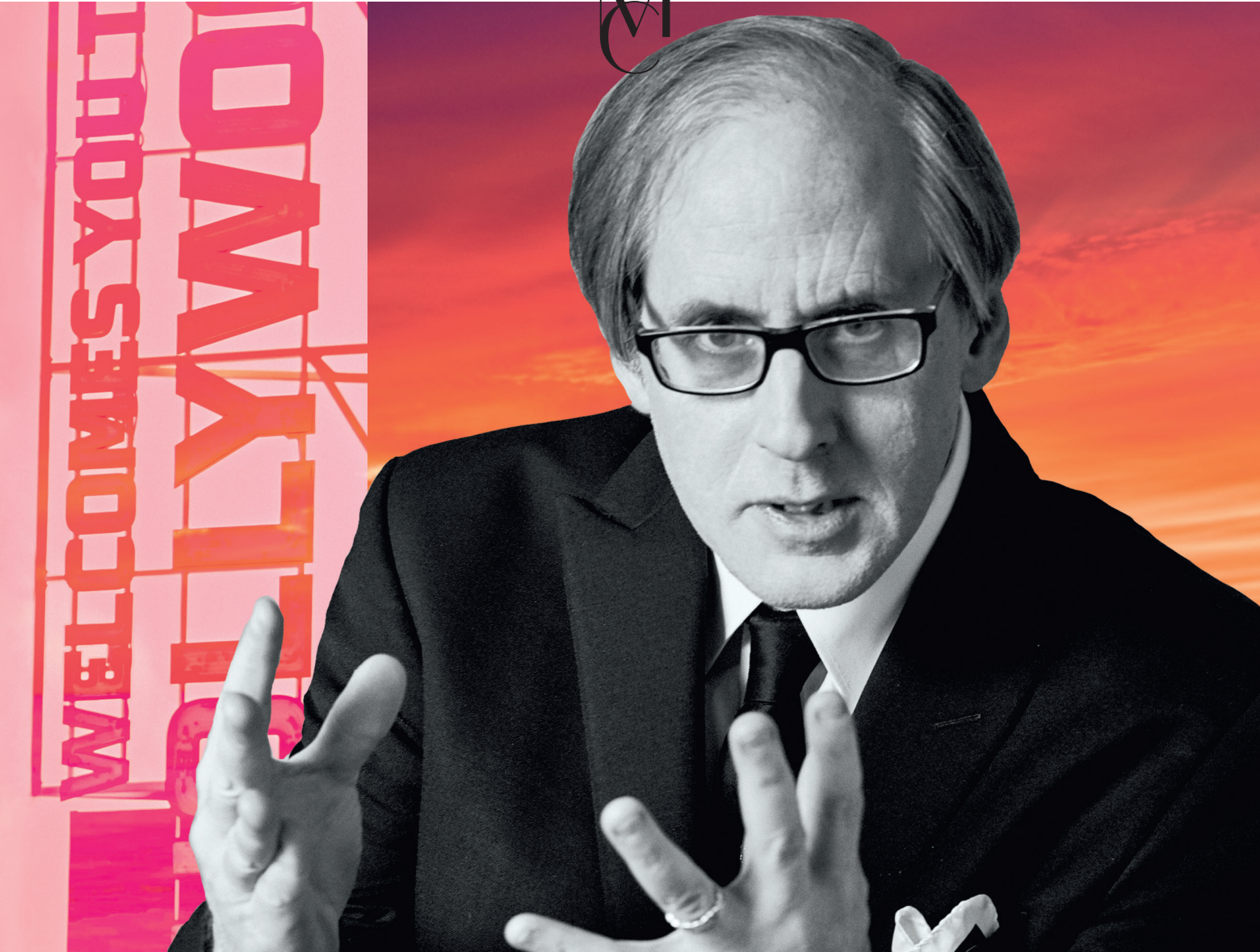


LOS ANGELES

# MASTER CHORALE

WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL

M



## SUNRISE

A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

JANUARY 2020  
GRANT GERSHON  
KIKI & DAVID GINDLER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

performances  
MAGAZINE

# WELCOME

FROM MARK A. BERRY, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER



With the Oscars coming up in only a couple of weeks, now is a perfect time to re-visit the big winner of the first Academy Awards ceremony in 1929, F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*, presented tonight with a brand-new score by Jeff Beal, one of today's top film composers. Jeff's haunting, beautiful music breathes new life into a film that shocked and astounded audiences almost a century ago. It also affords the Master Chorale a new way to demonstrate its artistry and delight its audiences.

Many of you certainly will be familiar with Jeff as the composer of the score for the Netflix series *House of Cards*. Over the course of six seasons, Jeff's spine-tingling music, which perfectly captured all the tension and intrigue of the drama onscreen, won the Emmy for Outstanding Music Composition for a Series (Original Dramatic Score) four times. Longtime Master Chorale fans will also remember our world-premiere performance in November 2015 of Jeff's *The Salvage Men*, a co-commission with the Eric Whitacre Singers.

We're pleased once again to give the first performance of work by Jeff. Murnau's *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* has always been one of Jeff's favorite films. By providing new, updated music, he hopes to "give it a context that speaks to us today, as opposed to a museum piece." It's beautiful music that deepens the meaning of the action of the screen, and we're sure you'll find it moving.

In tonight's performance, the Master Chorale will showcase the skills that have made it the go-to vocal ensemble for recording soundtracks, including the final two installments in the *Star Wars* franchise, *The Last Jedi* and *The Rise of Skywalker*, with music by John Williams.

If there's one choral group that can make this the truly special night it promises to be, it is the Master Chorale.

You'll have three more chances after tonight to enjoy the Master Chorale this season. In March, Associate Director Jenny Wong leads the group in two performances of Fauré's Requiem. Our tribute to the legendary choral figure Alice Parker is on the agenda for May, and in June, we perform two concerts of Rachmaninoff's virtuosic All-Night Vigil.

Plus, we hope you'll join us on April 18 for GALA 2020 at the Hollywood Palladium. This year's honorees are Billy Childs and The Blue Ribbon, The Music Center's premier women's support organization.

Watch your email inboxes and mailboxes in February, when we'll be announcing the 2020-21 season. I don't want to share too much and spoil the surprises we have in store, but I can safely say that when we do release all the details of our new season, you'll find what we have in store to be exciting.

Until then, I hope you enjoy tonight's stimulating, imaginative performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Berry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark A. Berry  
Chief Marketing Officer

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

# SUNRISE

## A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020 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  
HOLLY SEDILLOS, soprano  
SUZANNE WATERS, soprano  
DERMOT KIERNAN, tenor

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### SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

JEFF BEAL (B. 1963)

Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans (World Premiere) ..... Jeff Beal

- I. Creation
- II. Summertime
- III. Seduction
- IV. The Seal
- V. Where Has He Gone?
- VI. The Boat Ride
- VII. The Trolley
- VIII. The Café
- IX. The Church
- X. The Barbershop
- XI. The Photo Studio
- XII. La Cité
- XIII. The Peasant Dance
- XIV. The Drink
- XV. The Storm
- XVI. The Search
- XVII. Muses
- XVIII. Sunrise

*This program is made possible with generous support from donors to the Artistic Innovation Fund: Leeba R. Lessin, Philip A. Swan, and Priscilla and Curtis Tamkin; the National Endowment for the Arts; and Paul Lazarus and Kitty McNamee.*

# MAKING *SUNRISE* SING AGAIN: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON A SILENT FILM CLASSIC

by Thomas May



On May 16, 1929, the first Academy Awards ceremony took place, paying tribute to films presented in 1927 and 1928. One of the big winners was *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*, which garnered three awards. Along with distinctions for Best Actress (Janet Gaynor) and Best Cinematography (Charles Rosher and Karl Struss), *Sunrise* was named Best Unique and Artistic Picture.

If the last category sounds unfamiliar, that is because it was discontinued after the inaugural year, which presented the awards at a private dinner held at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. (It was just down the road on Grand Avenue, in the Crystal Ballroom at the Millennium Biltmore, that the concept of the Academy Awards had been mapped out in 1927.) In an effort to distinguish “commercial fare from prestige art films,” as Peter Decherney notes in *Hollywood and the Culture Elite: How the Movies Became American*, there were at first two top film categories—the commercial one being Outstanding Picture (given to *Wings*), which was later renamed the Best Picture Award. But *Sunrise* continues to occupy a unique position in film history. Its director, F.W. Murnau (1888–1931) is best known nowadays as the creator of the Expressionist masterwork *Nosferatu* (1922) and entered the international spotlight with his psychologically astute 1924 film *Der Letzte Mann*, known in English by the title *The Last Laugh*. He had just emigrated to Hollywood to work with Fox Studio, where he had signed a four-picture deal. William Fox, the studio’s boss, gave Murnau carte blanche, and the director was able to integrate Expressionist aesthetics into the

visuals and performance and to push silent-film storytelling to new extremes without the intervention of titles.

The screenplay was by Murnau’s frequent collaborator Carl Mayer. With a cast of American leads and Mary Pickford’s cameraman (Charles Rosher) one of its cinematographers, it was filmed in the United States. Numbering 82 on the American Institute of Film’s updated list of the 100 greatest American films, *Sunrise* thus represents a fascinating hybrid of American and German elements.

“I realized that *Sunrise* was the perfect vehicle for a brand-new score,” Jeff Beal recalls when asked what attracted him to this material in the first place. Following the success of *The Salvage Men*, his 2015 commission from the Los Angeles Master Chorale, the Emmy Award-winning composer and Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, began mulling possibilities for a future collaboration. They envisioned scoring a silent film that could be accompanied live, with the human voice “as the driving sonic factor in the score rather than just the orchestra,” Beal says. He also mentions a personal family connection to the world of silent films: Beal’s grandmother Irene was a pianist who accompanied silent movies and inspired him to study jazz trumpet.

At first, Beal was drawn to German silent films, but he then became fixated on *Sunrise*: “The whole thing feels like a waking

dream to me. You don't ever really know where you are. The dreamy style is enhanced by the lack of 'dialogue' in the silent film sense of titles." Instead, the storytelling is communicated through the acting onscreen, the camerawork, and the extraordinary visuals. And, now, through Beal's expansive score for the entire film as well.

In fact, another unique dimension to *Sunrise* is that it became the first feature film to employ Fox Studio's new Movietone sound system. In 1926, William Fox acquired the patents for this system, which was designed to synchronize sound and picture. *Sunrise's* Movietone track included a score by the prolific Hugo Riesenfeld along with such sound effects as pealing bells. Yet alternative scores have been introduced in recent years.

Beal's work adds an unusual perspective not only by giving the chorus such a principal role in the soundscape but by introducing a libretto compiled from other sources by his wife, the soprano Joan Beal, a studio singer and former member of the Master Chorale. One of the great paradoxes of powerful art is that it can locate the universal resonance of the personal and particular. In his earlier Master Chorale composition, *The Salvage Men*, Beal had been inspired by his personal struggle coping with a recent diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. That work uses a cappella settings of texts by Oscar Wilde and the contemporary American poet Kay Ryan to reflect on "the universal existential questions we all face: the choices we make as we move through our lives and how they affect us."

As he became increasingly preoccupied with *Sunrise*, Beal says he was moved by its portrayal of "the relationship and fragility of a man and a woman in a relationship. I've been married to my wife Joan now for 35 years, and my son had recently gotten engaged, so I was thinking of how the film depicts this. On one level, it is a love story, but it is also about the fracturing of that and its fragility and fortuitous redemption."

On one level, the minimal plot of *Sunrise* echoes the schematic of a fairy-tale or even of a dream, its elements porous and open to all manner of associations. Enacting its archetypal love triangle are characters given only generic names: The Man, The Wife, The Woman from the City. Early on, a title declares: "This song of the Man and his Wife is of no place and every place; you might hear it anywhere, at any time."

But the film's critical triumph was not matched by commercial success. Beal posits that one of the reasons *Sunrise* lacked popularity with its original audience of the 1920s was that "it didn't feel 'real' or seem to be happening in a known place. Now, in 2020, I feel that this is what makes it so much more universal." Another possible factor may have to do with the sudden burst of enthusiasm for the newly emerging talkies: *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature with synchronized speech as well as music, opened just a few weeks later.

While "the role-playing in the film is very much of its time," according to Beal, the dynamic of *Sunrise* thus suggests something more universal. "Unfortunately, one of the timeless aspects involves the way relationships can contain violence and abuse."

Beal sensed that it was crucial to incorporate a woman's point of view into the score and decided to collaborate with his wife. Joan Beal responded by homing in on what she describes as the "archetypal dualities" that play an essential role in *Sunrise* and make its imagery so richly contrasting. She lists these dualities:

"night/day; male/female; lustful/virginal; country/city; strong/weak; modern/ancient; temporal/eternal," all of which "yearn for integration" in the sense of "the Jungian concept of the shadow self, which must be integrated for human wholeness." Jeff Beal thinks of *Sunrise's* three characters as, in a sense, "Jungian archetypes perhaps of the same psyche."

To accentuate these themes, Joan Beal crafted a libretto comprising excerpts from the ancient Greek poet Hesiod's *Theogony*, an epic about the origins of the gods from the 8th to 7th centuries B.C.E.; the Biblical *Song of Solomon*; texts by the American poet Hilda Doolittle, aka H.D. (1886-1961) and the German realist writer Theodor Storm (1817-1888).

As a guide to what she had in mind, she quotes from the Jungian therapist John Beebe, who sees movies as today's religion. Beebe's book *Integrity in Depth* includes a discussion of *Sunrise* and its depiction of the couple's painful move to become "partners in a conscious marriage." That evolution mirrors "the inner marriage of individuals trying to get along with themselves: the shadow that threatens to disintegrate the personality is the occasion for the shame that allows it to consolidate at a higher level of moral development. Such shame is healing only if it is held with integrity."

The addition of singers and text as an accompaniment to *Sunrise*, for Joan Beal, "maintains the duality: male/female; above/below the staff; lyrical/nonsensical; beautiful/guttural; strong/weak; new/familiar. The musical score integrates all of these elements."

Indeed, *Sunrise's* narrative arc cogently suggests a musical structure, incorporating an exposition, elements of repetition and transformation as the crisis unfolds, and a new synthesis as the couple reconciles. Murnau's film, tellingly subtitled *A Song of Two Humans*, invites a wide range of musical responses, whether subtly or explicitly: The Woman from the City as a siren—and a kind of hallucination—when she initially tempts The Man; the seduction scene by night; The Wife's terror in realizing her husband's intent; the long interlude in the City (which accounts for a lengthy stretch of the film), including both its loftiest elements and scherzo-like episodes such as the rescue of an errant piglet; the storm on the lake; and the redemptive second chance.

By setting texts for chorus, Beal says he was able to use language "as a vehicle to give the singers a dramatic context for what they are singing." For example, the introductory scene offers a "panoramic" perspective in relation to Hesiod's verses summoning the Muses to "tell the tale" of "how at first earth came to be." This segues directly into the "Summer Vacation" and "Seduction" scenes, where The Woman from the City emerges against a backdrop of sensual imagery from the *Song of Solomon*.

Notes the composer: "I set the *Song of Solomon* in another work before this as well, and it feels so perfect here in its combination of sensual but also dangerous aspects. I was attracted to the idea of brokenness in the film. Any marriage has this strong potential to be violated built into it, of being in the danger zone." The Woman from the City, moreover, is not simply a villainess but "a sexy, liberated woman out to have a good time. She represents to me the idea of seduction and of sexuality more generally." Because Murnau was gay, Beal sensed that "things that couldn't be said or spoken were part of his thinking and part of his internal narrative about sexuality. The idea of someone so

free and uninhibited is a powerful force in the movie, at a time when nothing was graphic.”

Jeff Beal’s score calls for an orchestra (with harp, piano, and celesta and added percussion), mixed chorus, and three vocal soloists (two sopranos and tenor). He uses the ensemble to offer its own commentary as well as to vary the predominantly vocal texture.

Beal’s *Sunrise* score makes prominent use of leitmotifs, which are readily identifiable: a love theme heard at the beginning, a beguiling idea for *The Woman from the City*, motifs for the boat ride (repeated during the ride back), and the Storm, “when the danger becomes Mother Nature rather than the husband.” The solo voices, to some extent, correspond to the three main characters, but it is not until later in the film that they come into the forefront, starting a duet after the dance in the cafe. “I felt this was a place where they earned these solo, opera-like identities,” Beal explains. “I conceived the music operatically but composed for chorus, thinking about things that would be sung by 60 people. Language suggests its own cadences and rhythms.”

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

Along with some vocabulary from the Second Viennese School, Beal draws on his background in jazz and other American vernaculars. “Another thing I love about *Sunrise* is that it takes place in my own voice, as a jazz musician and with its folk genres. There is a strong sense of the power of folklore in this film as an antidote or antithesis to the Modernist way of the city.”

By bringing *Sunrise* into the concert hall, Beal hopes to create “an immersive piece to be heard and experienced in a live setting. When you start to write to the picture and to contextualize it more in terms of your immediate time period and feeling, the film starts to speak back to you in interesting ways. I see things in the film that I never realized were there before.”

By trying to “reinvent the film so it is not seen simply as an historical oddity, I want to make it feel immediate for a modern-day audience. Although the story is straightforward, what I tried to do with the music is make you think about it. I like films that don’t answer all their own questions in an easy way.”

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## LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

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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 Alcalá, 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* and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*.

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  
Claire Fedoruk  
Harriet Fraser  
Kelci Hahn  
Ayana Haviv  
Elissa Johnston  
Beth Peregrine  
Elyse Willis  
Andrea Zomorodian

## ALTO

Garineh Avakian  
Amy Fogerson  
Michele Hemmings  
Callista Hoffman-Campbell  
Shabnam Kalbasi  
Sarah Lynch  
Laura Smith Roethe  
Niké St. Clair  
Ilana Summers  
Tracy Van Fleet

## TENOR

Matthew Brown  
Bradley Chapman  
Adam Faruqi  
Jon Lee Keenan  
Charlie Kim  
Shawn Kirchner  
Michael Lichtenauer  
Anthony Ray  
Matt Thomas  
Matthew Tresler

## BASS

Michael Barnett  
Mark Beasom  
Reid Bruton  
John Buffett  
Dylan Gentile  
Will Goldman  
Abdiel Gonzalez  
Ben Lin  
Brett McDermid  
Steve Pence

## VIOLINS I

Roger Wilkie  
*Concertmaster*  
Joel Pargman  
*Associate Concertmaster*  
Margaret Wooten  
*Assistant Concertmaster*  
Leslie Katz  
Nina Evtuhov  
Liliana Filipovic

## VIOLINS II

Elizabeth Hedman  
*Principal*  
Cynthia Moussas  
*Associate Principal*  
Linda Stone  
Steve Scharf  
Anna Kostyucheck  
Mui-Yee Chu

## VIOLAS

Diana Wade  
*Principal*  
Brett Banducci  
*Associate Principal*  
Karolina Naziemiec  
Kate Reddish

## CELLOS

Cecilia Tsan  
*Principal*  
Delores Bing  
*Associate Principal*  
Nadine Hall  
Maggie Edmondson  
Ira Glansbeek

## BASSES

Don Ferrone  
*Principal*  
Tim Eckert  
*Associate Principal*

## FLUTES

Geri Rotella  
*Principal*  
Sarah Weisz

## OBOE

Leslie Reed  
*Principal*

## CLARINETS

Gary Boyyer  
*Principal*  
Michael Grego

## BASSOON

William May  
*Principal*

## HORNS

Steve Becknell  
*Principal*  
Amy Sanchez

## KEYBOARD

Lisa Edwards  
*Principal*

## HARPS

Alyssa Katahara  
*Principal*

## TIMPANI AND PERCUSSION

Theresa Dimond  
*Principal*

## DRUMSET

Mark Converse  
*Principal*

## ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

MANAGER  
Brady Steel

## LIBRARIAN

Mark Fugina

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

## GRANT GERSHON

KIKI &amp; 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 in 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 *Sddeutsche 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 *Il Postino*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Florescia 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 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 *Il 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* and *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*.

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

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**HOLLY SEDILLOS**  
 SOPRANO


Holly Sedillos is one of Los Angeles's most versatile sopranos. Classical highlights include solos in John Adams's *Grand Pianola Music* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Consuelo in Adams's *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky* with Long Beach Opera, *Carmina Burana* solos with the San Bernardino Symphony, and varied vocal acrobatics with the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Other

stage highlights include world-music solos at Carnegie Hall with Christopher Tin; Jasmine in *Aladdin: A Musical Spectacular!* at Disney California Adventure Park; and the title role in Cindy Shapiro's *Anaïs: A Dance Opera* at festivals in France and Morocco. She also toured prisons with composer Eric Genuis. Sedillos has roughly 60 film, television, and video game credits. Solo highlights on film soundtracks include *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* by Austin Wintory, *The Darkest Minds* by Benjamin Wallfisch, *The Addams Family* by Jeff and Mychael Danna, and *Altered Carbon* and *Lucy In the Sky* by Jeff Russo. In 2020, Sedillos performs with Jacaranda, Santa Monica Symphony, and the San Bernardino Symphony. Sedillos is from Santa Monica and holds a bachelor of arts degree from Dartmouth College.

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**SUZANNE WATERS**  
 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."

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**DERMOT KIERNAN**  
 TENOR


Dermot Kiernan is a native of Ireland now based in Los Angeles. He performs as a vocalist and pianist across America and Europe. Kiernan holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music (majoring in performance on the classical accordion) and a Master's Degree in Medieval Music Performance and Musicology from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. During his time at university, Kiernan sang in such ensembles as

Schola Cantorum Dublinia, the University College Dublin Choral Scholars, Resurgam, and The Dublin Bach Singers. He also appeared as a soloist at Dublin's National Concert Hall and the Royal Dublin Society. After university, he joined the post-masters degree program at the University of Paris-Sorbonne, studying with Benjamin Bagby (Sequentia) and Katarina Livljanic (Dia Logus). In 2009, Kiernan was appointed choir leader of the Aontas Choral Ensemble, part of the internationally acclaimed music group Celtic Woman. For six years he toured worldwide with the show; he was also featured on several of their CD and DVD recordings, and their PBS specials. Kiernan is a member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and is joining the cast of *Lagrime di San Pietro* on their acclaimed world tour in 2020.

# GALA 2020

SAVE THE DATE  
APRIL 18, 2020  
HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM

HONORING  
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We sincerely thank the following individual donors, who have contributed \$300 or more to the annual fund and special events, and institutional donors of \$1,000 or more, from November 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019. Special thanks to our multi-year donors, whose gifts ensure a healthy base for our future.

*For more information about supporting the Master Chorale, contact Elizabeth Greenway, Chief Advancement Officer, at 213-972-3114 or [egreenway@lamasterchorale.org](mailto:egreenway@lamasterchorale.org).*

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The Leadership Circle honors and celebrates the Los Angeles Master Chorale's most distinguished donor community. Established in 2019 with a challenge grant from the Abbott L. Brown Foundation, the Leadership Circle enables transformative projects—from commissioning, recording, and artistic innovation, to ambitious community engagement programming and touring productions. Members receive exclusive recognition and event experiences throughout the year.

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# INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBERS ALEX G. ROMAIN, LAURA SMOLOWE, AND ANDREA WILLIAMS

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## ALEX G. ROMAIN



Alex G. Romain is a leading national trial lawyer with more than 20 years of experience in commercial litigation and white-collar criminal defense.

He was a member of the trial team that exonerated the late Senator Ted Stevens; *The American Lawyer* described his team's work on the case as "one of the best criminal defense performances in memory." Among other high-profile matters, Mr. Romain successfully represented the Baltimore Ravens in connection with the independent investigation into the National Football League's handling of the Ray Rice domestic-violence incident. Mr. Romain also successfully represented the former chairman and CEO of Fannie Mae against securities fraud claims.

Mr. Romain has litigated on behalf of private equity and accounting firms, and has defended individuals and corporations against allegations of campaign finance violations, obstruction of justice, bank fraud, environmental pollution, theft, fraudulent misappropriation, and attempted murder.

Alex was selected to *Lawdragon's* 500 Leading Lawyers in America and was featured in *Law360's* Minority Powerbrokers series. He was selected to *Savoy Magazine's* list of Most Influential Black Lawyers. He has also recently been featured in *The Recorder* and in *Attorney at Law Magazine* as Attorney of the Month.

Before moving to California, Alex spent 10 years as a litigation partner at Williams & Connolly in Washington, D.C. During law school, he worked at the Department of Justice, where he received the United States Attorney General's Special Commendation Award for Outstanding Service.

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## LAURA SMOLOWE



Laura Smolowe is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Munger, Tolles & Olson, and co-leads the Trade Secret and Employee Mobility Practice Group.

Ms. Smolowe has represented Fortune 500 companies as lead counsel, and her successful trial verdicts have twice been named by the *Daily Journal* as Top Defense Verdicts of the year. In 2017, Ms. Smolowe was recognized among the Most Influential Intellectual Property Lawyers by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*. In 2019, she was selected as a Southern California Rising Star by *Super Lawyers*.

Ms. Smolowe maintains an active pro bono docket, where she focuses on civil rights cases. For this work, Ms. Smolowe was a 2018 recipient of the ACLU's Equal Justice Award and a 2011 recipient of the ACLU's Courageous Advocacy Award.

Ms. Smolowe is a national co-chair of the American Bar Association's Judicial Intern Opportunity Program. She is a member of the Board of Trustees for Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Ms. Smolowe also serves on the boards of the anti-poverty non-profit LIFT-LA. From 2011-2014, she served on the California State Bar's Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services, to which she was appointed by the State Bar's Board of Trustees.

Ms. Smolowe, a graduate of Yale Law School, joined the firm after clerkships with the Honorable Richard A. Paez on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and Judge Dean D. Pregerson on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

**ANDREA WILLIAMS**



Andrea Williams is an accomplished corporate executive, communications leader, and spokesperson who has a comprehensive background in leading all facets of communications in multiple industries.

Ms. Williams is currently a managing director at Oaktree Capital Management, where she is Global Head of Corporate Communications & Branding and a member of Oaktree's Management Committee and Senior Leadership Council. At Oaktree, Ms. Williams preserves, protects, and enhances the company's corporate reputation and supports the ascension of co-founder Howard Marks to a globally recognized thought leader. She also regularly advises on communications, rebranding, and crisis management issues.

Prior to Oaktree, Ms. Williams was recruited to Mindspeed Technologies in the semiconductor industry to structure a communications and investor relations turnaround strategy that resulted in a 1200% increase in stock price and facilitated multiple public equity and debt offerings.

Ms. Williams began her career on Wall Street, where she began building her track record of successfully building corporate communications and investor relations functions to support strategic growth of her organizations.

Ms. Williams is a member of the board of the Friends of the Pasadena Public Library and currently serves in the role of treasurer of the organization. Ms. Williams graduated from Columbia University and has an MBA from Southern Methodist University.

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

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

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

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**WED 01 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**A Viennese New Year  
with Zubin**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

**THU 02 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Matthew Bourne's  
Swan Lake**

CENTER THEATRE GROUP  
@ Ahmanson Theatre  
Thru 1/05

**FRI 03 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Mehta's Mahler**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 1/05

**MON 06 JAN/ Noon**

**Food Truck Fundays**

@ The Music Center Plaza  
Every Monday

**TUE 07 JAN / 11:00 a.m.**

**LUNCH À LA PARK:**

**Food Trucks**

@ Grand Park  
Every Tue/Wed/Thur

**WED 08 JAN / 12:15 p.m.**

**LUNCH A LA PARK:**

**Yoga reTREAT**

@ Grand Park  
Every Wed/Fri

**FRI 10 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Mehta Conducts Wagner  
& More**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 1/12

**FRI 10 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**An Acoustic Evening with  
Jason Isbell**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

**SUN 12 JAN / 6:30 p.m.**

**What the Constitution  
Means to Me**

CENTER THEATRE GROUP  
@ Mark Taper Forum  
Thru 2/16

**SUN 12 JAN / 7:30 p.m.**

**Christian Schmitt**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

**TUE 14 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**The Last Ship**

CENTER THEATRE GROUP  
@ Ahmanson Theatre  
Thru 2/16

**TUE 14 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Russian Romantics**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

**THU 16 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Bach, Handel, and Telemann**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 1/17

**THU 16 JAN / 8:30 p.m.**

**Infinitely Yours**

by Miwa Matreyek  
REDCAT  
@Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 1/18

**SAT 18 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Adams Conducts Adams**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 1/19

**FRI 24 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Beethoven with Emanuel Ax**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 1/26

**SUN 26 JAN / 7:00 p.m.**

**Sunrise: A Song of Two  
Humans**

LA MASTER CHORALE  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

**THU 30 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**USC Thornton Symphony**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

**FRI 31 JAN / 11:00 a.m.**

**All-Strauss**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall  
Thru 2/02

**FRI 31 JAN / 8:00 p.m.**

**Tune-Yards**

LA PHIL  
@ Walt Disney Concert Hall

Visit [musiccenter.org](http://musiccenter.org) for additional  
information on all upcoming events.

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