



Oratorio Society of New York

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## ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 40TH ANNUAL LYNDON WOODSIDE ORATORIO-SOLO COMPETITION

**Polish Countertenor JAKUB JÓZEF ORLIŃSKI, a Grand Finals Winner of the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Wins First Prize – First Countertenor to Take First Prize at the Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition**



*Jakub Józef Orliński, photo by Anita Wasik (download in [hi-res.](#))*

(April 28, 2016 – New York, NY) The Polish countertenor Jakub Józef Orliński is the First Place winner of the Oratorio Society of New York (OSNY)'s 2016 Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition. The award was presented following a performance by eight finalists in Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall on Saturday, April 9. Mr. Orliński is the first countertenor to win the Oratorio-Solo Competition, the only competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing and now in its 39th year. The full list of finalists and prizes is:

- **Jakub Józef Orliński**, countertenor: Ellen Lopin Blair Award for **First Place**, \$7,000
- **David McFerrin**, baritone: Stanley C. Meyerson Award for **Second Place**, \$5,000
- **Katrin Targo**, soprano: Docia Goodwin Franklin Award for **Third Place**, \$2,500
- **Christopher Magiera**, baritone: Johannes Somary Award, \$2,500
- **Antonina Chehovska**, soprano: Frances MacEachron Award, \$1,500
- **Jennifer Taverner**, soprano: Lyndon Woodside Encouragement Award, \$1,000
- **Linda McAlister**, soprano: Robert & Winifred Connelly Green Award, \$1,000
- **Samantha Louis-Jean**, soprano: Leopold Damrosch Award, \$500

Mr. Orliński is also a Grand Finals winner of the 2016 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and winner of the 2015 Marcella Sembrich International Vocal Competition, among others. He holds a master's degree from the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music, Warsaw, and is currently working toward his Graduate

Diploma at The Juilliard School. While in Europe he has performed operas by Handel, Telemann and the English Baroque composer John Blow, and Purcell songs with ballet at the Leipzig Opera House.

Also an accomplished dancer, Mr. Orliński has taken prizes at several dance competitions and has been featured as a dancer, model and acrobat for such companies as Levi's, Nike, Samsung, Mercedes-Benz and MAC Cosmetics.

"I feel amazed to have won," says Mr. Orliński. "This competition was very special for me because it was all about oratorio music, and I love to sing sacred music. I learned about it from a friend who is now singing in Salzburg. He sent me the link to the competition so I decided to give it a try."

For the Oratorio-Solo Competition finals, Mr. Orliński performed two works: the aria "Buß und Reu" from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, BWV 244, and the motet *Longe mala, umbrae, terrors*, RV62, by Vivaldi.

"When I started to sing countertenor, I didn't even know it had a name," Mr. Orliński remembers. "I was singing bass-baritone in an amateur choir in Warsaw, and we were doing some Renaissance pieces, so we needed some high voices. I was the youngest member of the ensemble, so I was assigned the part. Then I went to the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music, where I discovered the world of Baroque music and started to sing solo as a countertenor."

Nearly 180 applicants from around the world applied to the Competition, and the eight finalists came from Illinois, Massachusetts and Minnesota in the US, Canada, France, Poland, Estonia and the Ukraine. This is among the highest number of applications in the Oratorio-Solo Competition's 39-year history; in recent years the Competition has received 120-130 submissions.

"This year's Oratorio-Solo Competition was the strongest I have adjudicated in my eleven years with the OSNY," said the Society's Music Director Kent Tritle. "This year's first place winner Jakub Orliński is a tremendous performer of the oratorio and concert repertoire. I am excited to share him with OSNY audiences, so we are looking to engage him for an OSNY performance in the near future."

Taking the Award for Second Place was baritone David McFerrin. Originally from Amherst, he spent two seasons with the Boston Lyric Opera as an Emerging Artist. He has also performed with the Seattle and Santa Fe operas and at the Blossom, Caramoor, Marlboro and Ravinia festivals in the U.S. and the Rossini Festival in Germany. He made his Carnegie Hall debut with the Israel Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel.

Winner of the Third Place Award was soprano Katrin Targo, who is from Tallinn, Estonia, and lives in Vienna. She appears in the major sacred music venues of Vienna, and she made her Vienna Concert House debut performing Bach cantatas.

The winners were decided by a panel of judges:

- Julianne Baird, soprano, Baroque performance authority and Distinguished Professor of Music at Rutgers;
- Leslie Fagan, soprano and frequent guest soloist with the Oratorio Society, including its 2015 Messiah;
- Steven Fox, Artistic Director of the Clarion Orchestra and the Clarion Choir, and founder of Musica Antiqua St. Petersburg in Russia;
- Alfred Hubay, OSNY board member and former Metropolitan Opera House Manager and Box Office Manager;
- Kent Tritle, Music Director of the Oratorio Society of New York, Director of Cathedral Music and Organist of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Music Director of Musica Sacra.

The finals accompanist was Linda Hall, an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera.

The Oratorio-Solo Competition was created in 1977 to encourage the art of oratorio singing and to give young singers an opportunity to advance their careers. In 2006, it was renamed the Lyndon Woodside Oratorio Solo-Competition in honor of the Society's long-time music director and the Competition's most devoted champion, who had died the year before.

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. [www.oratoriosocietyofny.org](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org)

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