



Oratorio Society of New York

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**ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK CONCLUDES ITS CARNEGIE HALL SEASON  
WITH THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF MARJORIE MERRYMAN'S *JONAH*  
AND HAYDN'S "NELSON MASS" – MONDAY, MAY 9, 2016**

**Also This Spring: Carnegie Hall 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala, Holst's *The Planets* with  
the New York Philharmonic**



To conclude its 143<sup>rd</sup> concert season, the Oratorio Society of New York brings its trademark choral grandeur to a sweeping program that spans nearly 200 years. OSNY Music Director Kent Tritle pairs the New York premiere of Marjorie Merryman's 1995 oratorio *Jonah* with Haydn's towering 1798 *Missa in Angustiis (Mass in Difficult Times)*, commonly known as the "Nelson Mass," at Carnegie Hall on Monday, May 9, 2016, at 8:00 pm. Rachel Rosales, soprano; Rachel Calloway, mezzo-soprano; John Matthew Myers, tenor; and Philip Cutlip, baritone, are featured soloists in the Haydn work, and for *Jonah*, John Matthew Myers is the narrator, and Philip Cutlip sings the title role.

Currently Provost and Dean of the College at the Manhattan School of Music, Marjorie Merryman is, as Kent Tritle describes, "a composer whose works are very layered. Her writing for the voice is like beautiful art song." He adds that "the Merryman pairs beautifully with the Haydn, both for its nautical theme and because both orchestras use Classical instrumentation." About the "Nelson Mass," dedicated to the great naval commander Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson and described by the noted scholar H.C. Robbins Landon as "arguably Haydn's greatest

single composition,” Tritle calls it “such a captivating listen. Haydn made some very special contrasting uses of dramatic elements, and I think that’s why it’s so popular.”

Merryman’s retelling of the Biblical story of Jonah and the whale was commissioned by the Newburyport Choral Society to celebrate its 60th anniversary and the maritime tradition of the Massachusetts North Shore. The oratorio begins with the chorus singing of “they that go down to the sea in ships,” setting the scene for Jonah’s adventure. After the dramatic recounting of the narrative, it ends with the chorus retelling the Genesis story of the creation of the great whales while the music recalls the great storm – in what Tritle describes as “an equation of the ocean and its immensity with the all-consuming power of God” – and Jonah’s defiance in the face of divine will.

“Marjorie Merryman's ‘Jonah,’ an artistic treasure,” said The Washington Post of a 2010 performance, “uses a deeply colorful orchestral palette and onomatopoeia to relate this ancient biblical account. Her varied use of dissonance is always purposeful, describing both the human condition and Jonah's defiance of God. The storm at sea is a violent fugue, and the leviathan (dyspeptic belly and all) is made incarnate with a solo tympani passage and eerily high string harmonics imitative of whale songs. . . . Merryman's solo scoring rivals the lyricism of Benjamin Britten's.”

**Also this spring: Carnegie Hall gala, Holst’s *The Planets* with the New York Philharmonic**

The Oratorio Society of New York played a central role in the founding of Carnegie Hall, and will participate in the hall’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala concert on May 5. In addition, the Women of the Oratorio Society of New York will join the New York Philharmonic in four performances of Holst’s *The Planets* conducted by David Robertson May 26-28.

**Marjorie Merryman’s** music has been commissioned and performed throughout the United States and in many countries in Europe and Asia. Her catalogue includes orchestral, choral, vocal, and chamber music, as well as an opera and two oratorios. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, including prizes from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the League of Composers/International Society for Contemporary Music, the WBZ Fund for the Arts, and Composers, Inc. (Lee Ettelson Award), and the Walter Hinrichsen Award. She has been Composer-in-Residence of the New England Philharmonic and the Billings (MT) Symphony Orchestra, and her works are published by C.F. Peters, E.C. Schirmer, APNM, and G. Schirmer and recorded on the Koch and New World labels. Before joining the Manhattan School of Music, Marjorie Merryman held an endowed chair as Distinguished Professor of Arts and Humanities at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has taught at Harvard, MIT, and the New England Conservatory, and for many years chaired the theory and composition department at Boston University School of Music. [Manhattan School of Music Faculty Bio](#)

**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 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](http://www.kenttritle.com)

A ubiquitous presence on the New York City scene, soprano **Rachel Rosales** has performed with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, American Symphony Orchestra, American Virtuosi/Baroque Opera Theatre, and Ensemble PI, among others. Recent engagements include performances with New York City Opera Renaissance and The Ensemble for Early Music, and in Richard Wilson's opera *Æthelred the Unready* as Emma, the nagging wife, at Vassar College and Symphony Space (NYC). She serves as a member of the music faculty of Vassar College.

An internationally recognized interpreter of contemporary and modern music, mezzo-soprano **Rachel Calloway** brings versatility and compelling insight to stages worldwide. Her work has been praised by The New York Times for "penetrating clarity" and "considerable depth of expression" and by Opera News for her "adept musicianship and dramatic flair." Ms. Calloway recently made her Carnegie Hall debut in the roles of Dominant and Musicologist in Steven Stucky and Jeremy Denk's *The Classical Style* led by Robert Spano, and she performed with Alarm Will Sound in the world premiere of *The Hunger* by Donnacha Dennehy. [www.rachelcalloway.com](http://www.rachelcalloway.com)

**John Matthew Myers** has garnered acclaim for his "smooth and rich" tenor and "insightful and beautifully nuanced performances." He has also been called an "artist to watch" by Opera News. Highlights from his recent seasons include the world premiere of Higdon's *Cold Mountain*, Bates' *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* as Steve Wozniak, and Grivet in Tobias Picker's *Thérèse Raquin* at the Chicago Opera Theater. [www.johnmatthewmyers.com](http://www.johnmatthewmyers.com)

Baritone **Philip Cutlip** has received consistent critical acclaim for his performances across North America and Europe. Established on both concert and opera stages, he has performed with a distinguished list of conductors that includes Nicholas McGegan, Yves Abel, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Gerard Schwarz, and Donald Runnicles. His appearance as Joseph De Rocher in Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, with Joyce DiDonato and Frederica von Stade for Houston Grand Opera, has been released on Virgin Records. [Philip Cutlip's management page](#)

### **Oratorio Society of New York**

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 a performance of the Handel-Mozart *Messiah*, and of a presentation of Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Allan 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 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Oratorio Society received the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural award, in recognition of these contributions. [www.oratoriosocietyofny.org](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org)

[Monday, May 9, 2016, at 8:00 pm](#)

Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

**ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK**

**Kent Tritle, conductor**

**Rachel Rosales, soprano**

**Rachel Calloway, mezzo-soprano**

**John Matthew Myers, tenor**

**Philip Cutlip, baritone**

**MERRYMAN**     *Jonah* (New York premiere)

**HAYDN**         *Missa in Angustiis (Mass in Difficult Times), "Nelson Mass"*

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](http://www.carnegiehall.org)

For more information, visit [www.oratoriosocietyofny.org](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org)

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**Photos:**

[Kent Tritle and the Oratorio Society](#)

*April 6, 2016*