

JENNIFER WADA COMMUNICATIONS CO.

Tel 718.855.7101 • Fax 718.855.7350 • jennifer@wadacommunications.com • www.wadacommunications.com

- **Kent Tritle Leads “The Grand Tradition Continues: OSNY *Messiah* 2020” – Premieres December 21, 2020, at 8 pm ET on www.osny.org
*Soloists Susanna Phillips, Heather Petrie, Joshua Blue, and Sidney Outlaw, and Members of the Oratorio Society of New York Chorus and Orchestra Perform Selections from Handel’s Messiah, Including the “Hallelujah” Chorus – Taped in October in Tritle’s Barn in Stone Ridge, New York***
- **On December 13, Kent Tritle To Lead the Cathedral Choir of St. John the Divine on the Cathedral Steps in a Concert of Holiday Music**
- **Grammy Nomination, Best Choral Performance, for the Moravec/Campbell Oratorio *Sanctuary Road*, with Kent Tritle Leading the Oratorio Society of New York, on Naxos**



Performing forces for the Oratorio Society of New York’s Messiah 2020. Photos by Ellen Davidson (top) and Bryan Zaros (bottom).

The Oratorio Society of New York’s 147th annual performance of *Messiah* had been slated to take place on Monday, December 21, 2020, at Carnegie Hall. When it became clear that this could not happen, OSNY Music Director Kent Tritle and the organization’s leadership came up with a Plan B.

“The Grand Tradition Continues: OSNY *Messiah* 2020” is a performance of selections from Handel’s *Messiah* that will debut for on-demand, free streaming on Monday, December 21, at 8:00 pm on the Oratorio Society of New York website, www.osny.org. Taped in October in the barn at Kent Tritle’s house in Stone Ridge, New York, the performance features Tritle leading 24 members of the Oratorio Society of New York chorus, a 12-member orchestra, and star soloists Susanna Phillips, Heather Petrie, Joshua Blue, and Sidney Outlaw.

In addition to most of the Christmas portion of the oratorio (Part 1), the performance includes the “Hallelujah” chorus performed by more than 80 members of the OSNY, each recorded separately and engineered together.

“It was a cold October morning; we used tent heaters to warm the space, and broke every 20 minutes for aerosol dispersion,” related Tritle. “Everyone was Covid-tested, masked, and distanced. After rehearsal, we recorded both audio and video in a single two-and-a-half-hour session.”

The barn was actually a social club during the Prohibition, and so retains a separate bar area, which housed the audio team – the barn itself held most of the orchestra (reduced to chamber-sized, with one player on a part), and the soloists. The trumpets and timpani were outside the large doors on the barn’s south side, and outside the north doors was the 24-member chorus.

Tritle said, “The rush of joy was tremendous from the first note of the Overture! We dressed in our elegant best, and had the time of our lives, even with the social distancing. I will remember that day forever.”

Cathedral Choir of St. John the Divine on the Cathedral Steps – Sunday, December 13, at 3:00 pm

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine presents the Cathedral Choir in concert, led by Music Director Kent Tritle, as a gift to the people of New York City on Sunday, December 13, at 3:00 pm. Amplified from the steps of the Cathedral at Amsterdam Avenue and 112th Street, the choir (masked and distanced, but in festive spirit), with soloists Lianne Coble, Kirsten Sollek, and Gregory Purnhagen, will sing Tomas Luis de Victoria’s motet “O magnum mysterium,” Jan Peterszoon Sweelinck’s “Hodie Christus Natus Est,” and a Christmas spiritual medley arranged by Joseph Jennings. Other carols of the season will fill out this 45-minute celebration. The concert recording will be posted to the Cathedral site for streaming.

Grammy Nomination for Best Choral Performance for Moravec/Campbell *Sanctuary Road* on Naxos

The Naxos recording of the world premiere performance of *Sanctuary Road*, the oratorio by Paul Moravec (music) and Mark Campbell (text) that Kent Tritle led with the Oratorio Society of New York at Carnegie Hall in 2018, has been nominated for a 2021 Grammy Award in the Best Choral Performance category. Based on the writings of the Underground Railroad “conductor” William Still, the work was an OSNY commission, and featured in its premiere performance the soloists Laquita Mitchell, Raehann Bryce-Davis, Joshua Blue, Malcolm J. Merriweather, and Dashon Burton. Complete list of nominees: <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/news/2021-grammys-complete-nominees-list#28>

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 Director of Cathedral Music and Organist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City; Music Director of the Oratorio Society of New York, the acclaimed 200-voice avocational chorus; and Music Director of Musica Sacra, the longest continuously performing professional chorus in New York City. In addition, Kent is Director of Choral Activities and a member of the organ faculty at the Manhattan School of Music and is a member of the graduate faculty of The Juilliard School, serving its Vocal Arts Department. An acclaimed organ virtuoso, he is also the organist of the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra.

Kent Tritle founded the *Sacred Music in a Sacred Space* concert series at New York’s Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, and led it to great acclaim from 1989 to 2011. From 1996 to 2004, he was Music Director of New York’s The Dessooff Choirs. Kent hosted “The Choral Mix with Kent Tritle” on New York’s WQXR, a weekly program devoted to the vibrant world of choral music, from 2010 to 2014. Kent is the 2020 recipient of Chorus America’s Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art. Among other recent honors are 2017 Distinguished Achievement Award from Career Bridges and the 2016 President’s Medal for Distinguished Service from the Manhattan School of Music. Kent is on the advisory boards of the Choral Composer/Conductor Collective (C4) and the Clarion Music Society, and was the 2016 honoree at Clarion’s annual gala. He was recently featured in the first season of the WIRED video series “Masterminds,” an installment titled, “What Conductors Are Really Doing.”

www.kenttritle.com

"The Grand Tradition Continues: OSNY *Messiah* 2020"

Premieres on Monday, December 21, 2020, at 8:00 pm ET at www.osny.org

Oratorio Society of New York

Kent Tritle, conductor

Susanna Phillips, soprano

Heather Petrie, contralto

Joshua Blue, tenor

Sidney Outlaw, baritone

Selections from Handel's *Messiah*:

Overture

"Comfort ye/Every valley"

"And the glory of the Lord"

"Thus saith the Lord/But who may abide"

"And He shall purify"

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive/O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion"

Sinfonia

"There were shepherds abiding in their fields/And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them/And suddenly"

"Glory to God in the highest"

"For unto us a child is born"

"Rejoice greatly"

"The trumpet shall sound"

"Hallelujah"

Cathedral Choir of St. John the Divine on the Cathedral Steps – Sunday, December 13, 2020, at 3:00 pm, Amsterdam Avenue at 112th Street, New York City

Visit www.stjohndivine.org/music for information

November 24, 2020