

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

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.

LIBRETTO

by Joan Beal

I. Creation

(from Hesiod's *Theogony*,
translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, 1914)

Sing now, sing muses, tell the tale
We who hold the highest mount
dance on soft feet.

These things declare to me
Tell how at first gods and earth came to be
And the gleaming stars, gloomy night

Sing now, sing muses, tell the tale

Shepherds of wilderness, things of shame
Speak false things as though they were true
Sing of themselves, both first and last

boundless, mortal

From starry heaven and gloomy night,
from starry heaven and gloomy night

Sing now, sing muses, tell the tale

Tell how at first earth came to be

Sometimes bitter
Sometimes sweet.

II. Summertime

(from Song of Solomon, Chapter 2)

Arise my darling
Come be with me

Arise my darling
come, come, come here

Flowers appear on earth,

See how the winter is past,
Rains are over and gone
Come, come with me

Oh, my dove
Show your face.

Show me your face,
Let me hear your voice

III. Seduction

(from Song of Solomon, Chapters 2 and 5)

Open, drink your fill

I have taken off my robe
Must I put it on?

Open, drink your fill.
Beloved, I await.

I have washed my feet,
Must I soil them?

Open, for my beloved.
Drink your fill of love.

I looked for him, but could not find him,
I called him, he did not answer.

Beloved, answer
Hear me.

His arms are rods of gold
set with topaz.
Oh my dove, show your face.

His legs are pillars of marble
set on bases of pure gold.

Oh my dove, show me your face
Let me hear your voice.

Come drink your fill, beloved one.
Come.

Come my love,
Show your face.

Catch for us
Catch they that run,
Catch the foxes,

They ruin vineyards.

For my love is mine
And I am his
He is mine and I am his.

Our vineyard was in bloom.
Foxes ruin, foxes ruin

Catch for us the little foxes,
They that ruin all our vineyards.

My beloved is mine.

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

IV. The Seal

(Song of Solomon, Chapter 8)

Place me
Over your heart
Place me, like a seal
Over your heart
For love is strong as death.

It burns like fire.

Place me, like a seal,
over your heart,

Drink your fill of love

Starry heaven,
Gloomy night
Sing muses.
Many waters cannot quench love
Boundless, mortal

It burns like blazing fire
Mighty flame
It burns like fire,
Like a mighty flame
As strong as death.

Place me like a seal
Over your heart
It burns like a flame

Many waters cannot quench love
It burns like a blazing fire
Many waters cannot
Quench love.

Drink your fill
Of love.

V. Where Has He Gone?

(Song of Solomon, Chapter 6)

Where has your beloved gone?
Which way did he turn?
My beloved.

Where has your beloved gone?
Which way did your love, your beloved, turn?
Where did he turn?

Oh, my beloved
He has gone down to the garden.

You are a garden, locked up.
I am, I am
She is mine, is mine.

Until day breaks
And shadows flee
Turn, my beloved.

Tell me who,
Tell me you
Who my soul loves.

Tell me where you may lie.
Lie here, lie down.
Do not gaze at me.

Turn, my beloved.
Turn your eyes from me.

Arise darling,
Come be with me.

Shadows flee

Draw me now after you,
Let us run.

Sing now, sweet muses,
Speaking false things as though true.

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

VI. The Boat Ride

“Schliesse mir die Augen beide” by Theodor Storm (1817–1888)

Schliesse mir die Augen beide
mit den lieben Händen zu!
Geht doch alles, was ich leide,
unter deiner Hand zur Ruh.

Und wie leise sich der Schmerz
Well' um Welle schlafen leget,
wie der letzte Schlag sich reget,
füllest du mein ganzes Herz.

English translation:

Close both my eyes
with your beloved hands!
Let all my suffering
gain rest beneath your hand.

And as gently the pain
wave upon wave lies in sleep,
As the last blow falls
you fill my whole heart.

VII. The Trolley

Lines of text selected from “Toward the Piraeus”
by Hilda Doolittle (aka HD) (1886–1961)

Slay with your eyes, men
over the earth.
Break, as ranks of steel
Now we would count them gods.

Men made you a god,
And claimed me set apart
Apart from the rest.

You would have broken my wings
A seal on my bitter heart
Broke and fluttered
Bound and caught

VIII. The Café

Lines of text selected from “Toward the Piraeus”
by Hilda Doolittle (aka HD)

Though my knees tremble,
My heart breaks.

My hands, my hands
Are cold

You would have broken my wings
You would have snared me

May not turn or move
Must wait and watch

You would have broken my wings.

IX. The Church

Original text by Joan Beal and reprise of Hesiod's *Theogony*

Beloved,
We gather, heavy laden
Tossed by endless sea.
In the presence,
boundless, mortal,
Finally set free.

Lashed together,
Hold fast.
Let go.
Hold fast.

Sing now,
Sing muses, tell the tale.

We who hold the highest mount
dance on soft feet.

These things declare to me
Tell how at first gods and earth came to be
And the gleaming stars, gloomy night

Sing now, sing muses, tell the tale

Shepherds of wilderness, things of shame
Speak false things as though they were true
Sing of themselves, both first and last
boundless, mortal

Giver of good things
Born of earth
Sunlight and gloomy night
Great and wretched,
Born of earth.

X. The Barbershop

Lines of text selected from “Toward the Piraeus”
by Hilda Doolittle (aka HD)

Whoosh
Shine

A new you.
A brand new you.

Snared me,
Possess
Scattered my nest
You would have snared me

Grant us one mantel
To strike men
Craven and weak.

Grant us but one
To frighten

Grant us but one
To strike.

To fright as your eyes
With a sword.
Men made you a god.
Set me apart.

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

XI. The Photo Studio

Original text by Joan Beal; Song of Solomon

Balla, bella, balla (Dance, beautiful one, dance)
Darling, come be with me

My dove, show me your face
Flowers appear on earth.

Let me hear your sweet voice
Balla, bella, balla.

See how winter is passed,
Rain is over and gone

Balla, bella, balla,
Come and be with me

My dove show your face
Darling let me see you.
Let me hear your sweet voice.
Little one.

My dove show me your face.
Balla, bella, balla
See how winter is passed
Rain is over and gone
Balla, bella, balla.

Ah, my beloved is mine

It burns like a blazing fire
A flame.

XII. La Cité

Text by Joan Beal

La cité lumière,
Écoutez
La cité nouveau
Écoutez
L'étranger

Écoutez, l'étranger,
La cité reveiller

Liebe, komm
Tanz mit mir.
Liebe, Liebe
Warum
Tanzen wir?
Mein Liebe,
Tanz mit mir.
Wo sind Sie?

Wohin gehst Du?
Wohin gehen Sie?

Ich bin hier,
Tanz mit mir!

Liebchen, Liebchen
Wohin gehst du?

The city of light
Listen
The new city
Listen
The stranger

Listen, the stranger
The city wakes up

Lover, come,
Dance with me
Lover, lover
why
Do we dance?
My love,
Dance with me.
Where are you?

Where are you going?
Where are you going?

I am here,
Dance with me!

sweetheart, sweetheart
Where are you going?

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

Trinken wir
Balla, bella, balla.
Liebe
Deine, meine Schweine
Liebe
Ich bin trunken
Mit mir
Deine, meine Schweine
Ich bin trunken
Mit der Wein.
Liebe, tanz mit mir!

Wein!
Deine, meine Schweine
Kleine Schwein
Mehr Wein!

Trinken wir.
Du hast das Schwein gefangen.
Danke, können wir trinken
Ich bin trunken
Mit der Liebe.

XIII. The Peasant Dance

“Brüderlein, komm tanz mit mir” from *Hansel und Gretel*
Text by Adelheid Wette (1858–1916)

Einmal hin, ein mal her,
komm tanz, tanz mit mir.
Einmal hin, ein mal her,
komm tanz, tanz mit mir.

Brüderlein tanz mit mir, komm
Rundherum, das ist nicht schwer
Komm und tanz mit mir.

Mit den Händen klapp, klapp
A klapp, a klapp
Komm tanz mit mir

Mit dem Köpfen nick
A tick a tick
Komm tanz mit mir.

Einmal hin, einmal her.
Klapp klapp, trapp trapp
Nick nick, tick tick

Let's drink
Dance, beautiful one, dance
Lover
Yours, my pigs
Lover
I am drunk
with me
Yours, my pigs
I am drunk
With the wine.
Lover, dance with me!

Wine!
Yours, my pigs
little pig,
More wine!

Let's drink
You have caught the pig!
Thank you, we can drink
I am drunk
With love.

One time there, one time here,
Come dance, dance with me.
One time there, one time here,
Come dance, dance with me.

Little brother dance with me, come
All around, it's not hard
Come and dance with me.

With your hands clap, clap
a-clap, a-clap
Come dance with me

With your head nick
a-tick, a-tick
Come dance with me

Once this way, once that way
Clap, clap, clap, clap
Nick, nick, tick, tick

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

XIV. The Drink

(Lines of text from Song of Solomon and *Theogony*)

Drink your fill of love
I have come into my garden

You have come in the garden
Then, if I found you outside,
I would kiss you.
Then I would kiss you, my love.

Do not awaken love
Until it so desires.

Who is this appearing,
Fair as the moon
Bright as the sun?
You who dwell in the garden
Sing on
Bright, bright as sun
Fair as the moon.

Let me hear your voice,
Sing now muses,
Boundless, mortal.

Until the day breaks and shadows flee
Fair as the moon,
Bright as the sun.
Now it is day,
Then it was night.
Until the day breaks and shadows flee,
Come back, Come back to me.

Day is as long as night,
Gleaming stars,
Heavens above,
Boundless sea,
Tell how the earth came to be.

XV. The Storm

Reprise of "Schliesse mir die Augen Beide"

XVI. The Search

(text compiled from Beal, Song of Solomon and *Theogony*)

Well'um welle
Show me your face,
Let me hear your voice.
Mein ganzes Herz

Love is strong as death,
It burns,
A blazing fire
Unyielding as the grave

Many waters cannot quench love
Rivers cannot wash it away.

Well'um Welle
Schlafen
Unter deiner Hand
Boundless, Mortal

We gather,
Heavy laden
Tossed by endless sea

In the presence
Boundless, mortal
Finally set free.
Lashed together
Hold fast,
Let go, hold fast, let go.
Until day breaks and shadows flee
Tell us how earth came to be.

XVII. Muses

from *Theogony*

Muses, let us sing
We who hold the high mount
Dance upon soft feet
Around the blue spring
We know how to utter true things.

Shepherds of the wild
Wretched things of shame
Bellies full of lies,
Wretched things of shame.

Muses sing only truth.

XVIII. Sunrise

(text from *Theogony*, Song of Solomon)

Boundless, mortal
Until the daybreaks and shadows flee
Fair as the moon
And bright as the sun.

Drink your fill.
Now it is day,
Until the day breaks and shadows flee
Come back
Come back to me

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

SUNRISE: A SONG OF TWO HUMANS

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.”

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* 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 Bovyer
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 & 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*, *Florenzia 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

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.

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."

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 *Lagrima di San Pietro* on their acclaimed world tour in 2020.