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CALENDAR CLASSICAL MUSIC

PICK OF THE WEEK

LOS ANGELES JEWISH SYMPHONY

This Sunday is ladies' day at the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony, an ensemble whose dedication to providing a forum for Jewish composers, performers and compositions on Jewish themes has distinguished it as "the only orchestra of its kind in the world." With Dr. Noreen Green at the helm, the symphony expands its vision even further this weekend when it presents a program of new and old works by Jewish women composers to benefit the worldwide health, social action and education programs of Hadassah Southern California, the Women's Zionist Organization. The highlight of the afternoon is the world premiere of Andrea Clearfield's oratorio *Women of Valor*, a celebration of females throughout biblical history as well as Jewish women of today. The oratorio, which features a multilingual English, Hebrew and Yiddish text consisting of biblical readings, modern poetry and prose, was inspired by the Midrash (commentary) on the Book of Proverbs, an homage of its own to biblical woman. "I believe that it is important to create new artistic Midrash where the women's voices of the Bible are not only heard, but redefined in contemporary terms," explains composer Clearfield. *Women of Valor* features noted soloists Hila Plitmann and Gail Dubinbaum, and who better to narrate this ambitious new work than

Valerie Harper, a.k.a. Rhoda Morgenstern, TV's quintessential working gal who proved to the world that a single daughter of Israel could make it in the world and handle a nagging Jewish mother at the same time? "The extraordinary use of ancient and new text in the oratorio embodies the many traits women have to celebrate," states Harper. (Wouldn't Ida be proud?) Also on the trend-setting program: an overture by Fanny Mendelssohn, who, after taking a back seat to brother Felix for a century or so, finally came into her own as a composer in the last couple of decades; Meira Warshauer's *Like Streams in the Desert*; and Tsippi Fleischer's *Strong's-Bow and Arrow*, for strings and Arabic drum. At UCLA, Royce Hall, Wstwd; Sun., April 16, 2:30 p.m.; \$250-\$36 (\$250 & \$125 tickets include special receptions). (310) 276-0036 or (800) 951-6228, or visit www.hadassahsc.org.

—Mary Beth Crain



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