

PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact: Jennifer Scott

jscott@lamasterchorale.org | 213-972-3142

L O S A N G E L E S

MASTER CHORALE

Five Hundred North American Choral Music Leaders to Meet in Los Angeles for Chorus America Conference June 21-24



LA Master Chorale Artist-in-Residence Eric Whitacre & Artistic Director Grant Gershon.

Conference hosted by the Los Angeles Master Chorale

**Special “Choir Night” Concert Presented at
Walt Disney Concert Hall June 22**

(Los Angeles, CA) June 6, 2017 – Artistic leaders and managers of choirs from North America will gather in Los Angeles this month for [Chorus America’s 2017 Conference](#) held **Wednesday, June 21 through Saturday, June 24**. The conference is being held at the



135 NORTH GRAND AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3013
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Omni Hotel on Grand Avenue and is hosted by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, a resident company of The Music Center and choir-in-residence at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Chorus America is a 2,000-member national advocacy, research, and leadership development organization based in Washington, D.C.

In their role as host, the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Grant Gershon, the Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, will present a special [Choir Night](#) performance of its Los Angeles-centric concert program celebrating the 20th anniversary of Morten Lauridsen's *Lux Aeterna* on **Thursday, June 22 at 8 PM** in Walt Disney Concert Hall. In addition to the revered Lauridsen work performed with full orchestra, the program features world premieres by Billy Childs and Moira Smiley, and a West Coast premiere by Swan Family Artist-in-Residence Eric Whitacre. The program will also feature *Iri da iri* by Esa-Pekka Salonen and Shawn Kirchner's *Heavenly Home: Three American Songs*. The Master Chorale's full roster of 115 singers will be accompanied by a 47-piece orchestra and Artistic Director Grant Gershon, Assistant Conductor Jenny Wong, and Eric Whitacre will conduct.

The Choir Night concert performance will be preceded by an audience-member group sing in Walt Disney Concert Hall led by the Master Chorale's Artist-in-Residence Eric Whitacre and guest artist Moira Smiley. Tickets for this concert and the pre-concert singing event are also available to the public from lamasterchorale.org or by phone at 213.972.7282.

In addition to the Master Chorale concert, the breadth of the city's choral arts will be on display with Conference attendees given the opportunity to hear performances by the **Angel City Chorale, Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, Vox Femina Los Angeles, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Los Robles Master Chorale**, and the **Spirit Chorale of Los Angeles**.



LA Master Chorale artistic leaders will present sessions during the conference alongside distinguished professionals from around the country. Grant Gershon will be part of the opening session titled “The Rewards of Creative Risk-Taking” with Francisco J. Núñez, Artistic Director and Founder of the Young People’s Chorus of New York City, and composer James W. Newton. Classical KUSC’s Gail Eichenthal will moderate the discussion.

Artist-in-Residence Eric Whitacre will join Gershon to present a session called “Participatory Performances” about creating events that engage large groups of singers. Composers Dale Trumbore, Nilo Alcalá, and Hussein Janmohamed will speak about composing choral music for today’s audiences in a panel discussion moderated by Ann Meier Baker, and Director of Street Symphony, Vijay Gupta, will talk about “The Medicine of Music” and his experience using music to engage with Los Angeles’s homeless community. Other sessions include a panel discussion by five female conductors talking about their experiences and the role of mentors, a discussion on how choirs can create a welcoming space for transgender and non-binary singers, among others.

“Chorus America looks forward to bringing our Conference to Los Angeles in partnership with our host the Los Angeles Master Chorale,” said Chorus America President & CEO Catherine Dehoney. “The diverse and rich Los Angeles choral community contains so many exciting examples of the forward-thinking, relevant work happening right now in the choral field, and we are thrilled to be able to highlight that work through our Conference programming and concerts.”

“The Los Angeles Master Chorale is honored to host our peers and colleagues and look forward to a Conference of exchanging ideas, making new connections, and celebrating the wide and varied choral field,” said LA Master Chorale President & CEO Jean Davidson. “We are excited to showcase the vibrant Los Angeles arts community, both in our own concert program featuring six Los Angeles composers, and with performances by the city’s other



choirs. We also hope participants will explore the thriving Grand Avenue arts community of which we are proud to be a part.”

The Conference will conclude in celebratory fashion on **Saturday, June 24** when the Los Angeles Master Chorale presents the inaugural **Big Sing L.A.**, a giant group sing held in **Grand Park at 1 PM**. The sing-along is free and open to the public to attend with five conductors leading the audience in well-known and easy-to-learn songs. Conductors will be **Grant Gershon, Eric Whitacre, Francisco Núñez**, singer/songwriter **Moira Smiley**, and Director of Choral Music at Temple University School of Music **Rollo Dilworth**, who will each take turns leading the crowd from the Grand Park stage located in the downtown park between Grand Avenue and Hill Street. Songs such as “Lean On Me,” “The Lion Sleeps Tonight,” and “Bridge Over Troubled Water” will be performed and lyric sheets will be provided. Big Sing L.A. is supported by the California Arts Council, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Metro and Wells Fargo.

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ABOUT CHORUS AMERICA

Chorus America is the advocacy, research, and leadership development organization that advances the choral field. It supports and serves choral conductors, administrators, board members, and singers with tools, training, peer networking, and access so that choruses are better able to contribute to their communities. Chorus America serves more than 6,000 choruses, individuals, businesses, and organizations with a wide array of programs, publications, research, and personal services. These services strengthen their ability to build strong organizations that foster quality choral performances. Chorus America is governed by a diverse board of accomplished arts leaders from across North America, and the executive staff is headquartered in Washington, DC.



ABOUT THE 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 and an Oratorio Project for high school students, and the annual High School Choir Festival, which brings around 1,000 teenagers from around the Southland to perform en masse in Walt Disney Concert Hall.

ABOUT CHOIRS IN NORTH AMERICA

- There are approximately 270,000 choruses in the U.S.: 41,000 K-12 school choirs, 216,000 church choirs, 12,000 independent professional and community choruses.
- An estimated 32.5 million adults and 10.1 million children sing in choirs—that's a total of 42.6 million singers overall, or more people than live in California.
- Nearly 23% of households have one or more choral singers. Research from the National Endowment for the Arts corroborates Chorus America's research showing that choral singing is the most popular form of performing arts participation in the U.S.



LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jennifer Scott, Director of Public Relations

jscott@lmasterchorale.org | 213-972-3142 office; 702-510-4363 cell

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

gmurphypr@gmail.com | 310-914-0178 office; 213-700-9645 cell

Chorus America Conference sessions are open to registered attendees only. However, if you are a member of the press interested in attending a session, please contact Jennifer Scott, jscott@lmasterchorale.org.

