



**MASTEROICES PRESENTS *O HOW GOOD*, A CONCERT OF JEWISH SACRED MUSIC
BY BLOCH, WEILL AND A WORLD PREMIERE BY DANIEL REIN,
ON MARCH 23, AT CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE**

Featuring Baritone Justin Austin, Tenor Daniel Mutlu, and Organist David Strickland



New York, NY, February 2, 2023 – MasterVoices continues its eclectic 2022-23 season on **March 23** at **Central Synagogue** with **Ted Sperling** leading *O How Good*, a performance of Jewish sacred music. The program includes 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 *And the Sun Goes Up*, a new work by Israeli-American composer **Daniel Rein**, commissioned by MasterVoices.

Joining the **MasterVoices** chorus are “mellifluous baritone” (*The Wall Street Journal*) **Justin Austin** – a Drama Desk Award nominee for his performance in Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage’s opera *Intimate Apparel*, and a soloist for the premiere of Daniel Rein’s “3 Songs by e. e. cummings” at the group’s “Our America” concert in 2018; tenor **Daniel Mutlu**, the Senior Cantor of Central Synagogue who is also a member of the choir at Trinity Church on Wall Street; and **David Strickland**, organist at Central Synagogue since 2002.

Thursday, March 23, 2023, 7:30 pm
Central Synagogue, 652 Lexington Avenue

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

MasterVoices

Ted Sperling, conductor

Justin Austin, baritone

Daniel Mutlu, tenor

David Strickland, organ
Daniel Rein, piano

Bloch: *Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh)*

Weill: *Kiddush*

Daniel Rein: *And the Sun Goes Up (World Premiere)*

In this concert, **MasterVoices** honors the life and dedicated service of Board member Lois Conway. **Ernest Bloch's Sacred Service** (*Avodath Hakodesh*), with his opening words in Hebrew "Ma tovu" (*Oh how good*), is one of the 20th 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 later published. Bloch wrote it for Cantor Reuben Rinder, who served the pulpit of the city's prestigious classical reform synagogue Congregation Emanu-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 this 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 features the **world premiere** of *And the Sun Goes Up*, 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 The Cooper Union. He is a native of Jerusalem, and a member of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop. 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 in 2017.

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

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 legendary lyricist Sheldon Harnick, *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 New York Emmy Award nomination and 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 this season's New York City premiere of Sheldon Harnick's full English translation of Bizet's *Carmen*, 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. 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 from left to right: Baritone Justin Austin, Tenor Daniel Mutlu, and Organist David Strickland, courtesy of MasterVoices

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