



Oratorio Society of New York

1440 Broadway, 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10018
212-400-7255

Contact: Jennifer Wada Communications
718-855-7101
jennifer@wadacommunications.com

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK PERFORMS JURAJ FILAS' REQUIEM AND PAIRS MARJORIE MERRYMAN'S *JONAH* WITH HAYDN'S "LORD NELSON" MASS IN ITS 2015/16 SEASON

MUSIC DIRECTOR KENT TRITLE & THE OSNY ALSO RETURN TO MOZART'S ARRANGEMENT OF *MESSIAH*

Carnegie Hall Series:

- Nov 2—FILAS: Requiem, *Oratio Spei* (Carnegie Hall premiere)
- Dec 21—HANDEL: *Messiah*, Mozart arrangement
- May 9—MERRYMAN: *Jonah* (New York premiere) / HAYDN: *Missa in Angustiis*, "Lord Nelson Mass"

Other Events of OSNY's 143rd Season:

- Feb 25—MAHLER: Symphony No. 8, "Symphony of a Thousand," an OSNY premiere and a joint performance with the Manhattan School of Music, part of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine's Great Music in a Great Space
- Apr 7—Special encore presentation, and recording, of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the choruses and soloists in a world premiere of an organ transcription written and performed by David Briggs
- Apr 9—Finals of 40th Annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition

The Oratorio Society of New York (OSNY), New York's standard for grand choral performance, will mark its 2015/16 season with performances of two major symphonic choral works written within the past 20 years. Leading OSNY in its 143rd season will be **Kent Tritle**, in his 11th year as music director.

The OSNY season opens Monday, November 2, with the Carnegie Hall premiere of **Juraj Filas'** massive **Requiem, *Oratio Spei (Prayer of Hope)***, dedicated to the victims of terrorism. On Monday, December 21, for their annual sold-out holiday performance of Handel's *Messiah*, Mr. Tritle and the OSNY reprise their critically acclaimed 2011 presentation of **Mozart's rarely-heard arrangement of the work**. The series ends Monday, May 9, as Mr. Tritle pairs two works spanning two centuries: the New York premiere of **Marjorie Merryman's *Jonah***, written in 1995, and **Haydn's revered "Lord Nelson" Mass**, written in 1798.

Furthermore, on Thursday, February 25, Mr. Tritle will lead the combined forces of the OSNY, the Cathedral Choristers of St. John the Divine, and the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) Symphonic Chorus and Orchestra in **Mahler's Symphony No. 8, "Symphony of a Thousand,"** as part of the Cathedral's Great Music in a Great Space series. This will be OSNY's first performance of the epic Mahler Symphony in its 143-year history. On Thursday, April 7, OSNY and the other choruses and soloists will

perform and record the work in the world premiere of an organ transcription, written and played by David Briggs.

On Saturday, April 9, OSNY will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its annual **Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition** by presenting the 2015 finals in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. Mr. Tritle joins other leading figures in the choral and vocal fields as judges.

Nov 2—FILAS' REQUIEM: The OSNY opens its 2015/16 season and Carnegie Hall subscription series on Monday, November 2, with a work that has become closely identified with its music director. Mr. Tritle led the US premiere of **Juraj Filas'** Requiem, *Oratio Spei*, at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in 2011 (with a choir of 60 singers), and he conducted the work's debut recording, a project of the New York-based Harmony Foundation, in Prague with the Prague Symphony and Kühn Mixed Choir in 2013.

Filas had just begun composing the work when the 9/11 attacks occurred. He finished it a year later, and dedicated it to all victims of terrorism. Mr. Tritle is eager to bring it to Carnegie Hall for the first time, because "it gives New York a glimpse into the international response to 9/11." Describing Filas as "bridging the Romantic and modern eras," Mr. Tritle calls the Requiem "a magnificent piece on the scale of the Verdi Requiem. At times it has great grandeur and drama, and at other times it is hauntingly intimate."

All three soloists have sung the work with Mr. Tritle: soprano **Susanna Phillips** and baritone **John Michael Moore** appeared in the US premiere, and tenor **Matthew Plenk** sang in the recording. **Ms. Phillips**, who will appear at the Metropolitan Opera for her eighth consecutive season, sang with OSNY in last season's Haydn's *Creation*. **Mr. Plenk** sang in OSNY's 2013 *St. Matthew Passion*, while **Mr. Moore** makes his OSNY and Carnegie Hall debuts. In a unique connection, as a youth he played drums in a band with Mr. Tritle's brother in their native Iowa.

December 21—HANDEL/MOZART'S MESSIAH: In December 2011, Mr. Tritle led OSNY in Mozart's 1789 arrangement of Handel's *Messiah*, which had once been widely performed but now is done infrequently. "What makes this so fascinating is that we're getting Handel with the imagination of Mozart," explains Mr. Tritle. "Mozart 'modernized' the orchestra to include trombones, two flutes, two clarinets, two horns and divided bassoons. He also reassigned several arias for the singers he worked with—just as Handel had done." For example, the tenor, rather than the soprano, sings "Rejoice Greatly," and the bass, rather than the mezzo, sings "But Who May Abide."

On Monday, December 21, OSNY will present the arrangement again, featuring four soloists who have all sung *Messiah* with OSNY, and, in Mr. Tritle's words, "can do both Baroque and Classical equally well": soprano **Emalie Savoy**, who also sang with OSNY in Britten's *War Requiem*; mezzo-soprano **Sara Murphy**, who was the 2013 winner of the Lyndon Woodside Competition and sang in last season's *Messiah* and the Verdi Requiem; tenor **Nicholas Phan**, who was the narrator for the 2013 *St. Matthew Passion*; and bass Matt Boehler who appeared in the 2008 *Messiah*.

February 25—MAHLER'S "SYMPHONY OF A THOUSAND": Among Mr. Tritle's other roles is that of Director of Cathedral Music and Organist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and Director of Choral Activities at the Manhattan School of Music. In a desire to re-envision the great massive choral concerts of the 19th century, he created what he calls "a synergistic collaboration" among the three organizations that resulted in a concert of Verdi's Requiem at the Cathedral last March. "The experience

was amazing,” he remembers. “We filled the Cathedral with 300 performers and 2,000 audience members, and we still had to turn people away.”

That collaboration will continue on Thursday, February 25, as Mr. Tritle leads OSNY, the MSM Symphonic Chorus and Orchestra, and the Cathedral Choristers (the Cathedral’s children’s choir), in Mahler’s Symphony No. 8, “Symphony of a Thousand.” “I played the organ for this piece in Lorin Maazel’s final performance with the New York Philharmonic, but I’ve never conducted it, and I’m thrilled I’ll be leading OSNY in its first performance of the work,” says Mr. Tritle. “It begins with an exuberant, bright setting of “Veni, Creator Spiritus” and then takes a completely different and very dark turn with the final act of Goethe’s *Faust*. Yet it is totally transcendent throughout.” For the eight soloist parts, Mr. Tritle will use both professionals, including the Verdi Requiem mezzo-soprano Sara Murphy, and singers from the MSM graduate program.

On Thursday, April 7, also at the Cathedral, there will be a special encore presentation of the Symphony featuring the world premiere of an organ transcription by David Briggs. Mr. Briggs will play the Cathedral organ and be joined by the OSNY, MSM chorus, Cathedral Choristers and the soloists of February 25, led by Mr. Tritle. The work will be recorded for the Pro Organo label.

May 9—MERRYMAN: *Jonah* (New York premiere) / HAYDN: *Missa in Angustiis*, “Lord Nelson”: For OSNY’s final 2015/16 concert at Carnegie Hall on Monday, May 9, Mr. Tritle presents a program with a “nautical” theme that spans nearly 200 years. He pairs **Marjorie Merryman’s** 1995 oratorio, *Jonah*, which *The Washington Post* called “an artistic treasure,” with Haydn’s towering 1798 mass dedicated to Lord Horatio Nelson.

Currently Provost and Dean of the College at the Manhattan School of Music, Ms. Merryman is, as Mr. Tritle describes, “a composer whose works are very layered. She writes for the voice like a beautiful art song.” He adds that “the Merryman pairs very nicely with the Haydn, both for its nautical theme and because both orchestras use Classical instrumentation.” The “Lord Nelson” was the first piece Mr. Tritle chose to focus on when he was studying choral conducting at Juilliard. “This Mass is such a captivating listen. Haydn made some very special contrasting uses of dramatic elements, and I think that’s why it’s so popular.”

The four soloists for the Haydn are led by soprano **Rachel Rosales**, who has appeared with OSNY at Carnegie Hall and on tour. Mezzo-soprano **Rachel Calloway** makes her OSNY debut with this program. Tenor **John Matthew Myers**, who is also narrator for *Jonah*, was a soloist for OSNY’s Britten *War Requiem*. Baritone **Philip Cutlip**, who sings the part of Jonah, was a soloist in Mr. Tritle’s first *Messiah* as music director.

40TH ANNUAL WOODSIDE ORATORIO-SOLO COMPETITION: On Saturday, April 9, OSNY will hold its 40th annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition, which remains the only major competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing. The competition receives more than 125 applications, and in a process led by OSNY Associate Conductor David Rosenmayer, eight finalists are selected to perform at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall before a panel of judges that includes Mr. Tritle. He says, “through the Competition we’ve been able to shine a bright spotlight on this repertoire and encourage singers, who would otherwise just prepare for opera, to consider the richness of oratorio music.”

TICKETS: All performances of the OSNY Carnegie Hall series will take place on the Perelman Stage of Stern Auditorium, Carnegie Hall.

Subscriptions are available at www.oratoriosocietyofny.org.

- 3-concert subscriptions are \$243–\$68.
- 2-concert subscriptions are \$162–\$45.
- Single tickets are \$90–\$25. They go on sale in the fall and may be purchased at the Carnegie Hall Box Office or through CarnegieCharge at (212) 247–7800. They are also available at www.oratoriosocietyofny.org.
- Mahler Symphony No. 8 tickets will be available after Labor Day at www.stjohndivine.org.
- Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition tickets are \$25. Tickets will go on sale in February, and may be purchased at the Carnegie Hall Box Office or through CarnegieCharge at (212) 247–7800. They will also be available next spring at www.carnegiehall.org.

ABOUT THE ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK: The Oratorio Society of New York, the second oldest cultural organization in New York City, has been part the city's musical life since 1873. The Society's 175 members come from all walks of life to volunteer their time for the joy of making music together. Among recent highlights, in 2011 OSNY participated in Rome's Festival of Music with a performance in St. Peter's Basilica, and in 2014 it sang Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with Sir Roger Norrington and the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Carnegie Hall. www.oratoriosocietyofny.org

ABOUT KENT TRITLE: The OSNY's Music Director since the 2005/06 season, Kent Tritle is also in his ninth season as Music Director of the professional chorus Musica Sacra, and his fifth year as Director of Cathedral Music and Organist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. He founded Sacred Music in a Sacred Space, the acclaimed concert series at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in New York City. In addition, Mr. Tritle is Director of Choral Activities at the Manhattan School of Music and is a member of the graduate faculty of The Juilliard School. An acclaimed organ virtuoso, he is the organist of the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra. www.kenttritle.com

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

2015-16 Concert Season

143rd Season

Kent Tritle, Music Director

Monday, November 2, 2015, at 8:00 pm

Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Kent Tritle, conductor

Susanna Phillips, soprano

Matthew Plenk, tenor

John Michael Moore, baritone

Orchestra of OSNY

FILAS: Requiem, *Oratio Spei*

Tickets: \$90–\$25, also available as part of a subscription

Monday, December 21, 2015, at 8:00 pm

Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Kent Tritle, conductor

Emalie Savoy, soprano

Sara Murphy, mezzo-soprano
Nicholas Phan, tenor
Matt Boehler, bass
Orchestra of OSNY

HANDEL/Mozart: *Messiah*

Tickets: \$90-\$25, also available as part of a subscription

Thursday, February 25, 2016, time TBA

Great Music in a Great Space series

Cathedral of St. John the Divine

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONIC CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA

CATHEDRAL CHORISTERS OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

Kent Tritle, conductor

Sara Murphy, mezzo-soprano

Other soloists to be announced

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 8, "Symphony of a Thousand"*

Tickets go on sale after Labor Day

Thursday, April 7, 2016, time TBA

Great Music in a Great Space series

Cathedral of St. John the Divine

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONIC CHOIR

CATHEDRAL CHORISTERS OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

Kent Tritle, conductor

David Briggs, organ

Sara Murphy, mezzo-soprano

Other soloists to be announced

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 8, "Symphony of a Thousand"* (transc. for organ by David Briggs, world premiere)

Tickets go on sale after Labor Day

Saturday, April 9, 2016 at 1:30 pm

Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

40th LYNDON WOODSIDE ORATORIO-SOLO COMPETITION FINALS

Tickets: \$25

**Thursday, May 9, 2016, at 8:00 pm
Carnegie Hall**

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Kent Tritle, conductor

Rachel Rosales, soprano

Rachel Calloway, mezzo-soprano

John Matthew Myers, tenor

Philip Cutlip, baritone

Orchestra of OSNY

MERRYMAN: *Jonah* (New York Premiere)

HAYDN: *Missa in Angustiis*, "Lord Nelson"

Tickets: \$90–\$25, also available as part of a subscription

Carnegie Hall Series Subscription Tickets:

3-Concerts: \$243–\$68

2-Concerts: \$162–\$45

Single Tickets: \$90–\$25

www.oratoriosocietyofny.org

www.carnegiehall.org

July 27, 2015