



L O S A N G E L E S

MASTER CHORALE

Los Angeles Master Chorale's Oratorio Project 2025:

**Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts
Students Write, Compose and Premiere *Home: The Buried
History of Chavez Ravine***

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts

Free public performance at 7:00 p.m.

LOS ANGELES (Friday, February 14, 2025) – Los Angeles Master Chorale's Oratorio Project, now in its 15th year, returns to Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts—the first school to host the project in 2010. After a successful collaboration from 2010 to 2015, the project now returns nearly a decade later to premiere *Home: The Buried History of Chavez Ravine*. Students from the Mixed Chorus & Chamber Singers at Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, in collaboration with Los Angeles Master Chorale teaching artists: Alice Kirwan Murray, Brett Paesel &



135 NORTH GRAND AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3013
213-972-3122 | LAMASTERCHORALE.ORG

Saunders Choi, have crafted both the words and melodies for this new work, which tells the story of three Mexican-American communities that once thrived in the land where Dodger Stadium now stands.

Each year, the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Oratorio Project, born out of the Voices Within program, immerses high school students in a collaborative 20-week residency to write the libretto and music score for a large, complex choral work similar to an opera. Students delve into historically and culturally rich subjects to find a meaningful story to tell through music. This year's oratorio, *Home: The Buried History of Chavez Ravine* is especially poignant, set in a community still shaped by the history it recounts. Located just over the hill and less than a mile away, Chavez Ravine is not only the setting but also a living testament to the communities and events it portrays, with many locals tracing family ties to the displacement that forever altered the neighborhood. The oratorio revives past struggles while illuminating their lasting impact on today's social and cultural fabric.

Over 100 Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts students will be involved in this performance, led by Choir Director Drew Lewis who was honored as a 2024 California Teacher of the Year by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond. This is the sixth residency the Oratorio Project has had at Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, a dual-mission high school dedicated to providing aspiring artists and scholars with an academically rigorous pre-college curriculum and a comprehensive, four-year pre-conservatory arts program.

The 40-minute work has been arranged for SATB choir, chamber orchestra, soloists and instruments by Composer Teaching Artist Saunders Choi and will be premiered by Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts students joined by singers from the Master Chorale and conducted by Choir Director Drew Lewis.

Carol Jacques, whose stories and materials were referenced during the research portion of the Oratorio Project, will participate in a post-performance talk. As one of the most outspoken advocates for the history of Chavez Ravine, Jacques offers invaluable insights—especially given that many former residents are no longer alive to share their stories firsthand.

This performance will be featured in an upcoming documentary about Chavez Ravine called *Blue Heaven*, produced by Someone Great Pictures.

Movement titles:



- Movement 1 Home Base
- Movement 2 Everyone Here Knows Everyone
- Movement 3 Man With A Plan
- Movement 4 The Battle of Chavez Ravine
- Movement 5 Whose Land is It Anyway?
- Movement 6 No Profits, No Benefits
- Movement 7 Born Into A Story
- Movement 8 People Like Us Matter

The Master Chorale's Oratorio Project consistently sheds light on powerful and socially relevant stories. Last year's oratorio, *(un)American: The Oratorio*, written by students from Granada Hills Charter High School, explored the impact of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the fear-driven political climate of the 1950s. In 2022, Hamilton High School students composed *Stonewall: The Oratorio*, a tribute to the 1969 Stonewall uprising and its pivotal role in igniting the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement.

The Oratorio Project, a Voices Within program, is made possible by generous support from Bryant, Judi and Debra Danner; William and Patricia Flumenbaum; the California Arts Council; the Edward A. & Ai O. Shay Family Foundation; City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs; The Green Foundation; The Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Norris Foundation; Dwight Stuart Youth Fund; Walter and Holly Thomson Foundation; William H. Hannon Foundation; John and Beverly Stauffer Foundation; Lon V. Smith Foundation; and Sidney Stern Memorial Trust.

AT A GLANCE:

Home: The Buried History of Chavez Ravine

An original oratorio by Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts students created for the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Oratorio Project. Performed by Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts students joined by singers of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and conducted by Drew Lewis, Choir Director, Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts.

Full score arranged and orchestrated for SATB choir, chamber orchestra, soloists and instruments by Saunder Choi.

Thursday, March 6, 2025
Ramón C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts Concert Hall
450 N Grand Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Free performance open to the public at 7:00 p.m.

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE MEDIA CONTACT:



Lisa Bellamore
Crescent Communications
lbellamore@gmail.com

###

