

# Verdi Chorus To Present Spring Concert In April

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by BWW News Desk Mar. 21, 2019 Tweet Share

March 20, 2019

This Spring marks the start of the 36th season of the Verdi Chorus, who will present their Spring Concert, *L'Amore e la Vita* (Love and Life) for two performances only at the First United Methodist Church in Santa Monica on April 6 and 7. Led by Founding Artistic Director Anne Marie Ketchum, the Verdi Chorus is the only choral group in Southern California that focuses primarily on the dramatic and diverse music for opera chorus. This program, which Ketchum humorously calls the Rom-Com of opera, will feature selections from two Verdi operas *I vespri siciliani* and *Ernani*, three Donizetti operas - *Don Pasquale*, *La fille du r*giment and *L'elisir d'amore*, as well as operatic sequences from Bizet's *Les p cheurs de perles* (The Pearl Fishers), Delibes' *Lakm*, and Puccini's *La rondine*.



The program will feature four guest soloists: critically acclaimed Los Angeles Opera favorite Jamie Chamberlin, praised for her shimmering tones and star-struck vulnerability by Opera News; her equally acclaimed husband, tenor Nathan Granner, one of the original The American Tenors (Sony Classical), and known for his vibrant and flexible voice (The Boston Globe) and for possessing utter control of a ravishing mixed head sound (Opera News), celebrated mezzo soprano Danielle Marcelle Bond, who was hailed by the Los Angeles Times with a Brava! for her performance in Long Beach Opera's production of John Adams' *Death of Klinghoffer*; and renowned baritone Roberto Perlas G mez who, with over 100 roles to his credit, has performed extensively throughout the United States.

Director Anne Marie Ketchum says, Spring is the perfect time of year to celebrate life, light, and most importantly love, and what better way to accomplish that than with opera? I love the idea of using this theme to launch the 36th season of the Verdi Chorus, which continues to grow and evolve with over 60 members. *L'Amore e la Vita* (Love and Life) will feature a wonderful mix of audience favorites, from the famous duets from *Lakm* and *Les p cheurs de perles*, to the achingly beautiful music of Puccini's *La rondine*, which audiences may not be familiar with, but will not soon forget.

I also can't imagine a better or more excitingly appropriate lineup of guest soloists. When Nathan Granner and Jamie Chamberlin sang with us last season, the Sunday matinee

culminated with Nathan proposing marriage to Jamie onstage to the delight and surprise of our audience and to Jamie, who not only instantly accepted, but did so with several high C's! To have Nathan and Jamie back for this concert as husband and wife, and heralded by the Verdi Chorus with *Si celebri alfine* from Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani*, seems wonderfully right. I am thrilled to have the wonderful Danielle Marcelle Bond, who I am a huge fan of, joining us for this concert, and delighted to welcome back Roberto Perlas Gomez, one of our favorite baritones and part of the Verdi Chorus family. The fact that all four of these incredible soloists are also connected as dear personal friends makes having all of them together for this concert even more special.

The Verdi Chorus prepares for concerts with rehearsals every Monday night. There, an amazing thing happens as over 60 singers gather together from every walk of life to become the Verdi Chorus. This wide swath of people includes singers from 18 to 80 who come from a variety of professions, and yet have one thing in common: the desire to sing side-by-side each week and delve into the rich, dramatic world of opera. They in turn are joined by opera stars at the beginning of their careers, and college students who have just begun to realize their operatic gifts, as all of them become one under the direction of Founding Artistic Director Anne Marie Ketchum. Each rehearsal is like a vocal master class.

Raising their voices together they become everything from the overworked but amused servants of Don Pasquale to the romanticized revelers of a bar set in Puccini's 19th century French Riviera.

Further demonstrating the organization's mission to provide performance opportunities to young professional singers, fifteen highly promising singers are hired as section leaders and rehearsal coaches. Known as the Walter Fox Singers, named in memory of a long-time Chorus and Board member, these singers assist the Artistic Director, provide direction for their sections in rehearsals, and have opportunities to perform as featured singers in performances. The Walter Fox Singers also perform on occasion independently of the full Chorus, serving as a showcase for the singers and as ambassadors for the Verdi Chorus, and will present a showcase concert later this season. Performances of special arias and ensembles have been presented at venues in Southern California including the Annenberg Beach House, The Broad Stage, the Huntington Library, and the Nixon Library.

The Chorus is also proud to continue with the Apprentice Singers program that was established in 2015 in which talented vocal music students at the college level gain the opportunity to work with the Chorus in rehearsals and sing operatic music in concert. Sahm Foundation Apprentices for this session, named in honor of a generous grant from the Sahm Family Foundation, are soprano Dina Murphy, mezzo-soprano Rachel Labovitch, and tenor Brennan Garrett Meier. Each

receives a scholarship to provide funds with which they can broaden their music studies. Apprentices who successfully complete the program are invited back to sing with the Chorus for subsequent sessions.

Performance times are Saturday, April 6 at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, April 7 at 2 pm at the First United Methodist Church in Santa Monica, located at 1008 11th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90403.

Tickets are available for purchase at [www.verdichorus.org](http://www.verdichorus.org) or by calling (800) 838-3006. Priority seating is available for \$40, general admission is \$30, seniors are \$25, and students aged 25 and under with a valid ID are \$10.

Music Director and Founding Artistic Director ANNE MARIE KETCHUM has been the conductor of the Verdi Chorus since its inception in 1983. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Choral Conducting and a Master's degree in Voice Performance from California State University, Northridge, where she studied choral conducting with John Alexander and served as his assistant conductor. As a singer, she has appeared internationally and is well known for her performances of contemporary art music, vocal chamber music, solo recitals, and opera. She has made several recordings of contemporary music. Among her more recent activities Ms. Ketchum was the Stage Director for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Western Region Showcase Concerts in Palm Springs for five years. She helped create *This and My Heart: A Portrait of Emily Dickinson in Text and Song*, a concert/theater piece that she co-wrote and performed with actress Linda Kelsey and pianist Victoria Kirsch. This was presented as part of Grand Performances in Los Angeles and made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Cultural Affairs Department of Los Angeles. She recently premiered and recorded a piece in New York by Aurelio de la Vega entitled *Recordatio* for soprano and ten instruments, which was written for her and subsequently nominated for a Latin Grammy.

Accompanist LARAINNE ANN MADDEN has garnered acclaim as one of the most sensitive and experienced collaborating artists in the Los Angeles area. Trained in the Bay Area, she made her solo debut with the Oakland Symphony at age 13 performing Mozart's Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 488. Ms. Madden studied Accompanying at the University of Southern California with its pioneer teacher, Gwendolyn Koldofsky, and has accompanied in the master classes of Martin Katz, Geoffrey Parsons, Giorgio Tozzi, Martial Singher, Joan Dornemann and Peter Pears. She has served as repetiteur accompanist under conductors Simon Rattle, Christoph Perrick and Richard Buckley, and has appeared in concert with singers associated with New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and Los Angeles Opera including Alan Titus, Rod Gilfry, Erie Mills, Young Mi Kim and Ealynn Voss. Recent engagements include performing on the *Jacaranda*

Concert Series and with the Walter Fox Singers at the Annenberg Beach House in Santa Monica, the Huntington Library in Pasadena, and the Richard Nixon Library for the Marshall B. Ketchum University Shared Visions Gala. This is her 21st year as collaborator with the Verdi Chorus.

## About the Soloists

Praised for her shimmering tones and star-struck vulnerability by Opera News, Greek-American soprano Jamie Chamberlin is recognized for her versatility as both a singer and actress. ArtsInLA hailed her role debut as Cunegonde in Long Beach Opera's *Candide* as jaw-dropping. Most recently at LBO, Ms. Chamberlin earned rave reviews for her "soaring tone" (LA Weekly) and superhuman soprano (Schmopera) as Faustine in *The Invention of Morel*, a new opera by Stewart Copeland of the legendary rock band, The Police. In 2015, Chamberlin garnered national attention when she was selected to portray Marilyn Monroe in the U.S. Premiere of Gavin Bryars' *Marilyn Forever* in a haunting production by LBO's visionary Artistic Director, Andreas Mitisek.

The 2017-2018 season marked a return to LBO as *The Foreign Woman in The Consul*, starring Patricia Racette, *Isolde in Martin's The Love Potion (Le Vin Herb)*, and Hazel George in the US Premiere of *Glass' The Perfect American* (also at Chicago Opera Theater). Other season highlights included Ms. Chamberlin's debut of the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Pacific Opera Project, concert appearances as soprano soloist with the California Philharmonic at Walt Disney Concert Hall, and Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra's Mahler's *Symphony No. 4* and Poulenc's *Gloria*. Recently, Jamie and her husband, tenor Nathan Granner, curated a lecture recital featuring the operas of Left Coast Composers for LA Made and LBO.

A gifted interpreter of new music, Ms. Chamberlin made her professional debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, singing the soprano solo in the world premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Wing on Wing* during the inaugural season of the Walt Disney Concert Hall. Ms. Chamberlin created the powerhouse role of Elyn Saks in the world premiere of Kenneth Wells' *The Center Cannot Hold* (based on Saks' memoir of the same title), a coproduction with UCLA and Pacific Opera Project, which continues to receive national attention for its impact in both the arts and mental health communities. As a Young Artist, Jamie was selected to participate in the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, where her portrayal of troubled poetess Anne Sexton in Conrad Susa's *Transformations* was called spellbinding by SF Chronicle's Joshua Kosman.

As a Delos Recording Artist, Ms. Chamberlin's fresh-sounding, expressive soprano (Opera News) has been praised for her work on *Terrain of the Heart*, song cycles of Mark Abel. Ms. Chamberlin created the role of Lisa on the world premiere Delos recording of Abel's 2016 chamber opera,

Home is a Harbor. Jamie's recognizable sound can also be heard during the epic water ballet scene in the 2016 Coen Brothers film *Hail, Caesar!*, for which she was handpicked by prolific film score composer Carter Burwell.

A frequent artist with Los Angeles Opera, Ms. Chamberlin made her solo debut singing the High Priestess in *Ada* and the Cretan Woman in *Idomeneo*, with Plácido Domingo. Ms. Chamberlin has appeared extensively with the Pasadena Symphony and Louisville Orchestra under the baton of Jorge Mester, an early champion in her career. Her concert repertoire includes the soprano solos in Mozart's *C Minor Mass*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mahler's *Second and Fourth Symphonies*, Milhaud's *Chants de Ronsard*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* and Adams' *Grand Pianola Music*. She is the recipient of many awards and scholarships from organizations, which include The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, First Prize in the Performing Arts Scholarship Foundation, Third Prize in the Inaugural Jos Iturbi International Music Competition, The Opera Buffs, The Pillsbury Foundation, and the Society of Singers. Jamie holds both Bachelor of Arts and Master of Music Degrees from UCLA.

DANIELLA MARCELLE BOND sang on the 2017 Grammy Award winning album for Los Angeles Opera's recording of *Ghosts of Versailles* and also sang in that year's Grammy Awards broadcast. Roles include Hannah After in Laura Kaminsky's *As One*, which the *Gazettes* called extraordinary with intense singing and acting performances." She was hailed by the Los Angeles Times with a Brava! for her performance in Long Beach Opera's production of John Adams' *Death of Klinghoffer*. Her roles include *Carmen*, Marilyn Monroe in Gavin Bryars' *Marilyn Forever*, *Paquette/Candide*, *Dido/Dido & Aeneas*, *Hermia/ Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Siebel/Faust*, *Olga/Eugene Onegin*, *Cornelia/Handel's Giulio Cesare*, *Maddalena/Rigoletto* and others. She works frequently in contemporary opera and has developed roles for composers such as Stewart Copeland's *Invention of Morel* and Kenneth Wells' *The Center Cannot Hold*. Ms. Bond is based in Los Angeles where she sings on film, TV and video game scores.

Operatic tenor, NATHAN GRANNER is world renowned as a solo and collaborative artist. His buoyant, elegant personality and musicality shine from every stage.

Nathan Granner's 2017-2018 engagements included performing as Dr. Morel in Stewart Copeland's (of the band The Police) world premiere opera *The Invention of Morel* at Chicago Opera Theater & Long Beach Opera, Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* and Ubaldo in the U.S. premier of Donizetti's *Pia de' Tolomei* with Spoleto Festival USA, Curly in *Oklahoma!* with Ash Lawn Opera, Edgardo in Pacific Opera Project's *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Greek-American soprano (and

wife) Jamie Chamberlin, the magician in Menotti's *The Consul* with Long Beach Opera and being featured in the climactic scene of the award winning independent film, *Counter-Clockwise*, directed by George Mosse.

Granner continues 2019 with back-to-back *Rodolfo*s at West Bay Opera and Opera Santa Barbara, Jacopo in Giuseppe Verdi's early opera *I Due Foscari* again with West Bay Opera, then two world premieres at Opera Parallele (*Today it Rains* by Laura Kaminsky with Mark Campbell & Kimberly Reed) and at Long Beach Opera, (*The Central Park Five* by Anthony Davis with Richard Wesley) in the spring.

With over one hundred roles to his credit, baritone ROBERTO PERLAS GOMEZ has performed extensively throughout the United States. He has performed supporting roles with Michigan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, San Diego Opera, and San Francisco Opera. He has done multiple leading roles with most of the regional companies in California.

Mr. Gomez made his international debut as Marcello in *La bohème* with the Shanghai Opera. He was also in Manila, Philippines to create the title role of Jose Rizal in an opera honoring the final days of the Philippine national hero. He was recently at Kennedy Center to perform the role of Elias in the Tagalog opera *Noli me tangere*.

In 2008, Mr. Gomez made his Italian and European debut for the Arena di Verona Foundation as the Chinese Prime Minister Chou en-lai in the Italian premiere of John Adams' *Nixon in China*, a role he reprised with Long Beach Opera.

Mr. Gomez has done numerous roles to great press, including the Verdi baritone leads in *La Traviata*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Il trovatore*, *Il finto Stanislao*, *Don Carlo*, *Aida*, and Verdi's *Requiem*. He debuted the leading roles of the kings in *Die Kluge*, *The Emperor of Atlantis*, and in its American premiere, Vivaldi's long lost *Moteczuma* with Long Beach Opera.

As an Opera San Jose resident artist, Mr. Gomez performed lead roles in *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and created the role of Drosselmeier in *The Tale of the Nutcracker*. He has further performed what has become his signature role of Figaro with Nevada Opera, Santa Barbara Opera, Accorde Opera in Mexico, Sacramento Opera, and Opera Idaho.

About The Verdi Chorus

The Verdi Chorus is a Southern California nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting opera choruses in concert and to providing career development opportunities for young professional singers. As the only choral group in Southern California that focuses primarily on the dramatic and diverse music of the opera chorus, the Verdi Chorus gives talented amateur singers the unique opportunity to sing side-by-side with professional singers in rehearsals leading up to performances held to the highest artistic standards. Under the direction of its remarkable Founding Artistic Director Anne Marie Ketchum, each rehearsal is like a vocal master class.

The Verdi Chorus was founded in 1983 at the Verdi Restaurant in Santa Monica. When the restaurant closed in 1991, the Verdi Chorus continued. In 1999, the Chorus incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Under the continuous direction of Founding Artistic Director Anne Marie Ketchum, the Chorus presents four concerts each year as well as other collaborative events. Its repertoire includes over 300 choruses from 81 operas in seven languages.

For more information visit: [www.verdichorus.org](http://www.verdichorus.org)

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