

L O S   A N G E L E S

# MASTER CHORALE

**Los Angeles Master Chorale's Oratorio Project 2023:**

**Hamilton High School Students Write, Compose and  
Premiere *Stonewall: The Oratorio***



**Wednesday, March 29, 2023  
Hamilton High School Auditorium**

**School assembly at 1:20 p.m.  
Free performance open to the public at 7:00 p.m.**



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**LOS ANGELES (Tuesday, March 21, 2023)** – Los Angeles Master Chorale’s Oratorio Project, now in its 12th year, celebrates the civil rights uprising that took place on June 28, 1969 and ignited the gay rights Movement we know today, with the premiere of *Stonewall: The Oratorio*. Sixty students from choir classes in the Academy of Music and Performing Arts at Hamilton High School wrote the melodies and lyrics with teaching artists from the Master Chorale to tell the pressing story of The Stonewall Inn through this eight-movement oratorio.

Starting in the fall of 2022, the Los Angeles Master Chorale began working in person with students at Hamilton High School to create this original musical work. Each year, the project challenges and supports students to write an original oratorio, a large, complex choral work, exploring an encompassing theme. *Stonewall: The Oratorio* honors the LGBTQ community’s embattled progress and extraordinary history.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, homosexuality was outlawed and categorized as a mental disease. At that time, members of the LGBTQ community, fearing exposure that could cost them their jobs, families, and even their lives, stayed largely in the closet. One place that offered community and anonymity was New York City.

In the late 60’s, The Stonewall Inn in lower Manhattan was a safe haven for those in the LGBTQ community despite constant police raids of gay bars during this time. Repressed for far too long, in 1969, for the first time, the gay and trans community fought back against the police. These riots led to a movement of community members organizing around and fighting for issues such as visibility and legal and social equality.

In the days that followed, community members (notably two transwomen: Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera) started to organize around issues that directly affected them – the most important issue being visibility. By taking to the streets and refusing to hide anymore, gay rights activists made enormous strides in legal and social equity (as well as forcing attention to the worldwide AIDS crisis).

This is the first time the Oratorio Project has been in residency at Hamilton High School, which is known for having a strong music program through the Academy of Music and Performing Arts. This LAUSD Magnet program has combined rigorous academic study with performing arts in a way that prepares students for advanced higher education. The Hamilton High students were joined in this collaboration by Master Chorale professional teaching artists Alice Kirwan Murray, singer; Brett Paesel,



lyricist; and Saunder Choi, composer. Under these mentors, the students were able to foster their creativity and hone their skills in a safe artistic environment while creating a moving and impressive work of art.

The fully orchestrated 40-minute work will be performed by Hamilton High School students joined by singers from the Master Chorale.

### **Movement titles:**

- Movement 1 Queer Fear
- Movement 2 Assimilation, Activism, Acceptance
- Movement 3 New York City
- Movement 4 Breaking Out
- Movement 5 We All Are Leaders
- Movement 6 Safe Haven
- Movement 7 A Ways to Go
- Movement 8 We Have Come So Far

The Master Chorale's Oratorio Project has a history of tackling relevant and serious subjects. Last year's oratorio, *Imagine A City*, had Van Nuys High School students writing seven original songs about utopian cities in its first in person collaboration since the pandemic. In May 2021, during the pandemic period, the Master Chorale's Oratorio Project continued with the digital premiere of *Naia: The Spirit of Hoyo Negro*, an oratorio also written by Van Nuys High School students, about the discovery of 13,000-year-old ice age skeleton.

The Oratorio Project, a Voices Within program, is made possible by generous support from the California Arts Council, The Rose Hills Foundation, the Edward A. & Ai O. Shay Family Foundation, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, The Green Foundation, Dwight Stuart Youth Fund, Walter and Holly Thomson Foundation, Employees Community Fund of Boeing California, William H. Hannon Foundation, John and Beverly Stauffer Foundation, Lon V. Smith Foundation, Sidney Stern Memorial Trust, and The ASCAP Foundation.

### **AT A GLANCE:**

#### ***Stonewall: The Oratorio***

An original oratorio by Hamilton High School students created for the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Oratorio Project. Performed by Hamilton High School students joined by singers of the Los Angeles Master Chorale.



Full score arranged and orchestrated for chorus, soloists and instruments by Saunder Choi

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

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2955 S Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90034

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