



1140 Ave of the Americas, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10036-5803
212-400-7255

Contact: Jennifer Wada Communications
718-855-7101

jennifer@wadacommunications.com
www.wadacommunications.com

**ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK PERFORMING HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*
AT CARNEGIE HALL — A NEW YORK TRADITION OF THE HIGHEST ORDER
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2017, AT 8:00 PM**

Kent Tritle Conducts OSNY's 144th Annual Performance of the Holiday Classic

Kathryn Lewek, Sara Murphy, Lawrence Jones, and Dashon Burton are Soloists



Kathryn Lewek, Sara Murphy, Lawrence Jones, Dashon Burton



Oratorio Society of New York's performance of *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall, Dec. 21, 2016 ([photo](#) by Claudia Huter)

The Oratorio Society of New York has the distinction of having performed Handel's *Messiah* every Christmas season since 1874, and at Carnegie Hall every year the hall has been open since 1891 – qualifying the OSNY's annual rendition of the holiday classic as a New York tradition of the highest order.

On Monday, December 18, 2017, Music Director Kent Tritle leads OSNY in its 144th performance of *Messiah*, the second event of its annual Carnegie Hall season. The vocal soloists are **Kathryn Lewek**, soprano; **Sara Murphy**, mezzo-soprano; **Lawrence Jones**, tenor; and **Dashon Burton**, bass-baritone.

The 200-voice Oratorio Society, New York's champion of the grand choral tradition, offers New Yorkers *Messiah* on an impressive scale. Commenting on a recent performance, Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim said in *The New York Times*, "when the entire chorus belted out the word 'wonderful' in 'For unto us a child is born,' the effect was exactly that."

Three of the concert's soloists have sung *Messiah* with the Oratorio Society of New York and Kent Tritle. Soprano Kathryn Lewek, who sang it in 2013 and 2016, has made *The Magic Flute's* Queen of the Night her signature role around the world; she performs it at the Metropolitan Opera this holiday season. Mezzo-soprano Sara Murphy won OSNY's Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition in 2013 and sang *Messiah* with the ensemble in 2014 and 2015.

Tenor Lawrence Jones was a Woodside Competition finalist. Bass-baritone Dashon Burton won that competition in 2012 and sang *Messiah* in 2012 and 2013; he will also join OSNY for Moravec's *Sanctuary Road* on May 7.

World Premieres by Moravec and Ranjbaran on May 7, 2018

The 145th season of the Oratorio Society of New York concludes on May 7, 2018, with a program featuring the world premieres of two works that speak to humanity's struggle in its quest for freedom and peace. Commissioned by OSNY, ***Sanctuary Road*** is an oratorio by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Paul Moravec**, with a libretto by **Mark Campbell**. The work is based on African-American abolitionist William Still's accounts as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. **Behzad Ranjbaran's *We Are One*** for chorus and orchestra was commissioned by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (which will give the West Coast premiere) in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It sets poetry by the medieval Persian poet Sa'di (sung in Farsi), supplemented by four additional texts (sung in Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, and English). Each is a call for peace—including the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome"—and whenever the word "peace" occurs, it is sung in more than a dozen different languages.

The commission of *Sanctuary Road* was made possible by a gift from Joanne Spellun.

Also in 2017-18: Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition Finals on April 14, 2018

OSNY's annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition, which remains the only major international vocal competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing, holds its final round as a public event in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. The competition receives applications from

around the world. "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 Kent Tritle.

The Artists

Soprano **Kathryn Lewek** has established herself as one of opera's strongest coloratura sopranos. In addition to her Metropolitan Opera performances of the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, her season's engagements have included her role debut as Ginevra in *Ariodante* at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival and her debut at the BBC Proms. www.kathrynlewek.com

Sara Murphy, whose voice has been praised as "a gorgeous, deep, dark mezzo-soprano" (*The New York Times*), this season makes her debut with the RAI Orchestra as Mary in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* conducted by James Conlon. She recently made her European debut at Opera Theater of Rome as Ulrica in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* under the baton of Jesús López-Cobos. www.saramurphymezzo.com

Tenor **Lawrence Jones** has established an active presence on the concert and operatic stages. He has received praise for his recent portrayals of Tom Rakewell in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the Princeton and Aldeburgh Festivals. Mr. Jones has performed roles with companies such as New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Saratoga, Sarasota Opera, Amarillo Opera, and Opera North. <http://robertgilder.co/lawrence-jones/>

Praised for his "nobility and rich tone" (*The New York Times*) and "enormous, thrilling voice" (*The Wall Street Journal*), bass-baritone **Dashon Burton** has performed the Brahms Requiem and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Franz Welser-Möst and The Cleveland Orchestra in the last two seasons, and this fall joined them for reprise performances of their production of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and for performances of Beethoven's Ninth as part of the orchestra's Prometheus Project, at home and in Vienna and Japan. www.dashonburton.com

OSNY 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 where he directs the concert series *Great Music in a Great Space*, which he reinstated in 2011. Mr. 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, he is the organist of the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra. www.kenttritle.com

Since its founding in 1873, the **Oratorio Society of New York**, New York's 200-voice avocational chorus, has become the city's standard for grand choral performance, having performed world, U.S., and New York premieres of works as diverse as Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (1877), Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* (1882), a full-concert production of Wagner's *Parsifal* at the Metropolitan Opera House (1886), Britten's *The World of the Spirit* (1998), Filas's *Song of Solomon* (2012), and Moravec's *Blizzard Voices* (2013). On its 100th anniversary the Oratorio

Society received the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural award, in recognition of its contributions. www.oratoriosocietyofny.org

Monday, December 18, 2017, at 8:00 pm

Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage, Carnegie Hall

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Kent Tritle, conductor

Kathryn Lewek, soprano

Sara Murphy, mezzo-soprano

Lawrence Jones, tenor

Dashon Burton, bass-baritone

Orchestra of the Society

HANDEL *Messiah*

Tickets: \$100–\$28

November 14, 2017