



Oratorio Society of New York

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**THIS SEASON, THE ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK PERFORMS
THE MOZART ARRANGEMENT OF HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*
FOR ITS ANNUAL HOLIDAY PRESENTATION OF THE WORK AT CARNEGIE HALL
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2015, AT 8:00 PM**

Leslie Fagan, Sara Murphy, Nicholas Phan, and Matt Boehler Are the Soloists

Mozart's 1789 arrangement of Handel's *Messiah*, created 48 years after the work's premiere, had once been widely performed but now is not often heard. On Monday, December 21, the Oratorio Society of New York, led by Music Director Kent Tritle, will perform the arrangement for its annual Christmastime presentation of *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall.

"What makes it so fascinating is that we're getting Handel with the imagination of Mozart," explains Tritle, who led the OSNY in a performance of the arrangement in 2011. "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." (Tritle talks more about the Mozart arrangement of *Messiah* in a [video](#) on the OSNY's YouTube channel.)

The performance's four soloists, in Tritle's words, "can do both Baroque and Classical equally well": soprano **Leslie Fagan**, who sang with OSNY in *Messiah* in 2014; mezzo-soprano **Sara Murphy**, who was the 2013 winner of the Lyndon Woodside Competition and sang with OSNY in last season's *Messiah* and Verdi Requiem; tenor **Nicholas Phan**, who was the narrator for the OSNY 2014 *St. Matthew Passion*; and bass **Matt Boehler**, who also appeared in the Verdi Requiem.

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

Oratorio Society of New York 2015-16 Season Continues

The OSNY's Carnegie Hall series ends Monday, May 9, 2016, 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 39th season 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 and newly-named Chair of the Organ Department at the Manhattan School of Music, and a member of the graduate faculty of The Juilliard School. An acclaimed organ virtuoso, Tritle is also the organist of the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra. www.kenttritle.com

Having performed under the batons of such noted conductors as Hans Graf, Sir David Willcocks, Jukka Pekka Saraste, Kent Tritle, Heinz Ferlisch, Victor Borge and Elmer Isler, soprano **Leslie Fagan** has delighted audiences and critics alike at Royal Albert Hall, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Bordeaux Opera House, Roy Thomson Hall, and Massey Hall. Opera News praised her 2011 performance in Poulenc’s Gloria with the Oratorio Society of New York as “one of the most memorable performances of the season.” www.lesliefagan.com

Sara Murphy, called “a gorgeous, deep, dark mezzo-soprano” by *The New York Times*, this season is featured in *A Prayer for Peace* with music of Leonard Bernstein and Turkish composer Ahmed Adnan Saygun with MidAtlantic Opera at Carnegie Hall, as well as the two performances of Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 with Kent Tritle at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. She returns to Cincinnati May Festival as Emilia in Verdi’s *Otello* and as the mezzo soprano soloist in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*. www.saramurphymezzo.com

In the 2015-16 season, **Nicholas Phan** performs the role of Inverno in the U.S. premiere of Alessandro Scarlatti’s *La gloria di primavera* as part of a tour with Philharmonia Baroque and makes his role debut as Tamino in Mozart’s *Magic Flute* in a set of semi-staged performances with Boston Baroque. Phan will perform both the tenor arias and the role of Evangelist, what are becoming signature roles for him, on a tour of Bach’s *St. John Passion* with Apollo’s Fire, and the Evangelist in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with John Nelson and the Strasbourg Philharmonic. As Artistic Director of Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, he will both curate and perform in the organization’s fourth annual Collaborative Works Festival, a vocal chamber music festival held in venues throughout Chicago. www.nicholas-phan.com

Hailed by *The New York Times* as “a bass with an attitude and the goods to back it up,” **Matt Boehler** has been critically acclaimed both for his dramatic skill and his vocal ability. About his appearances with Wolf Trap Opera Company in the title role in *Sweeney Todd*, *The Washington Post* said, “There are times, in fact, when this young man with a huge crossover career ahead of him is standing in a crowd of

actors, and you’d swear he was the only person onstage.” The 2014-15 season included returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Bertrand in *Iolantha*. The 2015-16 season and beyond will see his debut with Dallas Opera as the Donkey in *Becoming Santa*. www.mattboehler.com

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Since its founding in 1873, the OSNY, New York’s 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, December 21, 2015, at 8:00 pm](#)

Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Kent Tritle, conductor

Leslie Fagan, soprano

Sara Murphy, mezzo-soprano

Nicholas Phan, tenor

Matt Boehler, bass

HANDEL *Messiah* (arrangement by Mozart)

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

November 17, 2015

Photos:

[Kent Tritle and the Oratorio Society](#)

[Leslie Fagan](#)

[Sara Murphy](#)

[Nicholas Phan](#)

[Matt Boehler](#)