

#### LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE MUSIC TO ACCOMPANY A DEPARTURE

Grant Gershon, conductor Peter Sellars, director Thursday, October 26, 2023, at 7:30pm Foellinger Great Hall

#### **PROGRAM** LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE MUSIC TO ACCOMPANY A DEPARTURE

**Grant Gershon**, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director **Jenny Wong**, Associate Artistic Director **Reena Esmail**, Swan Family Artist-in-Residence

#### Henrich Schütz (1585–1672) Musikalische Exequien

I. Concert in Form einer teutschen Begräbnis-Missa (Concerto in the form of a German Funeral Mass)

> II. Motette: Herr, wenn ich nurdich habe (Motet: Lord, if I only have you)

III. Canticum B. Simeonis: Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener in Frieden fahren (The Song of Simeon: Lord, let your servant now depart in peace)

World premiere performance of *Music to Accompany a Departure* took place on Sunday, November 20, 2022, at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, California.

Music to Accompany a Departure is made possible by generous support from Lillian Pierson Lovelace, Patrick R. Fitzgerald, and Ron Myrick. The touring production is supported by the Joan and Jeff Beal Artistic Innovation Fund, the Andrea and Gregory Williams Collaborating Artists Fund, and Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation.

Co-commissioned by Los Angeles Master Chorale, Cal Performances at University of California Berkeley, Stanford Live at Stanford University, and Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

# **MUSIC TO ACCOMPANY A DEPARTURE**

#### CONDUCTOR

Grant Gershon

**DIRECTOR** Peter Sellars

**COSTUME DESIGN** Danielle Domingue Sumi

LIGHTING DESIGNER James F. Ingalls

#### SOPRANO

Kelci Hahn<sup>\*</sup> Elissa Johnston<sup>\*</sup> Anna Schubert<sup>\*</sup> Sunmi Shin<sup>\*</sup> Addy Sterrett<sup>\*</sup> Andrea Zomorodian<sup>\*</sup>

#### ALTO

Lindsay Patterson Abdou\* Mindy Ella Chu\* Shabnam Kalbasi Laura Smith Roethe\* Niké St. Clair Ilana Summers

#### TENOR

Casey Breves\* Matthew Brown Adam Faruqi\* Dermot Kiernan\* Joey Krumbein\*

#### BASS

Derrell Acon\* James Hayden\* Luc Kleiner\* Chung Uk Lee\* Ben Lin Brett McDermid\*

**PORTATIVE ORGAN** Lisa Edwards

VIOL DA GAMBA Eva Lymenstull

\*soloists



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# **PROGRAM NOTE**

#### REIMAGINING THE REQUIEM

On February 4, 1636, the funeral services of Prince Heinrich II Posthumus of Reuss took place with musical accompaniment composed by his younger friend (and namesake) Heinrich Schütz. Prince Heinrich, an admired and enlightened ruler during an era of almost unimaginable devastation in Central Europe, had prepared meticulously for his own death.

Nascent Lutheran tradition allowed the personal selection of religious texts for one's funeral, but the scope of Prince Heinrich's arrangements was unprecedented. At least a year before his death, he secretly ordered a copper coffin to be made, on which an array of 25 quotations—sourced from the Bible together with various church hymns—was inscribed on all sides, surrounded by exquisite painted decorations. This collection of texts also served as the basis for the *Musikalische Exequien* that Schütz was commissioned to compose—a sonic "translation" and amplification of the message embodied by this unique sarcophagus and an integral part of the process of saying goodbye.

"Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced the trauma of losing loved ones and oftentimes not being able to be there with them during their last weeks, days, hours," says Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. "So we saw this piece as a perfect way to explore what it means to say goodbye and what it means to have faith that the departed's presence will still be with us." For director Peter Sellars, the goal is "to create a gathering that could acknowledge the passing of so many people from our lives across these last two years" through music that "touches the emotional depth that we've denied ourselves."

A well-educated humanist with a special passion for music—he liked to take part in performances at his court by singing bass—Prince Heinrich had largely managed to keep the ravages of the Thirty Years War at bay from his domain, which was centered around Gera in the heart of Germany. Schütz, born within his sovereignty in nearby Köstritz in 1585, had recently been forced by the chaos of the war to interrupt his longtime position as Kapellmeister in Dresden and to find other courts where he could continue his life as an artist.

Although the Prince commanded only a fraction of Dresden's resources, his policies brought economic prosperity. He had earlier consulted with Schütz to improve musical life at the court and churches and seems to have developed a close friendship with the composer. Whether the commission for the Musikalische Exequien came directly from Prince Heinrich or from his widow following his death—some accounts contend that the Prince actually heard performances of the music in his final months—Schütz constructed an innovative requiem memorial that remains a landmark of music history.

In his preface to the *Exequien*, which he published at roughly the midpoint of his career, the composer noted that he had "brought together and set to music in one concerted work" the scriptural quotations and hymn verses engraved all around the Prince's special coffin. The texts in question, which encompass the Old and New Testaments, convey a theological message of overcoming the bitterness of death through the consolation and hope of the promise of eternal life.

But instead of the cosmic, metaphysical journey of the departed soul mapped out by the Latin Requiem, the carefully culled German texts of the *Exequien* suggest something more personal and intimate—the assurance of salvation for the departed meant to provide solace to the grieving left behind on earth, in this "vale of tears." And Schütz has found a way to express this in music that, as described by director Peter Sellars, is "quiet, sober, beautiful, tender, heartfelt, and very modest"—at a far remove from sentimentality as well as from the "histrionics" of our own time.

If that sounds familiar, it may be because Brahms achieves something comparable in his early masterpiece A German Requiem, which sets a similarly bespoke juxtaposition of scriptural texts. But Schütz, the most important German predecessor of J.S. Bach, got there more than two centuries before, in a time rent by plague as well as horrific warfare, indelibly marked by tragic losses in his personal life that gave him "a very deep understanding of death as a process of living," according to Sellars.

Conditions had altered drastically since his youthful years, early in the 17th century, when Schütz studied music in Venice with Giovanni Gabrieli. "Imagine how spectacular it must have seemed when he arrived: the 360-degree, immersive sound universe of choruses amid the blazing golds and incredible mosaics of San Marco—music not as presentation, but as immersive," Sellars observes.

Upon returning to Germany and receiving his appointment to the court in Dresden, Schütz proceeded to combine stylistic currents from Northern Europe with these Italian influences the latter represented, above all, by the polychoral splendor of Gabrieli, but also the subtle word painting of Monteverdian madrigal.

Aspects of both inform the *Musikalische Exequien*, albeit on a far more modest scale in comparison with the extravagant resources called for in earlier works of Schütz. He limited himself in this funeral music to a tutti choir scored for six to eight parts (these can have more than one voice to a part), which alternates with varying configurations of soloists. From the ensemble of 24 singers performing as the choir in tonight's performance (three or four on a part), as many as 18 take the solo parts at various points in the piece in order to convey the "sense of communal grieving and also of the sharing of personal stories" that characterizes the work, as Gershon explains.

The *Musikalische Exequien* comprises three parts, offering a personalized, Protestant alternative to the Roman Catholic Requiem Mass. The first, which Schütz calls "Concerto in the Form of a German Funeral Mass," is several times longer than the other two combined and corresponds to the Kyrie and Gloria movements of the traditional Latin liturgy. "Concerto" is used here in the contemporary Italian sense of a composition for voices accompanied by basso continuo (rendered in all three parts by a portative organ and viola da gamba).

The six-part choir sings the Lutheran equivalent of the Latin rite's tripartite Kyrie plea, interspersed by settings of Biblical verses for changing groups of soloists. This pattern of alteration continues in the much longer, symmetrically constructed, 16-part section that paraphrases and entirely rewrites the Latin Gloria using verses from contemporary chorales (sung by the choir) and scriptural passages (sung by an ever-changing assortment of soloists). After this would have followed the sermon. Part Two sets Psalm 73 (which also appears at the center of the "Gloria" section) in the manner of a motet for double choir: the exchange between each choir is a nod to what Schütz had absorbed from the polychoral style of his mentor Gabrieli during his time at San Marco.

Part Three calls for an especially unusual scoring. A five-part choir sings the Song of Simeon from the Gospel of Luke—a quintessential prayer of peaceful leave-taking—while a trio of soloists responds with other scriptural passages and represents the "blessed soul" of the departed (baritone soloist) being escorted heavenward by two seraphim (soprano soloists). Schütz ingeniously makes use of the performance space to differentiate these musical forces and to suggest "the little group gathered around the coffin, singing to the person inside, being answered by the universe," says Sellars.

Symbolically, this setup encapsulates the message of the *Musikalische Exequien*—the term "exequies" deriving from the Latin word for a "train of followers." In Schütz's singularly moving dramaturgy, they/we are gathering, learning to accompany a departure. As Sellars puts it: "You feel there's nobody in that coffin anymore: that being is now in the air and the sunlight and has reentered the universe in every raindrop, in every bud on every tree."

—Thomas May

Thomas May is the program annotator for the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

# PROFILES



Hailed for his adventurous and bold artistic leadership, **Grant Gershon**, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director, celebrates his 23rd season with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, which he

transformed into the "best-by-far major chorus in America" (*Los Angeles Times*).

Gershon is committed to increasing representation in the choral repertoire, and in 2020 he announced that the Chorale will reserve at least 50 percent of each future season for works by composers from historically excluded groups. His leadership in the field of choral music garnered him Chorus America's 2022 Korn Founders Award.

In 2022, Grant and the Chorale received the GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance followed by Chorus America's 2022 Korn Founders Award for his career-spanning leadership in the field of choral music.

In July of 2023, Grant and the Chorale made a triumphant return to the famed Salzburg Festival with *Music to Accompany a Departure* (Heinrich Schütz), directed by Peter Sellars. About the performances, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* declared "Everything is warmth, radiance and emotion," and the *Augsburger Allgemein* wrote "And what a choir! Flawless intonation . . . light-flooded transparency and an almost unearthly tonal richness." In the 2023–24 season, the Chorale will tour this groundbreaking production to Northern California, Chicago, and Toronto. Gershon has performed at Carnegie Hall and Trinity Wall Street, and on the Great Performers series at Lincoln Center. He has appeared at the Ravinia, Aspen, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Salzburg, and Vienna festivals, led the South American premiere of the LA Opera's production of *II Postino* in Chile, and performed with the Baltimore Symphony and the Coro e Orchestra del Teatro Regio di Torino in Turin.

In New York, Grant has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and at the historic Trinity Wall Street. He has been featured on the Great Performers series at Lincoln Center and the Making Music series at Zankel Hall: led the South American premiere of the LA Opera's production of Il Postino in Chile; and performed with the Baltimore Symphony and the Coro e Orchestra del Teatro Regio di Torino in Turin. Other major appearances include performances at the Ravinia, Aspen, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Salzburg, and Vienna festivals; Teatro Colon in Buenos Aries, the Barbican in London, and the Paris Philharmonie. He has had the honor of working closely with numerous legendary conductors including Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, James Conlon, Gustavo Dudamel, Zubin Mehta, Simon Rattle, and his mentor. Esa-Pekka Salonen.



Peter Sellars has gained international renown for his groundbreaking and transformative interpretations of classics, advocacy of 20th-century and contemporary music, and collaborative

projects with an extraordinary range of creative and performing artists. He has staged operas at the Dutch National Opera, English National Opera, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Opéra National de Paris, Salzburg Festival, and San Francisco Opera, among others. Earlier this year, Sellars created a staging of the Roman de Fauvel at the Théâtre du Châtelet in collaboration with musicologist and founder of the Sequentia Ensemble Benjamin Bagby. Also, in 2022, he staged composer Tyshawn Sorey's Monochromatic Light (Afterlife) for the Park Avenue Armory. A revival of Sellars' acclaimed production of Tristan und Isolde, with videography by artist Bill Viola, will be seen at the Paris Opera early in 2023. Sellars is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA. He is recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, the Erasmus Prize for contributions to European culture, the Gish Prize, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has been awarded the prestigious Polar Music Prize and named Artist of the Year by Musical America. In 2021 he was honored with the EBU-IMZ Lifetime Achievement Award for his body of opera video recordings.



Lisa Edwards (portative organ) is a widely sought after pianist, keyboard collaborator, and teacher based in Los Angeles. She is the pianist/music assistant for Los Angeles Master Chorale, under the direction of Grant Gershon, the Kiki and David Gindler Artistic Director. As a project

collaborator, Ms. Edwards is frequently involved with preparing productions with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Such projects include John Adams' operas *El Nino, Nixon in China, A Flowering Tree,* and *The Gospel According to the Other Mary,* as well as Schumann's Oas Paradies und die Peri, Stravinsky's Persephone, Oedipus Rex and Symphony of Psalms, Shostakovich's Prologue to Orango, and Bernstein's Mass, among others. Performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Green Umbrella series include War of the Worlds by Annie Gosfteld and Lou Harrison's opera Young Caesar. Other performances include Steve Reich's You Are (Variations) at Avery Fischer Hall; Stravinsky's Les Noces at Walt Disney Concert Hall; and Ian Krause's Lorca, Child of the Moon at the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts. In July 2023, she performed at the Salzburg Festival with Los Angeles Master Chorale in Sofia Gubaidulina's Sonnengesang and Music to Accompany a Departure, the Chorale's acclaimed staging of Heinrich Schütz's Musikalische Exeguien, directed by Peter Sellars. On disc, she can be heard on two Nonesuch recordings of Steve Reich's music, You Are (Variations) and Daniel Variations, and on Eric Whitacre's The Sacred Veil.



**Eva Lymenstull** (Viol da Gamba) enjoys a varied career playing baroque and modern cello and viola da gamba across the US and Canada. She has performed as concerto soloist and principal cellist with the Lyra Baroque Orchestra, guest principal cellist of the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, Apollo's

Fire, and Musica Angelica, and has appeared with Tafelmusik, Tesserae, Bach Collegium San Diego, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. A Voices of Music Bach Competition winner, she plays at the Carmel Bach Festival and on concert series across North America. Recent recordings can be heard on the Brilliant Classics and Violet Ear labels. Eva teaches baroque cello and viol as a guest artist in residence at the University of Michigan, and has given masterclasses at Michigan State, McGill, and USC. She holds degrees from the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, Rice University, and University of Michigan, and a doctorate in historical performance practice from Case Western Reserve University.

Danielle Domingue Sumi (Lighting Designer) is a visual artist inspired by culture, spirituality, and humility. She is committed to promoting social wellbeing through costume design and expressive arts. Her creativity is explicated through diversity and social justice principles with an increased understanding, recognition, and response to multiethnic heritage. A graduate of Clark Atlanta University, FIDMLA, and Loyola Marymount University, with degrees in both design and art psychotherapy, Danielle is treasured for ingenuity and leadership skills in theatrical, fashion, dance, and opera costume production. Danielle has created for The Fashion Institute of Design (LA), Theatre Forty, Los Angeles Opera, Music Academy of the West, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Perm Opera and Ballet, Los Angeles Master Chorale, East West Players, Japanese American Community and Culture Center, Halau Hula Moani'a'ala Anuhea, and Company One Theatre. Danielle worked as resident costume designer with Nobles Theatre Collective. She is currently costume director with New Orleans Opera Association.

James F. Ingalls (Lighting Designer) made his Los Angeles Master Chorale debut with Lagrime di San Pietro, with which he has toured internationally. His work for the LA Philharmonic includes last season's Fidelio with Deaf West Theatre and previous seasons' Canata Criolla, El Niño and The Gospel According to the Other Mary. Designs for Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group include The Beauty Queen of Leenane, The Price, and A Parallelogram. Most recently for Peter Sellars, he designed Monochromatic Light (Afterlife) (Park Avenue Armory/New York City), Oedipus Rex/Symphony of Psalms (San Francisco Symphony), and Le Roman de Fauvel (Theatre du Chatelet/Paris). Recent designs for dance include Ibsen's House (Singapore Ballet and Charlotte Ballet), Raymonda (Dutch National Ballet), and Twyla Now! (New York City Center). Recent theatre includes Once Before I Go (Gate Theatre/Dublin) and The Seagull and Three O'Casey Comedies (Druid Theatre/Galway). He often collaborates with The Wooden Floor dancers in Santa Ana, California.

# MASTER CHORALE

The Los Angeles Master Chorale is the "the finest-by-far major chorus in America" (Los Angeles Times) and a vibrant cultural treasure. Hailed for its powerful performances, technical precision, and artistic daring, the Chorale is led by Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director; Associate Artistic Director Jenny Wong; and Interim President & CEO Terry Knowles. Its Swan Family Artist-in-Residence is Reena Esmail.

Created by legendary conductor Roger Wagner in 1964, the Chorale is a founding resident company of The Music Center and choir-in-residence at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Chorister positions are highly sought after, and the fully professional choir is a diverse and vocally dynamic group.

The Chorale reaches over 175,000 people a year through its concert series at Walt Disney Concert Hall, its international touring of innovative works, and its performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and others. The Chorale's discography includes the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Deutsche Grammophon recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 8, for which the Chorale won a Best Choral Performance Grammy with the National Children's Chorus, Los Angeles Children's Choir, and Pacific Chorale. The Chorale released The Sacred Veil by Eric Whitacre on Signum Records in 2020. Under the direction of Grant Gershon, the Chorale has released eight recordings, including national anthems / the little match girl passion by David Lang on Cantaloupe Records. The Chorale is on the soundtracks of many major motion pictures, including Disney's Jungle Cruise and the Star Wars films The Last Jedi and The Rise of Skywalker.

Throughout 2018 and 2019, the Master Chorale toured its production of *Lagrime di San Pietro*, directed by Peter Sellars, earning rave reviews across the globe. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* called the 2019 Salzburg Festival performance "painfully beautiful," while the *Sydney Morning Herald* praised *Lagrime di San Pietro* as "stunning... Their voices soared to the heavens." After the Master Chorale performed in London, *The Stage* called *Lagrime* a "balm for the soul."

Committed to increasing representation in the choral repertoire, the Chorale announced in 2020 that it will reserve at least 50 percent of each future season for works by composers from historically excluded groups. This commitment to inclusion runs through the entire organization, which recently ratified a five-year plan that commits to improving representation at the staff and board levels, continuing to build a more diverse roster of singers, and reaching a wider audience.

The Chorale's education programs include Voices Within residencies that encourage students to write and perform their own songs, and an expansive Oratorio Project for high school students. The Chorale also presents an annual High School Choir Festival, which brings teenagers from around the Southland to perform in Walt Disney Concert Hall. In May 2019, the High School Choir Festival celebrated 30 years as one of the longest-running and widest-reaching arts education programs in Southern California. In July 2018, the Chorale presented Big Sing California, the largest group singing event in state history, encompassing a concert in Disney Hall that was broadcast live to venues in five other cities in California and livestreamed online.

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As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgment and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward.

Krannert Center affirms the commitment by the university to move beyond these statements, toward building deeper relationships and taking actions that uphold and preserve Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

As we gather to experience this performance, we have an opportunity to reflect on the ways that systems of oppression have shaped our society. We can work together to create systems that support human dignity, establish equity, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and draw upon the creative capacity of all people that make up this community, state, nation, and world.



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**JO ANN TRISLER** (1946-2010) November 2011



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We work to create the best possible setting for the experiences you seek and find here.

#### NECESSARIES

Restrooms are located in the foyers of Foellinger Great Hall, Tryon Festival Theatre, and Colwell Playhouse; the east entrances on the Lobby level; and in each elevator lobby on Level 1 and Level 3. Lobby restrooms and one restroom in each elevator lobby are fully accessible and contain baby-changing stations.

Ushers will be happy to provide you cough drops courtesy of St. Joseph Apothecary, or disposable foam earplugs if the place starts rockin'.

If you or a companion needs medical assistance, contact an usher or other staff member.

Please take a moment before the performance to note the theatre exits nearest to you. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the theatre, please remain calm, follow the instructions of the house staff, and exit in an orderly fashion to the appropriate safe meeting location, which will be announced to you.

#### PHONES AND DEVICES

The use of cell phones, cameras, and recording devices during performances is prohibited unless otherwise announced from the stage.

#### LATE ARRIVALS

As a courtesy to performers and audience members, latecomers will be seated only at times selected in advance by the artist. Should you find that you've arrived late to a performance, our Patron Services staff will keep you informed about the earliest seating opportunity.

#### LOST ITEMS

If you are in need of Lost and Found, please visit the Patron Services counter. We will do our best to reunite object and owner!

#### TICKET RETURNS

If you find you can't attend a performance, please contact the Ticket Office in advance, preferably by 6pm the day before the performance (kran-tix@illinois.edu). We never charge a handling fee on ticket transactions.

#### ACCESSIBILITY

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts is committed to making experiences accessible for all patrons, and we are delighted to provide a number of services to assist you. Krannert Center is equipped with an assisted listening system, wheelchair-accessible and no-step/few-step seating, and large-print programs, Braille programs, and American Sign Language interpreters are available with three weeks' advance notice.

For assistance regarding your visit, please email:

Para ayuda en relación con su visita, favor de enviar un email a:

Pour vous aider dans votre visite, prière de nous envoyer un courriel à:

欢迎! 如若您对您的造访需要帮助, 请发送电子邮件至: सवागत हे! अगर आपको अपने रहने के लिए मदद चाहिए, ईमेल कीजिए:

환영합니다! 방문에 관해 도움이 필요하실 때에는... 에게 이메일로 문의하시기 바랍니다:

# PATRONSERVICES@KRANNERTCENTER.ILLINOIS.EDU 217.333.9716

# **WE NOV 8 AT 7:30PM KRONOS FIVE DECADES** 📲 кrannert center

#### WE-TH NOV 15-16 AT 7:30PM

# THE PABLO ZIEGLER JAZZ TANGO TRIO



