

PRESS RELEASE

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L O S   A N G E L E S

# MASTER CHORALE

**Fifth Graders to Perform Their Own Songs as Part of the  
Los Angeles Master Chorale's Voices Within Program  
November 15 & 17**



**Huntington Park Elementary School**  
**Wednesday, November 15, 9:30 AM & 10:45 AM**  
6055 Corona Ave., Huntington Park

**Mt. Washington Elementary School**  
**Friday, November 17, 9:00 AM & 10:30 AM**  
3981 San Rafael Ave, Los Angeles



(Los Angeles, CA) October 31, 2017 – There are two pivotal moments during the Los Angeles Master Chorale’s Voices Within education program when the reality of creating their own songs truly resonates with the fifth grade students taking part: the first is when they realize that *they* are expected to create the melody for their song — it is not being written for them; and the second is when they are standing alongside professional Master Chorale singers, about to perform the songs they composed.

“They straighten up,” says Teaching Artist, lyricist Brett Paesel, “and you see them be like, ‘Oh! This is really happening!’”

For students at Huntington Park Elementary School and Mt. Washington Elementary School these performances will happen on **Wednesday, November 15** (Huntington Park) and **Friday, November 17** (Mt. Washington) when they perform their songs for fellow students, teachers, and friends and family. Each school will give two performances.

The concerts are the culmination of the 10-week Voices Within program that brings three teaching artists — a composer, a lyricist, and a performer — into the schools to introduce the students to music ideas such as pitch, rhythm, and melody, and teaches them how to apply these concepts to songwriting. Fifty-six students at Huntington Park Elementary took part in this edition of the program and 75 students at Mt. Washington Elementary.

A theme for the songs is provided and the students work in groups to write the lyrics and melodies for six songs. This year students at Mt. Washington Elementary wrote songs based on the theme of “Figurative Language.” Each songwriting group was assigned an aspect of Figurative Language with the six topics being Alliteration, Onomatopoeia, Hyperbole, Oxymoron, Idiom, and Personification. Among the resulting song titles are “Terrible Tortured Taco Tuesday,” “Heaven is a Piece of Cake,” and “All These Oxymorons.” Teaching Artists for Mt. Washington are Paesel, performer Amy Fogerson, and composer David O.



The theme for the Huntington Park students was “Stepping Into the Future” with resulting songs including “Make Your Body Last,” “My Floating House,” and “Whatever You Plant,” among others. Huntington Park Teaching Artists are performer Alice Kirwan Murray, lyricist Doug Cooney, and composer David O.

David O says finding consensus within the group is another skill Voices Within fosters: “They’ll naturally start with ‘whoever has the loudest voice wins,’ then they’ll try to go to some sort of democratic process, which is a fine ideal, but the ideal of this group is that they come up with an idea that they can all get behind — that all five, six, seven people sitting around the table can get behind one idea.”

The performances provide an exciting culmination of the project with the additional motivation of the students being joined by eight members of the Los Angeles Master Chorale who sing with them.

“You can see it in their faces at the performance, their joy in presenting their own work to their families and to their colleagues at school, and it’s incredible,” says Amy Fogerson. “Sometimes you come across 10 and 11-year-olds who say they don’t like singing but by the last performance they are singing their hearts out because it’s a piece that they wrote themselves — their own work presented to the world. It’s very special.”

Paesel says another core element of Voices Within is that it strips away the mystery around creating art: “There’s a disconnect sometimes — with arts specifically I think — where people think that you’re simply talented, or not, rather than realizing it’s a discipline, a thing you work on, a way to collaborate together, and that these things take time and go through a process.”



The Los Angeles Master Chorale partners with elementary schools for Voices Within residencies twice a year with concerts in the Fall and Spring. Additionally, Voices Within includes an Oratorio Project that engages high school students to compose a full-length oratorio and then perform it. In February, Van Nuys High School students performed their oratorio, *In America*, about Japanese-American incarceration camps during World War II that was featured in a nationally-broadcast *PBS NewsHour* story. The Los Angeles Master Chorale's education programming also includes an annual High School Choir Festival that brings around 1,000 student singers from around the Southland to perform at Walt Disney Concert Hall. The 2018 Festival will be held on Friday, May 18.

Voices Within was developed for the Los Angeles Master Chorale by Marnie Mosiman in collaboration with Bernardo Solano, Penka Kouneva, David O, and Doug Cooney. The first residency was held in 2000 and the program has subsequently been awarded Chorus America's Education Outreach Award. Voices Within is made possible by generous grants from:

- American Business Bank
- Ann Peppers Foundation
- The ASCAP Foundation Irving Caesar Fund
- Harry Bronson and Edith R. Knapp Foundation
- California Arts Council
- City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
- Employees Community Fund of Boeing California
- The Thornton S. Glide Jr. and Katrina D. Glide Foundation
- The Green Foundation
- William H. Hannon Foundation
- Thelma Pearl Howard Foundation
- The Rose Hills Foundation
- Lon V. Smith Foundation
- Sidney Stern Memorial Trust
- John and Beverly Stauffer Foundation
- Dwight Stuart Youth Fund
- Walter J. and Holly O. Thomson Foundation



**CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:**

Voices Within concerts performed by fifth grade students featuring members of the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

Open to the public & free to attend. (Street parking only.)

**WHEN & WHERE:**

**Wednesday, November 15, 9:30 AM & 10:45 AM**

Huntington Park Elementary School, 6055 Corona Avenue, Huntington Park, CA 90255

**Friday, November 17, 9:00 AM & 10:30 AM**

Mt. Washington Elementary School, 3981 San Rafael Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90065

[VIEW VOICES WITHIN VIDEO \(SPRING 2017\)](#)

[VIEW VIDEO OF THE TEACHING ARTISTS TALKING ABOUT VOICES WITHIN](#)

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Members of the press are welcome to attend, photograph, and film the Voices Within performances. Please rsvp to [jscott@lamasterchorale.org](mailto:jscott@lamasterchorale.org).

*Pictured: Students from Carlos Santana Arts Academy performing a Voices Within concert in 2016.*

