

L O S   A N G E L E S

# MASTER CHORALE

**LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE TO CELEBRATE  
COMPOSER JOHN ADAMS' 70<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY WITH  
PERFORMANCE OF STRAVINSKY'S *LES NOCES & CHORUSES*  
FROM FIVE ADAMS OPERAS**



115-member chorus conducted by Artistic Director Grant Gershon

Soloists Elissa Johnston, Peabody Southwell, Todd Strange, and Nicholas Brownlee; pianists Gloria Cheng, Lisa Edwards, Bryan Pezzone, and Vicki Ray; and percussionists Theresa Dimond, John Wakefield, Scott Higgins, Judy Chilnick, Alex Frederick, and Gary Heaton-Smith

Premiere performance of new piano transcriptions by Chitose Okashiro, curated for Boosey & Hawkes by Gershon, of choruses from *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *Doctor Atomic*, *A Flowering Tree*, and *Nixon in China*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 26 AT 7 PM  
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL**



(Los Angeles, CA, February 2, 2017) – There will be an exuberant musical celebration in Walt Disney Concert Hall on **Sunday, March 26** when the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Artistic Director Grant Gershon celebrate composer John Adams’ 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with *Les Noces*, Stravinsky’s raucous depiction of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian peasant wedding. The concert will open with the premiere of 10 new piano transcriptions of choruses from Adams operas by noted Japanese pianist Chitose Okashiro, curated by Gershon, for music publisher Boosey & Hawkes. The choruses are from *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *Doctor Atomic*, *A Flowering Tree*, and *Nixon in China*. The pianists performing with the choir will be Gloria Cheng, Lisa Edwards, Bryan Pezzone, and Vicki Ray.

All four pianists will also perform Stravinsky’s *Les Noces (The Wedding)* with the Los Angeles Master Chorale and soloists Elissa Johnston (soprano), Peabody Southwell (mezzo soprano), Todd Strange (tenor), and Nicholas Brownlee (bass). The piece requires four grand pianos to be on stage at once, along with a battery of percussion instruments played by Theresa Dimond, John Wakefield, Scott Higgins, Judy Chilnick, Alex Frederick, and Gary Heaton-Smith.

Although it was not premiered until 1923, Stravinsky conceived of his “dance cantata” in 1914 when he was still writing *The Rite of Spring*, finishing his first draft of *Les Noces* in 1917. The piece is dedicated to Sergei Diaghilev, founder of the Ballet Russes, the company that performed the world premiere. Stravinsky has said that *Les Noces* was Diaghilev’s favorite work of his. Adams has also called the piece one of his favorite works and one that has influenced him as a composer.

“John and I have often talked about our shared obsession with Stravinsky’s absolutely bonkers masterpiece, *Les Noces*,” said Gershon. “By featuring *Les Noces* along with these



new transcriptions of John's opera choruses we've created a monster concert for four brilliant LA-based pianists. Gloria, Lisa, Bryan and Vicki each have a long and special relationship with John and with the Master Chorale. This will be a very special celebratory night for all of us, and for the audience."

Gershon and Adams have an enduring friendship and professional relationship which 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' 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 has conducted performances of *Harmonium*, *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, *El Niño*, *The Chairman Dances*, and choruses from *The Death of Klinghoffer*. In November, Gershon will conduct the world premiere of Adams' much-anticipated *Girls of the Golden West* for San Francisco Opera in a production directed by Peter Sellars.

Gershon was recently approached by Boosey & Hawkes to curate and edit a new three volume set of choruses from Adams' operas, newly transcribed for piano by Chitose Okashiro.

"The goal is to create versions of these iconic choral pieces that are more idiomatic for piano than the original piano reductions which were written for rehearsal purposes only," said Gershon. "These new transcriptions will make Adams' opera choruses more accessible for performance by choral ensembles throughout the world."

The Los Angeles Master Chorale has performed a large body of Adams' work. It gave the first Los Angeles performances of choruses from *The Death of Klinghoffer* with Gershon in 2009. It has also performed numerous of his works with the LA Philharmonic including *A Flowering Tree* in 2009 conducted by Adams, and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*



in 2012 and 2013 conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. It also performed *Gospel* at the Ravinia Festival in 2013 with Gershon conducting. The Master Chorale performed Adams' nativity oratorio, *El Niño* in 2003 and 2005 with the LA Phil and Esa-Pekka Salonen, and most recently in 2016 with Gershon. Of this performance, *LA Times* Music Critic Mark Swed said: "With Grant Gershon conducting and his Master Chorale as the chorus, along with members of the L.A. Phil, there was a sense of rightness. No combination of chorus, orchestra and conductor has more experience with Adams' music ..."

The Los Angeles Master Chorale's concert on Sunday, March 26 will follow Gershon conducting three concert performances of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* with San Francisco Symphony February 16-18, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale performing *Nixon in China* with the LA Phil on March 3 and 5 in performances conducted by Adams.

#### **CALENDAR EDITORS:**

#### **WHAT:**

Los Angeles Master Chorale and Artistic Director Grant Gershon perform Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and John Adams opera choruses in celebration of Adams' 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

115 singers

Four pianists: Gloria Cheng, Lisa Edwards, Bryan Pezzone, and Vicki Ray

Four soloists: Elissa Johnston, Peabody Southwell, Todd Strange, and Nicholas Brownlee

Percussion: Theresa Dimond, John Wakefield, Scott Higgins, Judy Chilnick, Alex Frederick, and Gary Heaton-Smith.

**WHEN:** Sunday, March 26 at 7 PM. *ListenUp* pre-concert talk at 6 PM.

**WHERE:** Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave.

#### **TICKETS & BOX OFFICE INFORMATION**

Tickets to all concerts are available now, starting from \$29:

**Online:** [lamasterchorale.org](http://lamasterchorale.org)

**Phone:** 213-972-7282

Tickets can be purchased in-person at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Box Office Monday – Saturday, 10am – 6 pm.



On concert days, box office staff can be reached at 213-972-7282 beginning at 10 am and the Disney Hall Box Office will be open for will call and sales beginning 2 hours prior to curtain time. Group rates are available. Los Angeles Master Chorale offers \$10 Student Rush Tickets at the box office 2 hours prior to the performance, subject to availability. Student ID required; 1 ticket per ID. Please call for additional details.

*Please note: children under the age of six are not admitted to Los Angeles Master Chorale concerts.*

## **ABOUT LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE**

The Los Angeles Master Chorale is widely recognized as one of the country's leading professional choruses 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 Artistic Director Grant Gershon and President and CEO Jean Davidson. It is a founding resident company of The Music Center and the choir-in-residence at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Chorister positions are highly sought-after and the professional choir is a diverse and vocally dynamic group showcasing the many voices of L.A.

Presenting its own concert series each season, the Master Chorale performs choral music from the earliest writings to contemporary compositions striking a balance between innovation and tradition. It also regularly performs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at Disney Hall and the Hollywood Bowl. Praised for its definitive performances, the choir is committed to recording the choral repertoire and has also featured with Gershon on the soundtracks of many major motion pictures. It is further heard beyond the concert hall via broadcasts by Southern California's Classical KUSC.

Committed to community engagement and fostering music education in schools, the Los Angeles Master Chorale's education programs include Voices Within that encourages young people to write and perform their own songs, an oratorio project for high school students, and the annual High School Choir Festival, which brings teenagers from throughout the Southland to perform in Walt Disney Concert Hall.

[www.lamasterchorale.org](http://www.lamasterchorale.org)

## **LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE MEDIA CONTACT:**

Jennifer Scott, Director of Public Relations

[jscott@lamasterchorale.org](mailto:jscott@lamasterchorale.org) | 213-972-3142 office; 702-510-4363 cell

Gary W. Murphy, GM/PR, Los Angeles Master Chorale Public Relations Consultant

[gmurphypr@gmail.com](mailto:gmurphypr@gmail.com) | 310-914-0178 office; 213-700-9645 cell



High res photos of the Los Angeles Master Chorale are available from our online [Media Gallery](#).

*Photos: Los Angeles Master Chorale & Grant Gershon by Tao Ruspoli/Marie Noorbergen; Grant Gershon & John Adams by Jamie Pham.*

