



Oratorio Society of New York

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**ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK OPENS ITS 143RD SEASON WITH
JURAJ FILAS'S REQUIEM, *ORATIO SPEI (PRAYER OF HOPE)*,
DEDICATED TO VICTIMS OF TERRORISM,
AT CARNEGIE HALL ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2015, AT 8:00 PM**

Susanna Phillips, Matthew Plenk, and John Moore Are the Soloists

The Oratorio Society of New York opens its 2015-16 season and Carnegie Hall subscription series on Monday, November 2, 2015, with a work that has become closely identified with its music director. Kent Tritle led the U.S. premiere of Juraj Filas' Requiem, *Oratio Spei (Prayer of Hope)*, 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. On November 2, he leads the Oratorio Society in a performance of the work with soloists Susanna Phillips, soprano; Matthew Plenk, tenor; and John Moore, baritone.

This marks the 143rd season of the Oratorio Society, New York's standard for grand choral performance.

Filas had just begun composing the Requiem when the 9/11 attacks occurred. He finished it the following year, and dedicated it to all victims of terrorism. Kent 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," Tritle calls the Requiem "a magnificent piece on the scale of the Verdi Requiem." (Watch a video of [Kent Tritle talking about the Filas Requiem](#) on YouTube.)

Tritle led the OSNY—which numbers more than 200 singers—and forces of the Manhattan School of Music in a performance of Verdi's Requiem at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in March 2015. "*Oratio Spei* reflects the grandeur, scale, and drama of that work but through a thoroughly contemporary compositional aesthetic," Tritle continues. "There is a recurring 'Dies irae' theme in both that unites and drives the drama to an amazing peak at the end."

All three soloists have sung the work with Kent Tritle: soprano Susanna Phillips and baritone John Moore appeared in the U.S. premiere, and tenor Matthew Plenk sang in the recording. Susanna Phillips sang with OSNY in last season's performance of Haydn's *Creation*. Matthew Plenk sang in OSNY's 2013 *St. Matthew Passion*, while John Moore makes his OSNY and

Carnegie Hall debuts. In a unique connection, as a youth Moore played drums in a band with Kent Tritle's brothers in their native Iowa.

Oratorio Society of New York 2015-16 Season Continues

On Monday, December 21, for their highly popular annual holiday performance of Handel's **Messiah**, Tritle and the OSNY reprise their critically acclaimed presentation of **Mozart's rarely-heard arrangement of the work**. The series ends Monday, May 9, as 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, 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, the 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 2016 finals in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. Kent Tritle joins other leading figures in the choral and vocal fields as judges.

Kent Tritle is one of America's leading choral conductors. Called "the brightest star in New York's choral music world" by *The New York Times*, he is also Director of Cathedral Music and Organist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Music Director of Musica Sacra, the longest continuously performing professional chorus in New York. In addition, 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 also the organist of the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra. www.kenttritle.com

Alabama-born soprano **Susanna Phillips** continues to establish herself as one of today's most sought-after singing actors and recitalists. The 2015-16 season sees Phillips return to the Metropolitan Opera for an eighth consecutive season, starring as Roselinda in the Jeremy Sams production of *Die Fledermaus* conducted for the first time by music director James Levine, as well as a return of her acclaimed Musetta in Puccini's *La bohème*. <http://susannaphillips.com>

This season, tenor **Matthew Plenk** returns to the Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* and to the Opera Theater of St. Louis as Macduff in *Macbeth*. In 2005 Mr. Plenk was one of sixteen singers invited to work with Naxos Records and Yale University in a collaborative project to record the complete songs of Charles Ives. <http://matthewplenk.com>

A recent graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Program, baritone **John Moore** sees several significant company debuts this season, including Seattle Opera, as Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*; the Bayerische Staatsoper, as Adario in *Les indes galantes*; Florida Grand Opera, as Tadeusz in *The Passenger*; Portland Opera, as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Opera Omaha, as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. www.moorebaritone.com

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Since its founding in 1873, the OSNY, New York's own 200-voice avocational chorus, has become the city's standard for grand, joyous choral performance. "The chorus of nearly 200 voices sounded rich and full-bodied but never forced, and won the biggest, and deserved, ovation," wrote Anthony Tommasini in The New York Times of its 2011 performance of the Handel-Mozart *Messiah*, and of a 2008 presentation of Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Alan Kozinn said in the Times that "the sheer energy of the Society's sound had an enveloping fervor."

The Oratorio Society has performed the world, U.S., and New York premieres of works as diverse as Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (1877), Berlioz' *Roméo et Juliette* (1882), a full-concert production of Wagner's *Parsifal* at the Metropolitan Opera House (1886), Tchaikovsky's a cappella *Legend and Pater noster* (1891) and *Eugene Onegin* (1908), the now-standard version of *The Star Spangled Banner* (1917; it became the national anthem in 1931), Bach's B-minor Mass (1927), Dvořák's *St. Ludmila* (1993), Britten's *The World of the Spirit* (1998), Juraj Filas' *Song of Solomon* (2012), and Paul Moravec's *Blizzard Voices* (2013), as well as works by Handel, Liszt, Schütz, Schubert, Debussy, Elgar, and Saint Saëns, among others. On its 100th anniversary the Oratorio Society received the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural award, in recognition of these contributions. www.oratoriosocietyofny.org

[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 Moore, baritone

FILAS Requiem, *Oratio Spei (Prayer of Hope)* (2002)

Tickets: \$25–\$90

At the Carnegie Hall Box Office, 57th St. and 7th Ave.

By phone at CarnegieCharge, 212-247-7800, or online at www.carnegiehall.org

For more information, visit www.oratoriosocietyofny.org

Photos:

[Kent Tritle and the Oratorio Society](#)

[Susanna Phillips](#)

[John Moore](#)

October 2, 2015