



Oratorio Society of New York

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ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK AND MUSIC DIRECTOR KENT TRITLE PRESENT BACH'S B-MINOR MASS AND OTHER ICONIC WORKS IN THE 2016-17 SEASON

Carnegie Hall Series:

- MOZART "Great" Mass in C minor, BRUCKNER *Te Deum* – November 3
- HANDEL *Messiah* – December 21
- BACH Mass in B minor – May 8

Other Events of OSNY's 144th Season:

- BRITTEN *War Requiem*, a Joint Performance at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine – April 6 & 7
- 40th Anniversary of Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition – Finals, April 8



The Oratorio Society of New York (OSNY), New York's standard for grand choral performance, will mark its 2016-17 season with performances of symphonic choral masterworks of Handel, Mozart, Bruckner, and Britten, ending with Bach's monumental Mass in B minor. Leading the OSNY for its 144th season will be Kent Tritle, in his 12th year as Music Director.

The OSNY's Carnegie Hall season opens Thursday, November 3, with an intriguing pairing by Mr. Tritle of Mozart's Great Mass in C minor and Bruckner's *Te Deum*. On Wednesday, December 21, the OSNY will continue its unbroken string since 1874 of annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*. The series ends Monday, May 8, as Mr. Tritle leads the OSNY in Bach's epic Mass in B minor.

Furthermore, on April 6 and 7, Mr. Tritle will lead the combined forces of the OSNY, the Cathedral Choristers of St. John the Divine, and the Manhattan School Symphony and Symphonic Chorus in Britten's *War Requiem* as part of the Cathedral's Great Music in a Great Space series – the third collaboration of this kind. That same weekend, on Saturday, April 8, the OSNY will present the finals of the 40th anniversary of the OSNY's Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition, a public event in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.

From Mozart's "Great" Mass in C-minor to Bruckner's C-major *Te Deum* – November 3, 2016

The OSNY's 2016-17 season is flanked by two great masses in a minor key: Mozart's "Great" Mass in C minor in the fall, and Bach's Mass in B minor in the spring. The first concert further transverses the key of C, from Mozart's C-minor Mass to Bruckner's C-major *Te Deum*.

Mozart promised to write a mass upon his marriage to Constanze Weber, but he never finished it, leaving what has been called the "torso" of a mass. "Mozart has captured the essence of the Classical era," says Kent Tritle, "and at only 50 minutes, it can be performed in conjunction with another work, opening up many possibilities." For this pairing, Mr. Tritle chose Bruckner, who wrote choral music in an intimate style, in contrast to his vast symphonies. Bruckner called his *Te Deum* the "pride of my life," having written it after a period of great turmoil while living in Vienna. Says Tritle, "This is a very satisfying piece of music that is not performed often enough."

Mr. Tritle has selected four soloists who "are wonderfully capable Mozart singers, but who also bring the warmth and the quality we want in the romantic work of Bruckner." Soprano **Jennifer Zetlan** sings with the Metropolitan Opera and was soloist for the OSNY's 2013 Mozart *Requiem* and 2015 *Carmina Burana*. Mezzo-soprano **Helen Karloski** won the OSNY's 2015 Woodside Competition and made her Lincoln Center debut singing Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* for Mostly Mozart. Tenor **Alex Richardson** sang in the OSNY's 2015 Verdi *Requiem* at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and will sing the Shepherd for the Metropolitan Opera's upcoming *Tristan und Isolde*. Baritone **Philip Cutlip** was soloist for the OSNY's spring 2016 performance of Merryman's *Jonah* and Haydn's "Lord Nelson" Mass; he was featured in the Houston Grand Opera's recording of Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*.

Handel's *Messiah* – December 21, 2016

After an acclaimed performance of the Mozart arrangement of Handel's *Messiah* last year, the OSNY and Mr. Tritle will return to Handel's arrangement this year. The OSNY has the distinction of performing *Messiah* every Christmas season since 1874, and at Carnegie Hall every year that it has been open.

Yet each annual performance is fresh, as Tritle explains: "Handel's *Messiah* is a perfect example of what is so special about live performance. As we come to the work again, we are changed people from the year before. We experience the words and musical gestures differently, so the notes come alive every year in a new and exhilarating way."

Among the soloists, soprano **Kathryn Lewek** has made *The Magic Flute's* Queen of the Night her signature role around the world and sang in the OSNY's 2013 *Messiah*. **Jakub Józef Orliński** was the first countertenor to win the Woodside Competition when he took first place this past spring; he is a graduate student at Juilliard. Tenor **William Ferguson** is also a Woodside Competition winner and has sung with both the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera. Bass **Adam Lau** sang in the OSNY's collaborative performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony this past spring and was a winner of the 2015 George London Award.

Britten's *War Requiem* – April 6 & 7, 2017

This is the third OSNY collaboration with the Manhattan School of Music at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. For the past two years, Kent Tritle, who serves as Director of Cathedral Music and Organist at the Cathedral and Director of Choral Activities at MSM, has led collaborative performances by all these groups in concerts that re-envision the giant choral concerts of the 19th century. The first was Verdi's *Requiem* in 2015, followed by Mahler's Symphony No. 8 this past February and April.

That collaboration will continue with two performances of Britten's massive and haunting *War Requiem*. Written for the dedication of the new Coventry Cathedral in 1962 after the original Gothic cathedral was destroyed in World War II, the work is scored for full and chamber orchestras, full and chamber choruses, children's choir, organ and three soloists. The libretto is an intermingling of the Latin Requiem Mass and poetry

by Wilfred Owen, a British poet and soldier who died in World War I. “We have an amazing conglomeration of performers who will bring the grandeur of Britten’s vision for peace to life. It portends for two magical nights,” says Tritle.

Soprano **Susanna Phillips** has sung with the OSNY the past three years in works of Moravec, Haydn, and Filas, and will return to the Metropolitan Opera for her ninth consecutive season, singing in *La Bohème* and Saariaho’s *L’Amour de loin*; this will be her first performance of the *War Requiem*. Tenor **John Matthew Myers** sang with the OSNY in its 2013 performance of the *War Requiem* and again this spring in works by Merryman and Haydn; he has been an apprentice artist with the Santa Fe Opera. Making his OSNY debut is baritone **Matthew Worth**, who sang the title role in the world premiere of David Little’s *JFK* last season with the Fort Worth Opera.

Bach’s Mass in B minor – May 8, 2017

To close the OSNY’s 2016-17 Carnegie Hall season, Kent Tritle will lead the ensemble in one of the supreme works for chorus and orchestra, Bach’s Mass in B minor. The Mass is a compendium of music he wrote throughout his career. He wrote the Sanctus in 1724 for a Christmas service, and the Kyrie and Gloria as a presentation to the newly-crowned King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. He finished the work in 1749, a year before his death, and never heard it performed live. The first complete performance was not until 1859. Yet the work is astonishing for its coherence, according to Tritle. “The symmetry and the way the movements layer out, in a perfect fashion, seems so thought out in advance. It’s an incredible journey that covers the whole range of emotions, with moments that move from plaintive to exuberant, and from transparency to grandeur.”

Two of the OSNY’s favorite soloists are returning for the Mass: soprano **Leslie Fagan**, who sang in last December’s *Messiah* and has embarked on a project to record Canadian art songs; and baritone **Sidney Outlaw**, who took second place in the 2006 Woodside Competition; has appeared in OSNY performances of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* (in the title role), Handel’s *Messiah* and Haydn’s *The Creation*; and sang Apollo in a recent recording of Milhaud’s *Oresteia of Aeschylus*. Countertenor **Christopher Ainsley** is making his OSNY debut after singing the title role in Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice* in Nancy, France, this past spring. Tenor **Lawrence Jones** was a Woodside Competition finalist and recently received rave reviews for his performance as Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress*.

Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition – Finals, April 8

Next year marks the 40th anniversary of the OSNY’s annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio–Solo Competition, which remains the only major competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing. The 2016 competition received nearly 180 applications from around the world, and in a process led by OSNY Associate Conductor David Rosenmeyer, it was whittled down to eight finalists. “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,” says Mr. Tritle. The April 8 finals are a public event.

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

- Three-concert subscriptions are \$243–\$68; two-concert subscriptions are \$162–\$45. Subscriptions are available at www.oratoriosocietyofny.org.
- Single tickets are \$90–\$25; they go on sale in September and may be purchased at the Carnegie Hall Box Office or through CarnegieCharge at (212) 247–7800.
- Britten *War Requiem* tickets, \$65 and \$25, are available at www.stjohndivine.org.
- Lyndon Woodside Oratorio–Solo Competition tickets are \$25. Tickets will go on sale in February, and may also 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.

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 200 members come from all walks of life to volunteer their time and talents for the joy of making music together. www.oratoriosocietyofny.org

The OSNY's Music Director since the 2005-06 season, **Kent Tritle** is also Music Director of the professional chorus Musica Sacra and 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. Mr. Tritle is Director of Choral Activities and Chair of the Organ Department 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 2016-17 Concert Season

144th Season

Kent Tritle, Music Director

Thursday, November 3, 2016, at 8:00 pm

Carnegie Hall

[ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Jennifer Zetlan, soprano

Helen Karloski, mezzo-soprano

Alex Richardson, tenor

Philip Cutlip, baritone

Orchestra of the Society

MOZART "Great" Mass in C minor

BRUCKNER *Te Deum*

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

Wednesday, December 21, 2016, at 8:00 pm

Carnegie Hall

[ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Kathryn Lewek, soprano

Jakub Józef Orliński, countertenor

William Ferguson, tenor

Adam Lau, bass

Orchestra of the Society

HANDEL: *Messiah*

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

Thursday & Friday, [April 6](#) & [April 7](#), 2017, at 7:30 pm
Great Music in a Great Space at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine
MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONY AND SYMPHONIC CHORUS
ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Kent Tritle, conductor
Susanna Phillips, soprano
John Matthew Myers, tenor
Matthew Worth, baritone
The Cathedral Choristers,
Bryan Zaros, director

BRITTEN *War Requiem*

Tickets: \$65, \$25

Saturday, April 8, 2017, at 1:30 pm
Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall
LYNDON WOODSIDE ORATORIO-SOLO COMPETITION FINALS—40th Anniversary
Tickets: \$25

Monday, May 8, 2017, at 8:00 pm
Carnegie Hall
[ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK](#)

Kent Tritle, conductor
Leslie Fagan, soprano
Christopher Ainsley, countertenor
Lawrence Jones, tenor
Sidney Outlaw, baritone
Orchestra of the Society

BACH *Mass in B minor*

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

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July 12, 2016