

Chamber Singers • Mozart Requiem
Thursday, November 10, Noon • Obershaw

Lesley Leighton, *conductor*
Alastair Edmonstone, *pianist*
Elissa Johnston, *soprano*
Jessica Rotter, *mezzo-soprano*
Todd Strange, *tenor*
Abdiel Gonzalez, *baritone*
Deja Chandler, *assistant conductor*
Juan Del Real, *assistant conductor*
Veronica Manzanera, *assistant conductor*

Requiem

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

- I. *Requiem/Kyrie*, Chorus/Soprano Solo
Ms. Johnston
- II. *Dies Irae*, Chorus
- III. *Tuba mirum*, Solo Quartet
Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Strange, Ms. Rotter, Ms. Johnston
Deja Chandler, *conductor*
- IV. *Rex tremendae majestatis*, Chorus
- V. *Recordare*, Solo Quartet
Ms. Rotter, Mr. Gonzalez, Ms. Johnston, Mr. Strange
- VI. *Confutatis maledictis*, Chorus
- VII. *Lacrymosa*, Chorus
- VIII. *Domine Jesu*, Chorus/Solo Quartet
Ms. Johnston, Ms. Rotter, Mr. Strange, Mr. Gonzalez
- IX. *Hostias*, Chorus
- X. *Sanctus*, Chorus
Veronica Manzanera, *conductor*

XI. *Benedictus*, Chorus/Solo Quartet
Ms. Rotter, Ms. Johnston, Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Strange
Jual del Real, *conductor*

XII. *Agnus Dei*, Chorus/Soprano Solo
Ms. Johnston

BIOS



Lesley Leighton has performed as a conductor and singer at Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Hollywood Bowl, Opernhaus Köln, Glyndebourne, and Glimmerglass, and has worked with renowned conductors Gustavo Dudamel, John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Leonard Slatkin, and the late Brawell Tovey.

She made her Los Angeles Opera and Los Angeles Philharmonic conducting debuts in the 2018-19 season in two works by David Lang, in addition to preparing Los Robles Master Chorale for its debut at the Ojai Festival. She was recently named the Principal Guest Conductor of the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra and debuted conducting the orchestra in July 2022, and shared the podium with Maestro Anthony Parnter again in a concert of film music in October 2022. She was the Associate Conductor of Los Angeles Master Chorale from 2010-2016 and was the Artistic Director of Los Robles Master Chorale from 2007-2022.

Leighton's voice can be heard on well over 100 film and television soundtracks, most recently on *Chucky*, *Super Mario Bros. Movie*, *Captain Marvel*, *Sing2*, and *Mulan*, as well as classics like *Frozen* and *The Lion King*. A native of Los Angeles, Leighton studied conducting with Paul Salamunovich earning a BA in conducting from Loyola Marymount University, and an MM in vocal performance and a DMA in choral conducting from the University of Southern California.



Alastair Edmonstone has performed as collaborative pianist, soloist and chamber musician throughout North America, Europe and Africa. As chamber musician, Edmonstone has performed with current and former members of the Baltimore and Boston Symphony Orchestras, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Opera, Seattle Symphony, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra,

Orpheus Orchestra and Canadian Brass. As collaborative artist he has worked extensively with many celebrated singers including Vinson Cole, Jane Eaglen, Marquita Lister and Louise Toppin.

A native of Perth, Scotland, Alastair holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Washington, and a Master of Music and Graduate Diploma from the New England Conservatory of Music. He earned his undergraduate degree from Birmingham Conservatoire in England where he was subsequently hired as Principal Repetiteur (2012-14). He has also held faculty positions at Towson University (Maryland), Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) and was a visiting lecturer at the USC Thornton School of Music during the 2021-22 academic year.



Elissa Johnston Recently cited by the New York Times for her "especially lovely" singing, Elissa Johnston enjoys diving into repertoire ranging from Bach, Handel and Mozart to Messiaen, Carter and Unsuk Chin. Last season Elissa appeared with the L.A. Philharmonic in Die Staat by Louis Andriessen, conducted by John Adams. She also

appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Master Chorale in Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, with Jacaranda Music in Bach's Easter Oratorio, and in chamber music performances with Pittance Chamber Music, Le Salon de Musiques, the Hear/Now Festival, and in the music of Bob Dylan with MUSE/IQUE.



Jessica Rotter is a Los Angeles-based vocalist and songwriter whose voice has been heard across a variety of genres, from movies, TV shows and commercials to backing vocals and collaborations with other artists in addition to her own original songs. With classical training in opera and musical theatre from Pepperdine University, Jessica is just as comfortable using her voice in a major feature film or television show (credits include *The Simpsons*, *Wandavision*, *Suicide Squad*, *Sing 1&2*,

Pitch Perfect, *Trolls*, *Frozen*) as she is performing and producing her own music solo or with her band JEMS.



Todd Strange is a lyric tenor, specializing in opera, solo concert work, musical theater, session singing and professional choral/ensemble work. He is a member of the LA Master Chorale, LA Opera, and a soloist in regional opera companies/symphonies across the US and abroad. highlights include leading/supporting roles with The LA Philharmonic, Long Beach Opera, New York City Opera, Arizona Opera, Ohio Light

Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Stockton Opera and San Diego Opera. Todd has been featured on various recordings: LA Phil and LA Master Chorale, and in principal roles with Ohio Light Opera/Albany Records. Todd has sung on various popular film scores, including the blockbuster, "*Sing!*" as the operatic *Camel*. Todd had the privilege of working with John Williams for *Star Wars/The Last Jedi*. Other movies include *Us*, *The Lion King*, *Smallfoot*, *Star Wars/Rogue One*, *Frozen*, *Minions*, *Bumblebee*, and *The Simpsons*. Most recently, Todd portrayed the role of Donald Trump in Anthony Davis' Pulitzer Prize winning new opera, *The Central Park 5* with Long Beach Opera, which will later be released as a new studio recording with the same cast.



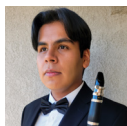
Puerto Rican baritone **Abdiel Gonzalez** has been praised for his "rich, lush baritone" and for having a "superb voice, which commanded the stage." He has been a concert soloist under the batons of Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Grant Gershon, to name a few. He has traveled the world singing, most recently to Taiwan, singing the role of Gaston in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, as well as being the baritone

soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Boca Del Rio Orchestra in Veracruz, Mexico, for the inaugural concert of a new state-of-the-art performing arts center. He has performed 36 operatic and Zarzuela roles, and can be heard in over 75 films, including *Coco*, *Encanto*, *Frozen*, *Wreck-It Ralph* and *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.

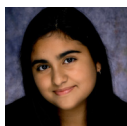


Deja Chandler was born and raised in Rialto, California. She was first introduced to music in the 5th grade by her teacher Mrs. Hollis. She had given her the bass clarinet to start off and had her also join the choir. From there, she would try to learn and immerse herself in the different programs her schools had to offer. In middle school, she was in her marching band which continued to high school. In high school, she was a part of

the marching band, wind ensemble, orchestra, and choir for which she won multiple awards for her hard work. Mrs. Holzbaugh was a very big influence on her decision to pursue music in college. She also had the opportunity to be a part of CSUSB's Honor Band in high school which ultimately helped her choose California State University, San Bernardino, as her school. She is currently working to earn her Bachelor's in Pre-Certification and will graduate in 2023. She is currently a part of the Chamber Singers, Chamber Winds, the Symphonic Band, and the Symphony Orchestra.



Juan Del Real is a musician who was born and raised in Southern California. He started playing the clarinet at the age of 11 when he joined his elementary school's band program. From there, he continued his musical career throughout his public education, taking part in different musical groups at school and in honor groups. His passion for music ultimately led him to apply for the CSUSB music program, where he is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music with a Music Education Concentration as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Music. Currently, he is studying clarinet under Margaret Worsley and is a part of different ensembles at the University. His ensemble experience includes CSUSB's Symphonic Band, Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Winds, Clarinet Choir, Chamber Singers, and SBSO Youth Wind Ensemble. As a soloist, Del Real has performed in multiple Music Major Recitals at CSUSB, a solo junior recital, and in March 2022 performed a solo with CSUSB's Symphony Orchestra, as a winner of the Young Artist Competition. Apart from his performance studies, Del Real has also studied conducting under Dr. Lesley Leighton and Dr. Nicholas Bratcher, and on April 21, 2022, made his collegiate conducting debut, conducting CSUSB's Chamber Singers.



Veronica Manzanera is an undergraduate student currently studying music education at California State University San Bernardino. She acts as the principal oboist for the CSUSB Symphony Orchestra, Symphonic Band, Chamber Winds, and participates in the Chamber Singers. Manzanera has been actively participating as a conductor at CSUSB, having conducted pieces with the Symphonic band and Chamber Singers. Her primary conducting instructors include Dr. Lesley Leighton and Dr. Nicholas Bratcher. During this past summer, Manzanera was accepted into Sofia Symphonic Summit, where she participated in master classes led by Simeon Pironkoff, and was able to conduct the world premier of *Ya Leili Ya Lian* by William Blacklaw with the Sofia Philharmonic. As she nears the end of her undergraduate degree, she plans to continue her education by pursuing a master's degree in conducting.

CHAMBER SINGERS

Soprano

Katherine Bello
Deja Chandler
Trisha Owens
Ashley Peacock

Tenor

Luis Araiza
Uriel Avila
Juan Del Real
Gabriel Fernando
Miguel Gonzalez Carrillo
Aldo Ramirez
Juan Del Real
Gabriel Fernando
Miguel Gonzalez Carrillo
Aldo Ramirez

Alto

Cindy Ceja
Laura Cifuentes Granada
Jan Hanken
Lizbeth Manriquez Corona
Veronica Manzanera
Claudia Mayorga
Martha Noyola-Gonzalez
Michelle Ramos
Angela Rodriguez

Bass

Oscar Arias
David Begnell
Diego Duenas
Roman Gallegos
David Henry
Joseph Lopez
Sean Monsalve
Nicholas Mundo
Cameron Ruggiero

PROGRAM NOTES

The unique circumstances surrounding the composition of Mozart's *Requiem* are remarkable for their almost Dickensian melodrama.

Just a few weeks before his own death in 1791 at the age of thirty-five, Mozart was approached by a gentleman acting on behalf of an anonymous patron who wished to commission from him a Requiem Mass. This patron we now know to be Count Franz von Wazlsegg-Stuppach, whose wife had died in February that year. The count, who was a keen and able amateur musician, wished to be

regarded as a major composer and saw in this commemorative commission an opportunity to further his own ends by passing off the Requiem as his own. He therefore conducted all business transactions with Mozart in secrecy so as to preserve his own anonymity; hence the subterfuge of sending a business agent to act on his behalf. On several occasions this gentleman arrived unannounced at the composer's house. To the dying Mozart, well known for his superstitious nature and quite possibly sensing his own impending demise, these mysterious visitations had all the hallmarks of the supernatural.

By the time he started work on the *Requiem*, Mozart was already terminally ill, and parts of the composition were actually written whilst on his death bed. In the event that he died before he could complete it, to the great consternation of his widow, Constanze, payment for the work had already been received and she feared that if it was handed over incomplete the commissioning patron would refuse to accept it and expect his money to be returned. She therefore decided to elicit the help of some other composer who might be able and willing to finish it for her, but despite several attempts being made, notably by Joseph Eybler and Maximilian Stadler, none came to fruition. Eventually Constanze approached Franz Süssmayr. There were many advantages to this arrangement: Süssmayr was one of Mozart's more able pupils and had been with him a good deal during the final year of his life. He had several times played through the completed parts and discussed the instrumentation with Mozart. Why, then, had Süssmayr not been Constanze's first choice, despite the fact that he had been the composer's closet musical confidante and knew what his intentions were in respect to the Requiem? This is but one of several intriguing questions, the answer of which we will almost certainly never know, but which will no doubt continue to fascinate musical historians.

Of the work's twelve movements only the opening *Kyrie* had Mozart managed to complete in its entirety. For most of the others he had written the vocal parts and a figured bass line (a kind of harmonic shorthand), leaving just the orchestration, for which he had clearly indicated his intentions. These movements may therefore be regarded as essentially the work of the master. For reasons unknown, Mozart postponed writing the seventh movement, the *Lacrymosa*, until after writing movements eight and nine, but managed only the first eight bars before death at last overtook him. He left a number of other fragments, such as the trombone solo at the opening of the *Tuba Mirum*. Süssmayr completed the *Lacrymosa*, and composed the whole of the last three movements, Mozart having passed away before he could even begin these sections.

Süssmayr used substantial parts of the orchestration begun by Stadler and Eybler, and for the closing passages he repeated Mozart's own music from the opening movement, an idea which according to Constanze, Mozart himself had suggested. Much more daunting, however, was the task of writing the entire Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei himself, the prospect of which had defeated his reputedly more talented fellow-composers. Eybler, for instance, despite contributing some worthwhile orchestration, had managed only two very unconvincing bars of the *Lacrymosa* before giving up and returning the entire portfolio to Constanze. Süssmayr was evidently made of sterner stuff, and by the end of 1792 he had finished the task. Opinions differ as to the quality of the Süssmayr movements, though it is generally agreed that the Agnus Dei is the most successful.

A copy was made of the completed score before it was handed over to Count Walsegg's envoy, but no mention was made of Süssmayr's part in its composition and for many years it was generally believed that Mozart had indeed written the entire Requiem. Amongst Mozart's circle, however, it was common knowledge that the composer had not lived to see its completion. Consequently, some considerable controversy later ensued as to the work's authenticity, compounded by the fact that Count Walsegg's score disappeared for nearly fifty years, to be rediscovered only in 1839. Fortunately, this complete score and Mozart's original unfinished manuscripts did both survive, and are now securely housed in the

Vienna State Library. Comparison of the two sources has shown quite clearly which parts Mozart either wrote down or indicated in the form of sketches and footnotes, and which parts were completed and composed by his pupil. However, the matter is not quite that straightforward. Since Mozart is known to have played through and discussed the music with Süßmayr, it seems more than likely that he would have passed on ideas that he carried in his head but had not yet written down, and for this reason we can never be entirely sure of precisely what is Mozart's and what Süßmayr's. But all this conjecture is of little consequence as we listen to the music. It is Mozart's genius that shines through.

-John Bawden