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# TOWARD A SEASON OF PEACE

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**RICHARD DANIELPOUR**

HILA PLITMANN, SOPRANO

PACIFIC CHORALE, JOHN ALEXANDER

PACIFIC SYMPHONY, CARL ST. CLAIR



## Richard Danielpour (b. 1956)

### Toward a Season of Peace

I've often referred to myself as an American Composer with a Middle Eastern memory. My parents were both born in Iran; born in the U.S., I spent a year in Iran (1963-64), and although I was just a child, I remember much about that year. In addition to learning Farsi, I laid the bedrock of my understanding about the world which deepened as I matured.

Sadly, the experience in Iran was for various reasons an unpleasant one, and I had fallen in love with Western Music and culture, so as I grew into adulthood I kept my Persian heritage at a distance. In recent years, however, I have become engrossed in this ancestral legacy and deeply interested in the way the people of Iran and the whole of the Middle East are pleading to be heard in the face of oppressive regimes.

Perhaps the thing of greatest interest and concern to me is how the peoples of this part of the world have used religion to remain at war with one another, in spite of the fact that Jews, Muslims and Christians all believe in "One God." Ironically all of the great religions speak of peace as a fundamental goal for humanity. "Shalom", "Salaam Allecham", and "Peace Be With You" are primary greetings in Judaism, Islam and Christianity respectively. This is the reason for my using multiple languages in *Toward a Season of Peace*.

I used a first class English translation of the work of Persian poet Rumi and not the original Farsi for two

reasons: I wanted to acquaint American listeners with the greatness of Rumi's very accessible work. And it seemed critical to have a sonic contrast to Hebrew and Arabic which Farsi – similar to both languages even though the two are dissimilar to one another – would not provide. Thus Rumi acts as an arbiter, a voice of wisdom and clarity in the polarized dialectic between Hebrew and Arabic.

The three part oratorio is cast in seven movements; Part 1 is comprised of the first, second and third movements using settings of texts dealing primarily with war and destruction; Part 2, movement four, begins with the famous litany of Ecclesiastes and culminates with a setting of the Lord's Prayer, invoking the choice between war and peace; and Part 3, the last three movements, sings of the promise of peace through forgiveness.

The work is titled *Toward a Season of Peace* because the "season" in question is Spring, which appears in many of the texts and is sometimes a metaphor for change and transformation. Moreover, the Persian New Year, Nowruz, which is celebrated on the first day of Spring, heralds a time of renewal and reconciliation. That the world première of this new work was given on or just after Nowruz was not an accident. May it be shared by all in the spirit of harmony.

**Richard Danielpour**

## Richard Danielpour



Award-winning composer Richard Danielpour, one of the most gifted and sought-after composers of his generation, has attracted an impressive array of champions; his commissioners include such celebrated artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Jessye Norman, Dawn Upshaw, Emanuel Ax, Fredericka von Stade, Thomas Hampson, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, Gil Shaham, Sarah Chang, Philippe Entremont, the Guarneri and Emerson String Quartets, the New York City and Pacific Northwest Ballets, the New York Philharmonic, The Philadelphia, the Vienna Chamber and the Stuttgart Radio orchestras, the San Francisco, Pittsburgh, and National symphonies, Orchestre National de France, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and many more. With Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison he created *Margaret Garner*, his first opera, which had a second production at New York City Opera. He has received the American Academy Charles Ives Fellowship, a Guggenheim Award, Bearn's Prize from Columbia University, and numerous grants and residencies. A devoted mentor and educator who has had a significant impact on the younger generation of composers, he is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music and Curtis Institute.

## Hila Plitmann



GRAMMY® Award-winning soprano Hila Plitmann is known worldwide for her astonishing musicianship, versatile and beautiful voice, and the ability to perform challenging new works. She has worked with many leading conductors, including Leonard Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Thomas Adès, appearing as head-liner with the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the London Symphony Orchestra, among others. Her varied recording career includes work on film soundtracks such as *The DaVinci Code*, *New York*, *I Love You* and *Pirates of the Caribbean IV*. In 2009 she won the GRAMMY® for 'Best Classical Vocal Performance' for Corigliano's song cycle *Mr. Tambourine Man* (Naxos 8.559331). Hila Plitmann has also released a recording of *Yiddish Songs*, *The Ancient Question* to high critical acclaim (Signum Classics). Born and raised in Jerusalem, she received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School of Music.

## Pacific Chorale



Founded in 1968, Pacific Chorale presents a substantial performance season at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Costa Mesa, California, and is sought after to perform with the nation's leading symphonies. Comprised of 140 professional and volunteer singers, Pacific Chorale enjoys a long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, and has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, and the National Symphony. The Chorale has toured extensively in Europe, South America and Asia, collaborating with the London Symphony, Orchestre Lamoureux and Orchestre de St-Louis-en-Île de Paris, the National Orchestra of Belgium, the China National Symphony, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Estonian National Symphony, and Argentina's Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional.

## John Alexander



Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale since 1972, John Alexander is one of America's most respected choral conductors. His inspired leadership both on the podium and as an advocate for the advancement of choral art has garnered national and international admiration and acclaim. Alexander's long and distinguished career has encompassed conducting hundreds of choral and orchestral performances throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, the former Soviet Union and South America. Equally versatile whether on the podium or behind the scenes, Alexander has prepared choruses for many of the world's outstanding orchestral conductors. He is nationally recognized as a proponent of contemporary American music, a leader in the development of the performing arts, a lifelong educator, and a composer.

## Pacific Symphony



Pacific Symphony, led by Music Director Carl St.Clair, is the largest orchestra formed in the United States in the last forty years, and is recognized as an outstanding ensemble making strides on both the national and international scene as well as in its own community of Southern California. Pacific Symphony offers moving musical experiences with repertoire ranging from the great orchestral masterworks to music from today's most prominent composers, highlighted by the annual American Composers Festival and a series of multi-media concerts called *Music Unwound*. Pacific Symphony is dedicated to developing and promoting today's composers and expanding the orchestral repertoire, illustrated through its many commissions and recordings, in-depth explorations of American artists and themes. The Symphony's innovative approaches to new works received the ASCAP Award for Adventuresome Programming in 2005 and 2010. In 2010, Pacific Symphony was named one of five orchestras profiled by the League of American Orchestras in a study on innovation. Since 2006, the Symphony has performed in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, designed by Cesar Pelli with acoustics by Russell Johnson. In March 2006, the Symphony embarked on its first European tour, receiving unprecedented and enthusiastic acclaim.

## Carl St.Clair



As Pacific Symphony's Music Director since 1990-91, Carl St.Clair has become widely recognized for his musically distinguished performances, commitment to outstanding educational programmes and innovative approaches to programming. St.Clair is known for the critically acclaimed annual American Composers Festivals, which began in 2000. In 2011-12, he inaugurated a vocal initiative that led to semi-staged productions of *La Bohème*, *Tosca* and *La Traviata*. In 2009 he launched *Music Unwound*, featuring concerts highlighted by multimedia and innovative formats. In 2006-07, he led the orchestra's move into its acoustic home of the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Costa Mesa, Orange County, California. In March 2006, St.Clair took the Symphony on its first highly successful European tour. St.Clair has served as General Music Director of the Komische Oper in Berlin, and as General Music Director and Chief Conductor of the German National Theater and Staatskapelle (GNTS) in Weimar, Germany. He was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Radio Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart. He has appeared with orchestras in Israel, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South America, and summer festivals worldwide. In North America, St.Clair has led many major orchestras, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where he served as Assistant Conductor.

## Toward a Season of Peace

### I. Annunciation

(Hebrew; Jeremiah 4:19-21)

Mey-ay Mey-ay !  
o-chi-la ki-rot li-bi  
Ho-meh li li-bi !  
Lo ach-a-rish  
ki kol sho-far sho-mat naf-shi  
t'-ru-ah<sup>†</sup> mil-cha-mah.

She-ver al she-ver nik-rah ;  
ki shu-d'-dah kol ha-ar-etz  
Pi-tom shu-d'-du oh-ha-li  
reh-gah yi-ri-o-tai  
Ad ma-taj er-eh nes  
esh-mah-ah kol sho-far ?

(Jeremiah, 12:4)

Ad ma-taj t'-e-val ha-ar-etz  
v'-e-sev kol ha-sa-deh yi-vash ?

(Psalm 103:15-16)

Eh-nosh ke-char-tzir ya-mav  
k'-tzitz ha-sa-deh ken ya-tzitz  
ki roo-ach ah-v'-rah bo v'-ey-neh-nu  
v'-lo ya-ki-reh-nu  
od m'-ko-mo

(From the 'Sim Shalom')

Bar-che-nu a-vee-nu ku-la-nu  
k'-e-chad b'-or pa-ne-cha

(Farsi; from Rahim M. Kermanshai):

Aj-ab sab-ree Gho-dah dar-ad...

(Translation: Revised Standard Version, Holy Bible)

My anguish, my anguish!  
I writhe in pain  
Oh the walls of my heart!  
I cannot keep silent;  
for I hear the sound of the shofar,  
the alarm of war.

Disaster follows hard on disaster;  
the whole land is laid waste.  
Suddenly, my tents are destroyed,  
my curtains in a moment.  
How long must I see the standard  
and hear the sound of the shofar?

How long will the land mourn,  
and the grass of the field wither?

As for man, his days are like grass,  
he flourishes like the flower of the field;  
for the wind passes over it  
and he is gone,  
And his place knows it no more...

Bless us, our Father, as one  
with the light of your countenance

(Translation by the composer)

Look how patient God is...

### II. Vision

(Jalaluddin Rumi, Divan 943;  
Translation by Rafiqq Abdulla)

Time passes, time passes, wearing out all clocks  
Travelling into the eye of night. The dance  
Of senses is stilled in night prayer  
The path to the Unseen unveils itself.  
Sleep's angel shepherds its flock of spirits towards  
Spectral cities and rose-proofed gardens  
Beyond the deadly confinement of place and time.  
Now the spirit freed from the cell of the sleeping  
Body...feels with the heart's revealing eye  
A thousand forms and shapes, origin of origins,  
Of one eternity and unblemished moment.  
You could justly say the spirit has come home...

### III. Celebration

(Arabic; poem by Al Mutanabbi)

A-lad-thuu min al-mu-dam al kha-dar-iis-ii  
wa-ah-la min-aa-taa-ti al kuu-yus-ii  
ma-aa-taa-ti es-sah-faa-ih wa-l a-waa-li  
wa-i Quaa-mi kha-mi-san fi kha-mi-sii  
Fa-mau-ti fi al-wa-gha aii-sha li a-na-ni  
Ra-ay-tu al-aii-sha fi aa-ra-bii an-nu-fuu-sii

\*Ja-a al ra-bi-a bi-bay-a-di  
Wa bi suu-di-hii  
s'an-faa-ni min sayyi-dan-ni-hii  
wa a-bi-di-hii  
jay-shun tha-waa-bil-hu al-ghus-suun  
wa-faw-TQui-hii  
aw-raa-Quu-ha man-shuur-a-tun  
ka-bu-nuu-du-hii

\* ("J" pronounced like the English "juice")  
† (Qui pronounced like the English "key")

(Translation by F. Deknate)

Tastier than old wine,  
and sweeter than the passing of winecups,  
is the play of swords and lances.  
The clash of armies at my command  
to face death in battle is my life  
for life is what fulfills the soul.

Spring has come  
with his whites and his blacks,  
two classes, his lords,  
and his slaves,  
the branches are his army of spears  
and above  
the leaves are  
his unfurled flags.



#### 4 IV. Atonement

(Hebrew; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

La koj zman  
V'-et le khol khe-fetz ta-khat ha-sha-maim  
Et la-le-det v'-et la-moot  
Et la-har-og v'-et lir-poh  
Et liv-kot v'-et lis-khok  
Et sfod v'-et re-kod  
Et le-va-kesh v'-et le-a-bed  
Et le-e-hov, v'-et lis-no  
Et mil-cha-mah v'-et sha-lom.

(Isaiah 40:2)

Kol kor-ey ba-mid-bar  
Pa-nu der-ech A-do-nai

(Farsi; Persian Proverb)

Nist Gho-da-yee be-jass Gho-dah

(The Lord's Prayer)

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass  
Against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

(continuing in Arameic)

Mud-tij de-dj lukh hai mul-choo-tah  
oo khai-la oo tush-bookh-ta  
L'-al-am al-mein  
A-men

(Translation: Revised Standard Version)

For everything there is a season,  
And a time for every matter under heaven.  
A time to be born, and a time to die,  
A time to kill, and a time to heal,  
A time to weep, and a time to laugh,  
A time to mourn, and a time to dance,  
A time to seek, and a time to lose,  
A time to love, and a time to hate,  
A time for war, and a time for peace.

A voice cries: in the wilderness,  
Prepare the way of the LORD...

(Translation by the composer)

There is no God but God

(Revised Standard Version)

For yours is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory  
to the end of the universe:  
Amen.

#### 5 V. Consecration

(Hebrew; Isaiah 40:1-2)

Na-cha-mu, na-cha-mu, a-mi  
yo-mar el-o-hey-chem  
Dab-ru al lev ye-ru-sha-lam  
v'-kir-y e-leh-ha  
ki mal-ah tz'-va-ah  
ki nir-tzah a-vo-nah  
ki lak-cha mi-yad A-do-nai  
kif-la-im b'-'chol cha-to-te-ha

Kol kor-ey ba-mid-bar  
Pa-nu der-ech A-do-nai  
Ve-nig-lah kvod A-do-nai  
v'-ra-y kol ba-sar  
yach-dav

(Arabic; poem by Ibn Arabi)

A-dee-nu bi-dee-ni al-hubb  
an-nee ta-waj-a-hat  
ra-kaa i-bu-hu fa-al hub-bu dee-ni  
wa a(y)-maa-ni

La-Qad sur-ra Qal-bi Qaa-bi-laan ku-laa  
suu-ra-lan  
Fa-ma-raj li-ghiz-al-ann-in wa dee-ru  
li-ruh-baa-ni  
Wa bai-tun li-aw-thaa-nin wa ka-ba-tu  
taa-if-in  
Wa alu-wa-hu taw-raa-tin wa muss-ha-fu  
Qu-ran-ni

(Hebrew; Isaiah 40:6-8)

Kol o-mer "Kra!"  
v'-a-mar ma ek-ra ?  
Kol ha-ba-sar khat-zif  
v'-kol khas-do k'-tzitz ha-sa-deh  
ya-vesh kha-tzir na-vel tzitz  
Ud-var e-lo-hei-nu ya-kum l'-o-lam.

(Translation: Revised Standard Version)

Comfort, comfort my people  
Says your GOD  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem  
And cry to her  
That her warfare is ended,  
That her iniquity is pardoned  
That she has received from the LORD's hand  
Double for all her sins

A voice cries: in the wilderness,  
Prepare the way of the LORD...  
And the glory of the LORD  
Shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together

(Translation by F. Deknate)

I believe in the religion of Love  
Whatever direction its caravans may take  
For love is my religion  
and my faith.

My heart has become able to take on all forms  
It is a pasture for gazelles  
For monks, an abbey  
And a temple for idols  
And a Káaba for  
anyone  
It is the tablets of the Torah and leaves the  
Quran

(Revised Standard Version)

A voice says "Cry!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
All flesh is grass  
And all its beauty is like the flower of the field  
The grass withers, the flower fades  
But the word of our GOD will stand forever.

## 6 VI. Parable

(*Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Divan 2015*;  
*Translation by Rafiqq Abdulla*)

A beggar smiled at me and offered me alms  
In a dream last night, my heart sprang with delight.  
His beauty and grace which shone from his tattered  
Presence took me by storm until I woke at dawn.  
His poverty was riches, it covered my body in silk.  
In that dream I heard the beckoning sighs of lovers,  
I heard soft cries of agonized joy saying: "Take this,  
Drink and be complete!" I saw before me a ring  
Jewelled in poverty and then it nested on my ear.  
From the root of my surging soul a hundred tremors  
Rose as I was taken and pinned down by the surging sea.  
Then heaven groaned with bliss and made a beggar of me.

## 7 VII. Apotheosis

(*Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Divan 2967*;  
*Translation by Rafiqq Abdulla*)

Once again to open to the melody  
Of the wheel of good fortune, listen:  
Sing my soul, dance my heart,  
Clap your hands and stamp your feet  
The dark shafts of a mine are now glowing  
Ruby-red, and the world is festive with welcome,  
The table is set for the coming celebrations.  
We are drunk on Love, blatant with hope  
And adoration of the Beloved's cheek  
Fresh as a meadow in spring...

(*Hebrew; Song of Solomon 8:6*)

Si-may-nj ka-cho-tam  
al le-be-cha  
ka-cho-tam al z'-ro-e-cha  
ki a-zah cha-ma-vet  
a-ha-vah

(*Farsi; Persian proverb*)

Nist Gho-da-yee be-jass Gho-dah

(*From the Kaddish*)

O-seh sha-lom  
Bim-ro-mav  
Hu ya-a-seh, sha-lom  
A-lei-nu  
V'-al kol yis-ra-el  
V'-im-ru, A-MEN.

(*Translation: Revised Standard Version*)

Set me as a seal  
upon your heart,  
as a seal upon your arm;  
For love is strong  
as death

(*Translation by the composer*)

There is no God but God

(*Revised Standard Version*)

May God,  
who makes  
peace on high,  
Bring peace to all and  
to all Israel,  
And say AMEN.

**NB: Phonetic pronunciation applies throughout,  
except where indicated.**



John Alexander, Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale, Richard Danielpour, composer, Carl St.Clair, Music Director of Pacific Symphony, and soprano Hila Plitmann following the world première of *Toward a Season of Peace* (2011) by Pacific Symphony and Pacific Chorale at the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Costa Mesa, California, 22nd March, 2012.

Photo: Nicholas Koon

Funding for this recording was made in part by the Hal and Jeanette Segerstrom Family Foundation.

Special thanks to Anosheh Oskouian, Marvin Hamlish, Nancy Manocherian and Bill Schwartz.

Thanks also to Elizabeth Dworkin, Bill Holab, Diana Jaensch, Paolo Marchettini,  
Daniel Shapiro, Jonathan Leshnoff, Ronnie Reshef and Sung Hong.

Richard  
**DANIELPOUR**

(b. 1956)

**Toward a Season of Peace (2011)**

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| <b>1</b> | <b>I. Annunciation</b>  | <b>8:41</b>  |
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| <b>6</b> | <b>VI. Parable</b>      | <b>4:21</b>  |
| <b>7</b> | <b>VII. Apotheosis</b>  | <b>10:10</b> |

**WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

**Hila Plitmann, Soprano**

**Pacific Chorale**

**John Alexander, Artistic Director**

**Pacific Symphony**

**Carl St.Clair,**

**Music Director and Conductor**

Recorded live (24th March, 2012) and in concert (22nd, 23rd and 25th March, 2012) at the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, Costa Mesa, California, USA

Producer and editor: Blanton Alspaugh

Engineers: John Newton, Mark Donahue and Ted Ancona

The sung texts and translations can be found inside the booklet, and may also be accessed at [www.naxos.com/libretti/559772.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/559772.htm)

Publisher: Lean Kat Music • Booklet notes: Richard Danielpour

Cover painting by Nasser Ovissi



**AMERICAN CLASSICS**

One of the most sought-after and acclaimed composers of his generation, Richard Danielpour refers to himself as “an American composer with a Middle Eastern memory.” His distinctive voice is part of a rich neo-Romantic heritage which includes composers such as Copland, Bernstein and Barber. *Toward a Season of Peace* is an oratorio which explores violence and war in the name of religion, using the season of spring as a metaphor for change and transformation toward songs of peace through forgiveness. Danielpour’s insistence on music having “an immediate visceral impact” can be heard throughout his oeuvre, and the beautifully translated Persian poetry and rich spirit of harmony in *Toward a Season of Peace* make it symbolic of a brighter future for everyone.

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Playing  
Time:  
**50:40**