Israel Sinfonietta, the National Orchestra of Belgium, and the Scottish National Orchestra. Very recent foreign appearances have included a public concert and broadcast as guest conductor of the B.B.C. Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Previously he had won a high reputation as a chorusmaster, working with Giulini, Mehta, Abbado, Muti, Barenboim, and Solti, with orchestras ranging from the Israel Philharmonic to the Chicago Symphony. He has been Chorusmaster of the Edinburgh Festival Chorus and the Scottish National Orchestra Chorus, as well as Chorus Director and Musical Associate at Scottish Opera. In 1981 he founded the Scottish Chorus which appeared in Belgium, Israel, and Italy, including La Scala. Earlier in 1968, he founded the John Currie Singers and Orchestra, with whom he conducted many world premieres.

In opera he has conducted Dido And Aeneas, Savitri, Orfeo (all with Dame Janet Baker in the title roles) and many Mozart operas, including Idomeneo. Mr Currie also appears regularly at Scotland's acclaimed Perth Festival, having recently conducted and staged The Marriage of Figaro, and Così Fan Tutte. Future engagements in this special series include Don Giovanni and The Magic Flute.

STUART CANIN, concertmaster was concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony from 1970 to 1980. He was born



in New York City where he studied the violin with famed pedagogue Ivan Galamian.

In 1959 he was the winner of the highly coveted First Prize of the Paganini International Violin Competition in Genoa, Italy. He recently returned from Italy where he had been invited by the Italian government to give a series of recitals as part of the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Niccolo Paganini. He has also been honored by his native city, New York, with its highest cultural award, the Handel Medal, in recognition of his musical achievements. Isaac Stern and Beverly Sills have also been recipients of this award.

As concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony under Seiji Ozawa, Canin was featured as soloist with the orchestra on numerous occasions, including concerts in Moscow, Leningrad, Berlin, and Tokyo. As a recitalist and as soloist with other major European and American orchestras, Canin has concertized extensively throughout the two continents.

Before joining the San Francisco Symphony, Canin was concertmaster and violin soloist of the Chamber Symphony of Philadelphia. He has also served as concertmaster of the Casals Festival Orchestra in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall in New York City, and the San Francisco Opera.

For many years Canin was a chamber music artist with the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. In addition, he has participated in the Spoleto Festival in Spoleto, Italy, and Charleston, S.C., and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

He has served as professor of violin at prestigious conservatories in this country and abroad, among them the Oberlin Conservatory and the Musikhochschule in Freiberg, Germany.

At present he pursues an active concert

career as well as being on the faculty of the University of California at Santa Barbara. He is also a member of the Artist Faculty of the Summer Music Festival of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California.

Mr. Canin recently returned from the People's Republic of China where as a guest of the Chinese government he gave Master Classes to young Chinese violin students at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. While in Shanghai, Mr. Canin performed as soloist with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

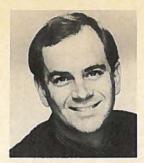


CYNTHIA WESTPHAL JOHNSON, soprano has performed a wide spectrum of music including oratorio, opera and recitals. Los Angeles Master Chorale audiences heard her most recently as the soprano soloist in Haydn's Mass in Time of War and Pergolesi's Magnificat. She has performed at the Long Beach Bach and San Luis Obispo Mozart Festivals and with the L.A. Chamber Orchestra Bach Soloists, the Saddle-back Concert Chorale, Orange Coast Chorale, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, and Euterpe Opera.

As a member of the Los Angeles Vocal Arts Ensemble, Ms. Johnson appeared with Spokane Symphony Orchestra in an evening of Sondheim highlights. She received critical acclaim for her performance of Beethoven's Ninth with the Pacific Symphony and Bach's Christmas Oratorio with Friends University and the Wichita Symphony Orchestra.

As a recitalist, she has appeared at the J. Paul Getty Museum, and made a return appearance there last summer with the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra singing the Egmont songs of Beethoven. A native of Southern California, Ms. Johnson received her degree from California State University, Long Beach.

JOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE-



PAUL JOHNSON, tenor a native Kansan, has a wide range of performing experience in concert and opera. He has received critical acclaim for his performance with the Pacific Chorale and Pacific Symphony in the Berlioz Requiem and most recently in Handel's Samson with the Pittsburgh Oratorio Society.

He has concertized with the Seattle, Spokane, Tucson, The American Youth, the Ventura, The Orange County Pacific, and Wichita Symphonies, The Orchestra of Santa Fe, and The Los Angeles Chamber and Pasadena Chamber Orchestras under the baton of such noted conductors as William McGlaughlin, Gerard Schwarz, Bruce Ferden, and Mehli Mehta. Last season he was heard in Mozart's Litaniae Lauretanae and Haydn's Harmoniemesse with John Currie and The Los Angeles Master Chorale. Other performances with the Los Angeles Master Chorale include Britten's War Requiem, and Handel's Messiah and Israel In Egypt. This season he makes his debut with the Garden Grove Opera in Rossini's Semiramide, and The Nashville Symphony in Orff's Carmina Burana.



BRIAN ASAWA, countertenor began his musical training at UC Santa Cruz, where he discovered his vocal abilities as a countertenor. Transferring to UCLA in order to develop his voice and to complete his undergraduate training, he received a degree in vocal performance in 1989. He was third place winner in the Artists of the Future 1989 Competition, and has received career opportunity grants from

The Young Musicians Foundation and The Opera Buffs.

Mr. Asawa has received acclaim for his performances with a number of Los Angeles groups, including Chorale Del Canto, Foothill Master Chorale, I Cantori, and was a featured soloist in the Paulist Boy Choristers of California 1989 European Tour. He is alto soloist at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Westwood.

Currently a graduate student at University of Southern California in early music, Mr. Asawa has appeared with the USC Opera Theatre and the USC Early Music Ensemble, La Musica Viva.

Future appearances in the Los Angeles area include a return to UCLA as a guest artist in Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and performances at the Long Beach Bach Festival.



WILLIAM FLECK, bass has emerged as an important singing actor in more than 80 roles on operatic stages throughout the world where he has combined his rich and powerful bass voice with sensitive and insightful characterizations. A product of the Eastman School of Music, where he was tutored by the renowned Wagnerian baritone Julius Huehn, Mr. Fleck continued his training with the Metropolitan Opera Studio, the San Francisco Opera and the Western Opera Theater. A regular member of the Metropolitan Opera Company since 1979, his many and varied assignments there have included the role of the Sacristan in Tosca, Alaska Wolf Joe in The Rise and Fall Of The City Of Mahagonny and Doctor Grenvil in La Traviata, as seen on the "Live from the Met" television production. He has also performed with the Opera Company of Boston, the Dallas Opera, Hawaii Opera Theater, Minnesota Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Vancouver Opera, Fort Worth Opera and Atlanta Opera. The Fall of 1989 saw Mr. Fleck in Cleveland Opera's world premiere of Stuart Copeland's Holy Blood and Crescent Moon (The Archbishop). At home in a wide

range of repertoire and styles, Mr. Fleck has had particular success in such modern works as Menotti's The Last Savage (with the composer directing), Kurt Weill's Street Scene, Robert Ward's The Crucible and Carlisle Floyd's Susannah. in which he gave a moving performance as Olin Blitch which earned him national critical acclaim. He certainly is no stranger to the concert stage where he has been heard in the St. Matthew Passion with Musica Sacra and the Carmel Bach Festival, the Verdi Requiem, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Missa Solemnis and Handel's Messiah with orchestras throughout the United States.

Mr.Fleck resides in Connecticut with his wife and family.

The LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE AND SINFONIA has played a unique role in the cultural life of Los Angeles for a quarter of a century. A resident company of the Music Center, it is the only professional chorus in the United States which has both its own series and serves as the resident chorus for other performing arts organizations, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and the Los Angeles Music Center Opera.

At the close of the Chorale's 1988-89 season, it gave its 500th performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and over 200 in its own series. During the 1989-90 Music Center season, the ensemble will perform in *Tosca*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Falstaff* and *Don Carlo*.

Conductor Roger Wagner founded the Master Chorale in 1964 with the support of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and local businessmen Z. Wayne Griffin and Louis Dee Statham. In January, 1965, the Master Chorale singing Bach's *B Minor Mass*, first filled the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Since then the 135-member ensemble has performed throughout the United States, in Europe and in the Soviet Union.

In 1986, after a world-wide search, John Currie of Edinburgh, Scotland became the Chorale's second Music Director. Mr. Currie is currently in his fourth season with the Chorale, and since his arrival in 1986, has conducted the Chorale and Sinfonia in acclaimed performances of many major works, and has collaborated with distinguished conductors for the Chorale's appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and at the Hollywood Bowl.

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Sally Etcheto
Michelle Fournier
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Rene Mandel,
Ass't Concertmaster
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Russ Cantor
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Karen Jones
Constance Meyer
Irma Neumann
Guillermo Romero

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Kenneth Burward-Hoy, Principal Wesley Cease Harry Shirinian Linn Subotnick

Anatoly Rosinsky

CELLOS

Sebastien Toettcher,
Principal
Todd Hemmenway
Dan Smith
Richard Naill

BASSES

Susanne Ailman, *Principal* Tim Barr

FLUTES

Sheridan Stokes, *Principal* Brice Martin

OBOES

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Saturday, April 21, 1990, 8 p.m.

Bernstein Chichester Psalms
Getty Annabel Lee
Mozart Concert Arias
Schubert Mass in E Flat

To close the Chorale's 26th Season we present Leonard Bernstein's exhilarating *Chichester Psalms*, sung in Hebrew, with Schubert's last great masterpiece, *Mass in E Flat*, a work of immense inspiration with melodies as only Schubert could write them. In addition, the world premiere of Gordon Getty's delightful *Annabel Lee* will be presented. Featured in Schubert's *Mass* and in Mozart's *Concert Arias* will be Patrice Michaels Bedi, the young American soprano who thrilled our Sing-Along audience last season.

PERFORMING ARTS L-15

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Welcome to the 1989-90 Season of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. This season represents the beginning of the Chorale's second quarter century at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, and we are delighted to have you join us.

As members of the Master Chorale Associates, we act in a variety of capacities to support the Chorale. We support the Music Center Unified Fund with a grass-roots letterwriting campaign to raise money for all the Music Center's operating companies and we support the Master Chorale's annual benefit ball. We sponsor activities designed to express our appreciation for and introduce us to the performing members of the Chorale. Our Curtain-Raiser Preview Dinners provide the opportunity for concert attendees to socialize and to explore the music being performed by the Chorale. This year we also sponsored a premiere film screening of the 1988 Academy Award nominee for the best foreign film, the Belgian film The Music Teacher, honoring the Belgian Consul General at our benefit reception. Our traditional annual holiday party in December for our members is always well received.

Our activities are diverse, and the involvement opportunites range from the purely social to serious charitable fund-raising. We hope that you will consider joining our membership as we support the Los Angeles Master Chorale/Sinfonia Orchestra and the Music Center. For more information, please call the Master Chorale office at 213-972-7282.

Thank you and enjoy the concert.

Sincerely yours,

Jan Powers, *President*Los Angeles Master Chorale Associates

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