

L O S A N G E L E S

MASTER CHORALE

GRANT GERSHON, KIKI & DAVID GINDLER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

GALA 2021: SHINE BRIGHT Honors Philanthropist Laney Techentin and the Los Angeles Master Chorale Singers

With Special Guest Host Patti LuPone

Online experience features performances by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, including a virtual “surround sing” and the world premiere of *Shine Bright*, a video triptych of Reena Esmail’s “TaReKiTa,” Meredith Monk’s “Earth Seen From Above,” and Derrick Spiva, Jr.’s “Ready, Bright”



**Sunday, May 16, 2021
5 p.m. PDT, reception
6 p.m. PDT, show**

Tickets for GALA 2021 start at \$25

Please visit <https://lamasterchorale.org/gala-2021> for information about ticket packages and benefits

(Los Angeles, CA) April 15, 2021 – The **Los Angeles Master Chorale**, the country’s preeminent professional choir, led by Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, will honor its singers and the philanthropic leadership of Laney Techentin at **GALA 2021: SHINE BRIGHT**, on Sunday, May 16, 2021 at 5 p.m. PDT. This special online experience, hosted by Broadway legend **Patti LuPone**, will feature performances by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, including a virtual “surround sing,” and the world premiere of **Shine Bright**, a triptych of videos featuring **Reena Esmail’s** “TaReKiTa,” **Meredith Monk’s** “Earth Seen From Above” from her landmark opera *Atlas*, and **Derrick Spiva, Jr.’s** “Ready, Bright” (Los Angeles Master Chorale commission). “[TaReKiTa](#)” was released in November 2020, and “Earth Seen from Above” and “Ready, Bright” will premiere at GALA 2021.

“We are at a transformative time in our history. The single most important thing we can do is find creative ways to come together and celebrate what we all love,” said Gershon. “The Master Chorale’s 2021 gala is an opportunity to celebrate the power of connection through choral music, and acknowledge the indomitable spirits of our singers and longtime Master Chorale supporter and friend, Laney Techentin.”

“This past year has shown us the importance and value of singing to our everyday lives, so it was only appropriate to honor the Master Chorale singers, whose artistry has given joy to so many,” said President & CEO Jean Davidson. “We are also proud to honor Laney Techentin and her unwavering dedication to the Master Chorale for over thirty years.”

“Earth Seen from Above” features 31 Master Chorale singers who recorded the audio tracks remotely; 10 of those singers were filmed at Walt Disney Concert Hall. The Master Chorale worked with the film production company and creative powerhouse [Subtractive, Inc.](#), and Walt Disney Concert Hall production staff to create a captivating visual experience. The 10 singers filmed for the video honor the “forward undulation” body movement notated by Meredith Monk in the score for *Atlas*. “Earth Seen from Above” also features dancer Ryan Spencer, who performs in locations throughout the concert hall and its gardens. “Earth Seen from Above” is about a

young girl's journey to the four corners of our world and beyond, and is from the opera's third and final part, "Invisible Light," where the protagonist reflects upon her journey and returns to Earth.

Conducted by Dr. Jenny Wong, Associate Artistic Director, "TaReKiTa" was written by Reena Esmail as a gift for Urban Voices Project, a choir composed of people who have or are experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles. Esmail, the Master Chorale's Swan Family Artist-in-Residence, and videographer Gabriel Zuniga, collaborated with 24 singers to create this video performance, which also features classically-trained Bharatanatyam choreographer Shalini Haupt. "TaReKiTa" is based on the bols (sounds) of the tabla, a traditional Indian drum. The result, says Esmail, is "ecstatic, energetic, rhythmic music that feels good on the tongue."

Commissioned by the Los Angeles Master Chorale in 2020, "Ready, Bright" is the fourth piece in *Anthems Of A Crowd*, a collection of choral works that integrates the aesthetics of different vocal traditions found around the world into single pieces. In "Ready, Bright" the listener hears elements of call and response (found in many cultures, including West Africa) between soloist and choir, as well as between sections of the choir. The piece also includes elements of traditional Ewe music from the Volta region of Ghana. Spiva blends his early musical experiences in the Black church with elements of West African traditions (Spiva studied drumming in Ghana) and his own L.A. infused vibe, including the strong influence of hip hop, layered with jazz, gospel, and pop vocal traditions. "Ready, Bright" is both powerfully of-this-moment and fantastically engaging. "Ready, Bright" features performances by 48 Master Chorale singers, including four soloists, Sharmila Lash, Kristen Toedtman, Charlie Kim, and Adrien Tishkowitz. An ensemble of 8 singers was filmed at MediaBox Studios, 4 dancers were filmed at South Coast Botanic Garden, and featured choreographer/dancer [Yeko Ladzekpo-Cole](#) was filmed at the Nate Starkman Building near downtown LA. "Ready, Bright" is directed by filmmaker Emily Bloom of [Island Creek Pictures](#). Post-production services are generously provided by [Therapy Studios](#).

The Master Chorale's "surround sing" video will feature all 100 singers performing "Abendlied" by Josef Rheinberger, led by Grant Gershon and Jenny Wong collaborating with videographer [Daniel Anderson](#). As each of the singers appear on the screen, their names and the number of seasons they have been with the Chorale will appear to spotlight their commitment to the

Master Chorale. The performance will be complemented by images of Los Angeles, and will conclude with a 360 degree shot of the Walt Disney Concert Hall auditorium.

Patti LuPone, a multiple Tony and Grammy award-winning actor, singer, and champion of performing artists everywhere, will serve as Special Guest Host of GALA 2021: Shine Bright. LuPone's professional collaborations with Gershon include Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* at the Ravinia Festival and *Sweeney Todd* with the New York Philharmonic.

Since 1964, the singers of the Los Angeles Master Chorale have inspired audiences with their outstanding performances, and today they are recognized as one of the leading professional choirs in the world. They are musical ambassadors for Los Angeles, with performances from Mexico City to the Salzburg Festival, and numerous recordings including the premiere of Eric Whitacre's *The Sacred Veil*. They are leaders in our region's cultural life through impactful and joyous community programs such as the Big Sing, and education programs which reach thousands of young people annually. Even amidst the pandemic, our singers have shown true artistry, commitment and resilience—sharing their voices through online performances and education initiatives. This group of resilient, exceptional musicians truly give voice to our organization and the city we call home.

Building on the legacy of her father, Z. Wayne Griffin, who was instrumental in establishing the Master Chorale at The Music Center in 1964, **Laney Techentin** served as a board member from 1979 through 1981, and re-joined in 1992. Laney and her late husband, Tom, also a fervent lover of the Master Chorale, were patron chairs of the Master Chorale's 50th anniversary gala. Laney supports other arts institutions throughout Los Angeles, including the Pasadena Conservatory and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. A resident of Pasadena, Laney remains a board member to this day, offering the guidance that only someone with her intelligence and love for our art form can provide.

Shine Bright is made possible by underwriting support from Kiki Ramos Gindler and David Gindler; GALA 2021 Platinum Sponsors Warren Techentin, Kristin Harrison, and Nick Techentin in honor of their mother Elayne Techentin; and by generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts; the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture; Marla

Borowski; Lisa Field, Field Family Foundation; Pamela Reis; and Sandy Pressman in honor of Reena Esmail.

The performance of “Ready, Bright” is made possible by a generous gift from Susan Erburu Reardon and George Reardon. In kind support is provided by South Coast Botanic Garden.

The performance of “TaReKiTa” is made possible by a generous gift from Robert and Sally Neely in honor of Stephanie Neely, Max Gladstone, and Casey Gladstone.

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

Media support is generously provided by Subtractive and Therapy Studios.

[ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE](#)

[ABOUT GRANT GERSHON, KIKI & DAVID GINDLER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR](#)

[ABOUT JEAN DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT & CEO](#)

[ABOUT JENNY WONG, ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR](#)

[ABOUT REENA ESMAIL, SWAN FAMILY ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE](#)

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE MEDIA CONTACT:

Lisa Bellamore
Crescent Communications
lbellamore@gmail.com | 323-500-3071

High resolution photos available to download from our [online press room](#).

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