

PRESS RELEASE

L O S A N G E L E S

MASTER CHORALE

WADE IN THE WATER, AN A CAPPELLA CONCERT OF SPIRITUALS AND MUSIC OF RENEWAL, TO BE PERFORMED BY THE LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE

**SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 7 PM
WALT DISNEY CONCERT HALL**



**TICKETS START AT \$29
LAMASTERCHORALE.ORG | 213-972-7282**

(Los Angeles, CA) March 27, 2017- The Los Angeles Master Chorale puts spirituals at the forefront of a concert called “Wade in the Water” to be performed at Walt Disney Concert Hall on Sunday, April 30 at 7 PM. The concert features 13 songs with the spirituals juxtaposed with other folk music traditions such as early American shape note singing, as well as a contemporary Korean piece, and a pair of European choral masterpieces from the



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

20th century. The concert will feature 48 singers performing a cappella, conducted by Artistic Director Grant Gershon and Assistant Conductor Jenny Wong. The concert also provides an opportunity to highlight several of the Master Chorale's solo voices on the program.

Gershon said although they appear very different, there is a connection between all of the songs: "There is a kinship to all of these pieces that has to do with emotional directness and a spirituality that reflects inward. They share a lyricism and clarity that are natural and effortless."

Gershon said while choirs love to sing spirituals, they are often sung to close out a traditional choral concert or as an encore. With "Wade in the Water" he wanted to make them the touchstone of the program: "We'll hear spirituals reflecting the perspectives of an array of composers and arrangers and interacting with other music on an eclectic program, to reflect and deepen themes of music of the spirit and of renewal."

The program includes two arrangements by Moses Hogan (1957-2003), a New Orleans-born composer, conductor, and pianist of international renown heralded for his settings of African-American spirituals. In this concert his setting of the English hymn *Abide with Me* is featured, as is his acclaimed arrangement of *Wade in the Water* that gives the concert its title. The song features a dramatic solo to be performed by soprano Zanaida Robles. Of a previous performance, *Los Angeles Times* music critic Mark Swed wrote: "... no one who heard the restrained rapture that Master Chorale soprano Zanaida Robles brought to 'Wade in the Water' will forget it."

A composer, a conductor, and an educator in addition to singing, Robles' arrangement of *Lift Every Voice* is also featured on the program. Written by brothers James Wheldon and J. Rosamond Johnson to commemorate Abraham Lincoln, the song became known as "the



Black National Anthem” in the early 20th century. Robles said of the work: “It speaks to anyone who has experienced oppression or injustice and is especially relevant in today’s social and political climate.” She describes her arrangement as having a more contemporary use of harmony with influences from musical theater and film.

Tenor Shawn Kirchner, who was the Master Chorale’s composer-in-residence from 2012-15, also has work featured. His setting of the Appalachian folk tune *Bright Morning Stars* includes a new verse he composed, “Where are our dear children?” in which he imagines departed fathers and mothers singing back to their children on earth, written in remembrance of his own mother’s passing.

Choral luminary Alice Parker, who is still actively arranging at the age of 91, was the primary arranger for the Robert Shaw Chorale for two decades. Her arrangements of *Amazing Grace* and *Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal* are featured.

Three other female contemporary arrangers/composers have works on the program. A leading figure in Korea’s choral scene, Hyo-won Woo’s signature fusion of Eastern and Western elements is in display in her piece *Cum Sancto Spiritu* which is the final movement from her 2002 setting of the *Gloria*. Alabama-based composer, performer, and educator Rosephanye Powell’s a cappella anthem *The Word Was God* sets a text from John 1:1-3 and is described by Powell as “a musical word painting of the Creation.” With *Stand in That River*, Los Angeles-based singer/composer Moira Smiley set out to write a new spiritual in the Americana tradition, emulating the Appalachian hymn genre. “I wanted to honor those folk hymns from an earlier period. Even though they were written as Christian hymns, they seem to speak across the ages no matter what your beliefs are. My piece is about having that same communal spirit.”



Ralph Vaughan Williams' Mass in G minor, a setting of the Latin Mass for an eight-part double choir and soloists is performed alongside another 20th century European work, Maurice Duruflé's motet *Ubi caritas* that draws upon melodies found in Gregorian chant.

American choral composer Randall Thompson's *Alleluia* was composed in 1940 and reflects the somber context of the Second World War. It has since become one of the most popularly performed choral works of all time.

The concert concludes in uplifting fashion with *Rockin' Jerusalem* arranged by Rollo A. Dilworth, Professor of Choral Music Education at Temple University and an expert in the spiritual genre. Dilworth said many African-American spirituals referred to Jerusalem: "They were very serious about how they were contextualizing their faith traditions. The spirituals that refer to the New Testament imparted a sense of hope: that Christ wasn't just about the heaven that was about to come but was also preaching about the heaven that we could experience on earth, if we learned to get along with each other and learned to treat people equally."

Tickets to the concert range from \$29-\$119 and are available from lamasterchorale.org or from the box office by phone at 213-972-7282.

PROGRAM:

MOIRA SMILEY	Stand in That River
AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRITUAL Arr. MOSES HOGAN	Wade in the Water <i>Zanaida Robles, soprano</i>
Arr. ALICE PARKER	Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal <i>Jenny Wong, conductor</i>
MAURICE DURUFLÉ	Ubi caritas



Jenny Wong, conductor

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Mass in G minor
Andrea Zomorodian, soprano
Laura Smith Roethe, mezzo soprano
Michael Lichtenauer, tenor
James Hayden, bass

Intermission

JOHN NEWTON

Arr. ALICE PARKER & ROBERT SHAW

Amazing Grace
Nate Widelitz, tenor

ROSEPHANYE POWELL

The Word Was God

HYO-WON WOO

Cum sancto spiritu

WILLIAM H. MONK

Arr. MOSES HOGAN

Abide with Me

J. ROSAMOND JOHNSON

Arr. ZANAIDA ROBLES

Lift Every Voice
Garineh Avakian, mezzo soprano

TRADITIONAL APPALACHIAN SONG

SHAWN KIRCHNER

Bright Morning Stars
Luc Kleiner, baritone | Lisa Edwards, piano

RANDALL THOMPSON

Alleluia

AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRITUAL

Arr. ROLLO A. DILWORTH

Rockin' Jerusalem
Lisa Edwards, piano

Grant Gershon & Jenny Wong, conductors

48 singers

A cappella



CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Wade in the Water – an a cappella concert of spirituals and music of renewal by the Los Angeles Master Chorale

WHEN: Sunday, April 30 at 7 PM.

ListenUp pre-concert talk with Grant Gershon & KUSC's Alan Chapman 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

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. lamasterchorale.org

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE MEDIA CONTACT:

Jennifer Scott, Director of Public Relations

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 | 310-914-0178 office; 213-700-9645 cell

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

Wade in the Water photo by Arnaud Pyvka; Grant Gershon photo by Marie Noorbergen/Tao Ruspoli.

