



Press Release

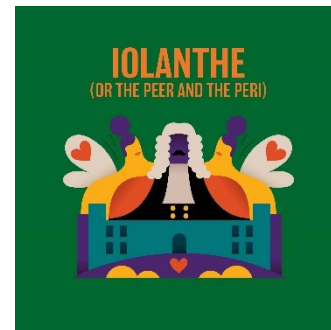
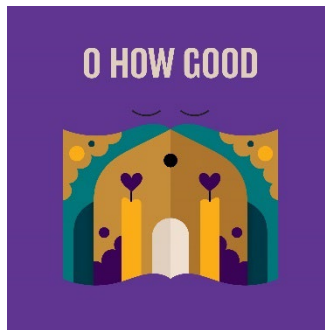
## MASTEROICES ANNOUNCES DETAILS OF ITS 2022-23 SEASON

*Carmen* in Bizet's Original Opéra Comique Version Using English Translation by Sheldon Harnick  
Opens the Season and Features Ginger Costa-Jackson, Mikaela Bennett, and John Brancy

*O How Good* Includes Bloch's *Sacred Service*, Weill's *Kiddush* and World Premiere by Daniel Rein

Gilbert and Sullivan's Comic Opera, *Iolanthe*

MasterVoices Renews Artistic Director Ted Sperling's Contract for Six More Years



**New York, NY, July 20, 2022** — **Ted Sperling**, Artistic Director of **MasterVoices**, announced details of the celebrated chorus' 81<sup>st</sup> season, celebrating the power of the human voice to unite, inspire and connect since 1941. The 2022-23 season opens on **October 25** at the **Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center** with Mr. Sperling leading a concert staging of **Bizet's *Carmen*** in its original Opéra Comique version, with dialogue rather than recitative, sung in an English translation by legendary Broadway lyricist **Sheldon Harnick**. The MasterVoices performance, suspended in March 2020 due to the pandemic, will mark the New York premiere of Harnick's full translation.

Joining the 120-member **MasterVoices** chorus is mezzo soprano **Ginger Costa-Jackson**, "a singer, stylist and actress of tremendous gifts" (*Opera Today*), as Carmen. MasterVoices favorite, rising soprano **Mikaela Bennett**, who was featured in the chorus' *A Joyful Noise* concert last December at Carnegie Hall, sings the role of Micaëla; and baritone **John Brancy**, featured in MasterVoices' theatrical song cycle *Myths and Hymns*, which is nominated for a 2022 New York Emmy Award, appears as Escamillo. **Sammi Cannold** directs, and the choreographer is **Gustavo Zajac**.

[O How Good at Central Synagogue](#)

Sacred music is the theme of the season's second concert on **March 23** at Central Synagogue. It will include two beloved works of traditional Jewish liturgy set by master composers – **Ernest Bloch's Sacred Service** and **Kurt Weill's Kiddush** – as well as the **world premiere** of a new work by Israeli-American composer **Daniel Rein**, commissioned by MasterVoices. The performance features baritone **Justin Austin**, tenor **Daniel Mutlu**, who is also the Senior Cantor of Central Synagogue, and **David Strickland**, organist at Central Synagogue.

#### Gilbert and Sullivan's Comic Opera *Iolanthe*

The season ends on **May 3** at Carnegie Hall with a concert staging of the 1882 comic opera *Iolanthe*, by W.S. Gilbert (libretto) and Arthur Sullivan (music), directed and conducted by Ted Sperling. *Iolanthe*, with "one of Sullivan's finest scores" (*The New York Times*), is a battle of the sexes pitting members of Britain's House of Lords against the Fairy Queen and her kin. Yet, its themes are supremely relatable today; it tells of how a minority of landed gentry makes rules that dominate the majority, how boorish masculinity disrupts and dominates a tranquil civilization of women, and how all that may still lead to surprising results.

#### MasterVoices Extends Artistic Director Ted Sperling's Contract

Ensuring a continuation of the artistic vision held by Ted Sperling, who became MasterVoices Artistic Director in 2013, MasterVoices has extended Mr. Sperling's contract for another six years. Says Executive Director Jennifer Collins, "I couldn't be more thrilled to know that I have Ted Sperling as a partner for another six years. He is always finding new ways to bring resonance to our mission and vision to our concerts – he inspires us all."

Juliana Chen and Deborah F. Stiles, Co-Chairs of MasterVoices' Board of Directors added, "Ever since 2009, when Ted guest-conducted *Firebrand of Florence*, we knew we had found someone special. He is the ideal leader for MasterVoices as we enter this new era – his musical talent, unflinching instincts, and steadfast commitment to excellence have always been a perfect fit for this organization. We see great things ahead!"

Ted Sperling shares, "This organization has a celebrated history which I am proud to be part of. I look forward to bringing our community exceptional programs of musical and cultural interest, expanding our family of MasterVoices collaborators and audiences, and continuing to explore the possibilities of the concert-going experience through a range of genres."

#### Additional performances this August

In addition to its planned season, at 8 pm on August 13, 15, 16, 17, and 18, 2022, MasterVoices sings in a special event at Radio City Music Hall. [Joe Hisaishi: Music from the Studio Ghibli Films of Hayao Miyazaki](#), celebrates the illustrious partnership between acclaimed composer Joe Hisaishi and the beloved filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki. In this new concert production, Joe Hisaishi's celebrated scores, including those from *Princess Mononoke*, *My Neighbor Totoro* and the Oscar-winning *Spirited Away*, are performed with the American Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hisaishi himself. The music accompanies montages from Miyazaki's films, providing a new perspective into the timeless work of Hisaishi and Miyazaki.

#### [Carmen](#)

Music by Georges Bizet, Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. English translation by Sheldon Harnick

**Tuesday, October 25, 2022, 8 pm**

**Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center**

**MasterVoices**

## **Orchestra of St. Luke's**

Conducted by **Ted Sperling**

Directed by **Sammi Cannold**

Choreography by **Gustavo Zajac**

Costume design by **Nicole Slaven**

Scenic design by **Ann Beyersdorfer**

Lighting design by **Brian Tovar**

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

CARMEN **Ginger Costa-Jackson** (mezzo soprano)

ESCAMILLO **John Brancy** (baritone)

MICAËLA **Mikaela Bennett** (soprano)

*Additional casting to be announced at a later date*

Tchaikovsky once predicted that **Bizet's *Carmen*** would be one of the best-known operas of all time. This of course has proven to be true, yet it would have been a surprise to Bizet, who died three months after the opera's premiere in Paris in 1875, believing his greatest work to be a failure. MasterVoices Artistic Director **Ted Sperling** leads a concert staging of ***Carmen*** in its original Opéra Comique version, as translated by the distinguished Broadway lyricist **Sheldon Harnick**. Harnick's translation of *Carmen* was commissioned and premiered by the Houston Grand Opera in 1981 and served as the English text for Peter Brook's acclaimed *La Tragédie De Carmen*, which was performed at the Vivian Beaumont Theater in New York in 1984. In addition to hearing Harnick's translation, this performance offers *Carmen* as performed at Paris' Opéra Comique in 1875, with spoken dialogue, rather than the sung recitative which was composed by Ernest Guiraud after Bizet's death. Says director **Sammi Cannold**, who directed *Icarus* in MasterVoices' virtual roll-out of Adam Guettel's song cycle *Myths and Hymns* and who was recognized in *Forbes Magazine's* "30 Under 30 in Hollywood & Entertainment," "To me, *Carmen* is about a woman's relationship to freedom. I want to probe at what power meant for women then, viewed through the lens of today." Choreographer **Gustavo Zajac** also staged the dances for MasterVoices' 2015 *The Pirates of Penzance*.

**Tickets**, priced from \$30 to \$175, are on sale on August 11, 2022, and may be purchased online at [jazz.org](http://jazz.org), at the Jazz at Lincoln Center box office, Broadway at 60<sup>th</sup> Street, or by calling 212-721-6500. Ticket holders will need to comply with the venue's health and safety requirements, which can be found [here](#).

## **[O How Good](#)**

**Thursday, March 23, 2023, 7:30 pm**

**Central Synagogue, 652 Lexington Avenue**

**MasterVoices**

**Ted Sperling**, conductor

**Justin Austin**, baritone

**Daniel Mutlu**, tenor

**David Strickland**, organ

**Bloch: *Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh)***

**Weill: *Kiddush***

**Daniel Rein: New Commission (World Premiere)**

**MasterVoices** honors the life and dedicated service of Board member Lois Conway and also showcases emerging stars in a culturally blended musical world – a cause that was dear to Ms. Conway’s heart. **Ernest Bloch’s Sacred Service** (*Avodath Hakodesh*), with his opening words in Hebrew “Ma tovu” (*Oh how good*), is one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s great expressions of devotion which reaches beyond the confines of any one faith. Based on the Sabbath morning service version common in reform synagogues in the 1930s, it is written in a lush romantic style with melodies that hint at Hebraic chant but were actually inspired by Bloch’s cosmic vision. Written for mixed chorus and bass baritone in 1927 during Bloch’s tenure as director of San Francisco Conservatory of Music, it was originally performed for full symphony orchestra but an organ version was published as a practical inducement for its use in worship. Bloch wrote it for Cantor Reuben Rinder, who served the pulpit of the city’s prestigious classical reform synagogue Congregation Emanuel-El. It was commissioned by Gerald F. Warburg, cellist and patron of the arts and the work is dedicated to him.

**Kiddush**, the Sabbath blessing over wine, is a rare liturgical gem from the pen of the great German-American composer, **Kurt Weill**, who blended jazz (the blues scale) with classical formalism in its composition for tenor, chorus and organ. First performed in May 1946, it was commissioned by Park Avenue Synagogue and dedicated to Weill’s father, who had been chief cantor in Dessau, Germany. The program concludes with the world premiere of a new work by **Daniel Rein**, whose previous MasterVoices commission “3 Songs by e. e. cummings” for choir and two soloists premiered at its “Our America” concert in 2018 at Cooper Union. Other recent projects by Rein include *Her Violet Eye*, a song cycle based on Edgar Allan Poe’s poetry, which was released as an album, and *Improvisations On Misirlou*, a mini-concerto for piano based on a Greek folk song, which had its U.S. premiere at the Sewanee Music Festival 2017.

**Tickets**, starting at \$25, are on sale on October 25, 2022, and may be purchased online at [mastervoices.org](http://mastervoices.org). Ticket holders will need to comply with the venue’s health and safety requirements, which can be found [here](#).

### [Iolanthe \(or The Peer and the Peri\)](#)

**Music by Arthur S. Sullivan, lyrics and libretto by W.S. Gilbert**

**Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 7 pm**

**Carnegie Hall, Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage**

**MasterVoices**

**MasterVoices Orchestra**

Directed and Conducted by **Ted Sperling**

*Casting to be announced at a later date*

**Gilbert and Sullivan’s Iolanthe** is the seventh work in their fourteen operatic collaborations between 1871 and 1896. Written when they were both at the height of their powers, the plot of *Iolanthe* is about fairies who take on members of the House of Lords, which is lampooned as a citadel of privileged dimwits; the law; a shepherd who is part fairy (from the waist up); a young heiress who as an orphan is a ward of the chancery (the courts); and her guardian, the Lord Chancellor, who also is in love with her. *Iolanthe* was the first opera to open at the Savoy, the London theater built by producer and hotelier Richard D’Oyly Carte to present the work of Gilbert and Sullivan. It was the first new theater production in the world to be illuminated by electricity, which made several special effects possible, including electric wands used by the chorus of fairies and battery-powered lights worn in the principal fairies’ hair. It ran for 398 performances.

The Gilbert and Sullivan operas, of which *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *The Mikado* are among the best known, continue to enjoy broad and enduring international success. The team’s creative DNA gave birth to 20<sup>th</sup> century American musical theater in which book, music and lyrics combine to form an

integrated whole, and they demonstrated that musicals can address contemporary social and political issues without sacrificing entertainment value. They also influenced political discourse, literature, film and television. Songwriter Johnny Mercer once said, “We all come from Gilbert.” MasterVoices has previously presented concert stagings of *The Mikado* and *The Pirates of Penzance* featuring stars from Broadway and the opera world.

**Tickets**, priced from \$30 to \$165, are on sale on February 2, 2023, and may be purchased online at [carnegiehall.org](https://www.carnegiehall.org), by calling CarnegieCharge at 212.247.7800 or in person at Carnegie Hall’s box office at 57<sup>th</sup> and Seventh Avenue beginning Spring 2023. Ticket holders need to comply with the venue’s health and safety requirements, which can be found [here](#).

Details of MasterVoices’ 2022-23 season can be found at [mastervoices.org](https://mastervoices.org).

### **About MasterVoices**

MasterVoices (formerly The Collegiate Chorale) was founded in 1941 by legendary American choral conductor Robert Shaw. Under the artistic direction of Tony Award winner Ted Sperling since 2013, the group is known for its versatility and a repertoire that ranges from choral masterpieces and operas in concert to operettas and musical theater. Season concerts feature a volunteer chorus of 100+ members from all walks of life, alongside a diverse roster of world-class soloists from across the musical spectrum, including Julia Bullock, Dove Cameron, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Renée Fleming, John Holiday, Jennifer Holliday, Norm Lewis, Victoria Clark, and Kelli O’Hara. Under Sperling’s direction the group has created cross-disciplinary collaborations with such diverse creative minds as *Vogue* Editor-at-Large Hamish Bowles, fashion designer Zac Posen, Silk Road visual artist Kevork Mourad, illustrator Manik Choksi, stage designer Doug Fitch, and choreographers Doug Varone and Andrew Palermo. Roger Rees was the group’s Artistic Associate from 2003–2015, and in 2021 the group received a Drama League Award nomination for its multi-genre digital concert production, *Myths and Hymns*.

Known for its presentation of lesser-known artistic treasures such as Scott Joplin’s *Treemonisha*, and Tchaikovsky’s *Maid of Orleans*, the group has received recent accolades for productions of rarely-heard works such as the 2018-19 season’s *Lady in the Dark* by Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin, Victor Herbert’s *Babes in Toyland*, the Gershwins’ *Let ‘Em Eat Cake*, and Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents’s *Anyone Can Whistle*. They also commission and premiere new works; recent examples include choral works by Ricky Ian Gordon, Marisa Michelson, Tariq Al-Sabir, and Randall Eng.

As one of the country’s first interracial and interfaith choruses, MasterVoices (as The Collegiate Chorale) performed at the opening of the United Nations and has sung and recorded under the batons of esteemed conductors including Serge Koussevitzky, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein, among others. It has been engaged by top-tier orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and the Israel Philharmonic, and has appeared at the Verbier and Salzburg Festivals.

For more information, visit [mastervoices.org](https://mastervoices.org). Connect with MasterVoices on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (@mastervoicesny).

### **About Ted Sperling**

One of today's leading musical artists, Tony Award-winning Maestro Ted Sperling is a classically trained musician whose career has spanned from the concert hall and the opera house to the Broadway stage. Presently Artistic Director of MasterVoices, he has led such symphony orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Boston Pops, San Diego Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, the Iceland Symphony, Czech National Symphony, and BBC Concert Orchestra, as well as New York City Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Formerly Principal Conductor of the Westchester Philharmonic, Mr. Sperling is a multi-faceted artist also known for his work as orchestrator, singer, pianist, violinist, violist, director, and music director.

With MasterVoices, Maestro Sperling has led acclaimed productions of rarely-heard gems as both director and conductor. These include Kurt Weill's *The Firebrand of Florence*, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *The Road of Promise* (based on *The Eternal Road* and subsequently recorded on Navona Records), and the 2018-19 season's sold-out three-performance run of *Lady in the Dark* at New York City Center. Other notable productions with the group include Carnegie Hall performances of Stephen Sondheim's *Anyone Can Whistle*, George and Ira Gershwin's satirical musicals *Of Thee I Sing* and *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, a reconstruction of Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, and *Song of Norway*; the New York City premieres of David Lang's *battle hymns* at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum; and Ricky Ian Gordon's operas *The Grapes of Wrath* at Carnegie Hall and *27* at New York City Center.

During the pandemic season of 2020-2021, Maestro Sperling spearheaded a filmed production of Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns* for MasterVoices, producing and music directing 24 short musical films and directing roughly half of them. This project was nominated for a Drama League Award, and featured over 100 artists collaborating remotely, including Renée Fleming, Take 6, Jennifer Holliday and Julia Bullock. Now that live performances are back, Maestro Sperling is supervising national and international productions of *My Fair Lady*, *The King and I*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. He has symphonic engagements in the U.S. and Europe and continues to teach at NYU, conducting three different orchestras and training the next generation of Broadway musicians and conductors.

Sperling has conducted multiple concerts for PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center*, the American Songbook Series at Lincoln Center, and the *Lyrics and Lyricists* series at the 92nd Street Y. He conducted Audra McDonald in a double bill of *La Voix Humaine* and the world premiere of *Send: Who Are You? I Love You?* at the Houston Grand Opera. He won the 2005 Tony and Drama Desk Awards for his orchestrations of Adam Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza*, for which he was also Music Director.

In addition to his directing work with MasterVoices, Mr. Sperling's work as a stage director includes the world premieres of four critically acclaimed original musicals Off-Broadway—including *The Other Josh Cohen* and *See What I Wanna See*—and a noted production of *Lady in the Dark* at the Prince Theater in Philadelphia, starring Andrea Marcovicci. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale University, and received the Faculty Prize at The Juilliard School. He made his Broadway stage debut as Wallace Hartley in *Titanic* and appeared as Steve Allen in the finale of Season Two of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

Images credit: MasterVoices 2022-23 season visual created by Asia Pietrzyk.

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