

# MUSICĀ SACRĀ

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**Update: Note new October 16 program, and additional collaborations:**

## **Musica Sacra 2024-25 Season:**

**Fall opener of Bach, Pärt, Tavener, and premieres; a Carnegie Hall holiday program of Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach; and the return of “SurRound,” an immersive concert experience at St. John the Divine**

**Four performances of Handel’s *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic; collaborations with Los Angeles Philharmonic, Juilliard Orchestra, and New York City Ballet**



*Kent Tritle leads Musica Sacra in Messiah at Carnegie Hall, December 2023. Photo by Brian Hatton*

The 2024-25 concert season presented by Musica Sacra, New York’s elite professional chorus led by Music Director Kent Tritle, encompasses a compelling array of music performed in three of New York’s storied venues. Beginning with a program of music by Bach, Pärt, and Tavener and premieres by Tetiana Yashvili and Jacob Beranek at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, the season continues with a December concert at Carnegie Hall featuring guest artists Susanna Phillips and Simone Dinnerstein and featuring Mozart’s *Exsultate, Jubilate*, Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy* and selections from Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*; and the return of “SurRound,” an immersive concert in 360° in the candlelit Cathedral of St. John the Divine (details and full programs below).

In addition, Musica Sacra continues its tradition of collaborations with other top-tier organizations: after acclaimed performances with the New York Philharmonic of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 2023 and Mozart's Requiem and *Ave Verum Corpus* in May 2024, the chorus will be featured in the Philharmonic's annual presentation of Handel's *Messiah* in four performances in December 2024. Musica Sacra also joins the Los Angeles Philharmonic, led by Gustavo Dudamel, for a Carnegie Hall performance of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Juilliard Orchestra, led by Gemma New, for Holst's *The Planets*. In the spring, Musica Sacra returns to the New York City Ballet for that company's signature production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Musica Sacra, founded in 1964, is New York's longest continually performing professional chorus, and the 2024-25 season marks Kent Tritle's 18<sup>th</sup> as Music Director. Created with the mission to create choral performances of the highest caliber, profound statements made simply and elegantly, Musica Sacra was recently described as one of "the great choruses of the world" by conductor Pablo Heras-Casado after a collaboration with the Orchestra of St Luke's. In its review of the New York Philharmonic's presentation of the Mozart works, *The New York Times* praised "the excellent singers of Musica Sacra," and *Musical America*, in its coverage of the April 2023 performances of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Philharmonic, praised the chorus's "stunning transparency," saying the group "achieved ravishing homogeneity in the frequent chorales while triumphing in the complex and moving 'Wir setzen uns mit Tränen' that closes the work."

**"Radiant Dialogues" – Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola**

Musica Sacra's season begins with "Radiant Dialogues," a program led by Kent Tritle that begins with J. S. Bach's motet *Komm, Jesu, komm* and ends with John Tavener's *Svyati*, a dialogue for choir and cello with text from the Russian Orthodox service. The journey in between includes U.S. premieres by Ukrainian composer Tetiana Yashvili, a world premiere by Juilliard's Jacob Beranek, a work by Britain's Janet Wheeler, and Arvo Pärt's Two Slavic Psalms and *Magnificat* (the full program is listed below). Assistant Music Director Michael Sheetz joins Kent Tritle to conduct the program.

**Mozart, Bach, and Beethoven – Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at Carnegie Hall**

This year, Musica Sacra's annual holiday season concert at Carnegie Hall will feature two stellar guest artists and three classic favorites: Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* with pianist Simone Dinnerstein; Mozart's solo motet *Exsultate, Jubilate*, featuring soprano Susanna Phillips; and selections from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, as well as Christmas motets by Poulenc, Lauridsen, Bassi, and Biebl (full program below).

**"SurRound II" – Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine**

Returning after a sold-out debut in October 2023 is "SurRound II," an immersive concert in 360° in the candlelit Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The audience, seated in the Great Choir stalls and floor, will experience a program of medieval, Renaissance, and contemporary works as the singers move throughout the cathedral. The program includes Gregorio Allegri's *Miserere* and John Tavener's *Lament of the Mother of God* as well as music by Adolphus Hailstork, Sarah McDonald, William Dawson, Perotin, Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, Heinrich Schütz, and Morton Lauridsen.

About the 2023 "SurRound" event, *Classics Today* said, "As the chorus moved we got to hear individual voices, inner harmonies, and, in a way, the manner in which great choral music works. By placing the chorus above, behind, and mixed in with the choir stalls for different works, the never ending panoply of tone and color put us in the middle of the creative process. A remarkable evening."

## **MUSICA SACRA**

Since its founding in 1964, the mission of Musica Sacra has been to create definitive, professional, choral performances of the highest caliber. It does so with concerts, recording, the commissioning and performing of new choral works, and collaborating with other top tier performing arts organizations.

Musica Sacra is known for its interpretations of the masterpieces of choral music – Tallis's *Spem in Alium*, the choral oeuvre of J. S. Bach, the masses of Mozart and Haydn, the Requiems of Mozart, Brahms, and Fauré, Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Strauss's *Deutsche Motette*, Bruckner's motets, and Schönberg's *Friede auf Erden*, among others – and its involvement in contemporary repertoire; the group has given the world and New York premieres of choral works by composers including Benjamin Britten, Dave Brubeck, Anthony Davis, Aaron Copland, David Diamond, Aram Khachaturian, Duncan Patton, Vincent Persichetti, Daniel Pinkham, Bernard Rands, and Peter Schickele.

### ***Musica Sacra commissions***

Musica Sacra's tradition of notable commissions includes Alan Hovhaness's *Revelations of St. Paul*, composed for and premiered by the group in 1982 at Lincoln Center. Subsequent commissions include McNeil Robinson's *Missa Brevis*, and two works that are based upon biblical texts for which there is little or no music available for use by church and synagogue choirs: *The Death of Moses* by Ned Rorem and Richard Danielpour's *Prologue and Prayer*. Other commissions include works by Alessandro Cadario, Robert Convery, Michael Gilbertson, Ricky Ian Gordon, Wang Jie, Libby Larsen, Meredith Monk, Robert Moran, and Kim D. Sherman.

### ***A tradition of collaborations and recordings***

Recent highlights of Musica Sacra's singular history of collaborations with other ensembles and organizations include the New York Philharmonic's live score performances of *Amadeus*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (which the chorus also performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra); the New York City Ballet's performances of *Les Noces* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; the Requiems of Brahms and Mozart and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the New York Philharmonic and Orchestra of St. Luke's; *Così fan tutte* at the Mostly Mozart Festival; the New York City Opera Renaissance production of *Tosca*.

Musica Sacra has recorded on the RCA, BMG, MSR Classics and Deutsche Grammophon labels, including the first digitally recorded performance of *Messiah*, led by Musica Sacra founder Richard Westenburg, released in 1982 by RCA and reissued on High Performance, BMG's audiophile label. Recent releases include *Messages to Myself*, the first Musica Sacra recording led by Kent Tritle, a disc of contemporary works including commissions by Daniel Brewbaker and Michael Gilbertson; and *Eternal Reflections*, recent choral compositions by Robert Paterson.

### ***Educational Engagement***

Each year Assistant Music Director Michael Sheetz, aided by Musica Sacra singers, works with students in Title 1 schools across New York City, giving workshops focusing on musical features of Handel's *Messiah*. This year, Musica Sacra will expand its educational engagement to include workshops centered around each of the season's concerts. In March 2022, schools were invited to participate in a pre-concert workshop with composer Wang Jie about her work which was then premiered in performance.

[www.musicasacrany.com](http://www.musicasacrany.com)

**Kent Tritle** has been Music Director of Musica Sacra since 2008. 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 in New York City and Music Director of the Oratorio Society of New York. In addition, Kent 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. <https://kenttritle.com>

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## Musica Sacra 2024-25 Season

Wednesday, October 9, 2024, at 8 pm

Carnegie Hall, New York, NY

[LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC](#)

Gustavo Dudamel, conductor

Alisa Weilerstein, cello

Jana McIntyre, soprano

Deepa Johnny, mezzo-soprano

María Valverde, narrator

Musica Sacra,

Kent Tritle, director

GABRIELA ORTIZ      *New Work for Cello and Orchestra (NY Premiere)*

FELIX MENDELSSOHN      *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Op. 61 (complete incidental music)*

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**Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at 7:30pm**

**Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, New York, NY**

[MUSICA SACRA: "Radiant Dialogues"](#)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Michael Sheetz, conductor

J. S. BACH      *Komm, Jesu, komm, BWV 229*

JACOB BERANEK      *Abendgebet (World premiere)*

FELIX MENDELSSOHN      *Heilig*

JANET WHEELER      *Beati Quorum Via*

J. S. BACH      *Lobet den Herrn, BWV 230*

ARVO PÄRT      *Two Slavic Psalms*

JOHN TAVENER      *Mother of God, here I stand*

ARVO PÄRT      *Magnificat*

TETIANA YASHVILI      *Bless the Lord, O my soul (U.S. premiere)*

JOHN TAVENER      *Cherubic Song (U.S. premiere)*

JOHN TAVENER      *Svyati*

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December 11-14, 2024

David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, NY

[NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC](#)

Ton Koopman, conductor

Maya Kherani, soprano

Maarten Engeltjes, countertenor

Kieran White, tenor

Klaus Mertens, bass-baritone

Musica Sacra, Kent Tritle, director

G. F. HANDEL

*Messiah*

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Saturday, December 14, 2024, at 7:30 pm

Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, NY

[JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA](#)

Gemma New, conductor

Musica Sacra,

Kent Tritle, director

SALINA FISHER

*Kintsugi*

WILLIAM WALTON

Violin Concerto

GUSTAV HOLST

*The Planets*

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**Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 7:30pm**

**Carnegie Hall, New York, NY**

[MUSICA SACRA: Mozart, Bach, and Beethoven](#)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Susanna Phillips, soprano

Simone Dinnerstein, piano

FRANCIS POULENC

*Hodie Christus natus est*

MORTON LAURIDSEN

*O magnum mysterium*

J. S. BACH

*Christmas Oratorio* selections:

“Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage”

“Bricht an, o schönes Morgenlicht”

“Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein”

FRANZ BIEBL

*Ave Maria*

W. A. MOZART

*Exsultate, Jubilate*

JAMES BASSI

*Quem pastores laudavere*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

*Choral Fantasy*

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**Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 7:30 pm**  
**Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, NY**  
**[MUSICA SACRA: "SurRound II"](#)**  
Kent Tritle, conductor

"SurRound II" is an immersive concert in 360° in the candlelit Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The audience, seated in the Great Choir stalls and floor, will experience a program of medieval, Renaissance, and contemporary works as the singers move throughout the cathedral. The program includes Gregorio Allegri's *Miserere* and John Tavener's *Lament of the Mother of God* as well as music by Adolphus Hailstork, Sarah McDonald, William Dawson, Perotin, Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, Heinrich Schütz, and Morton Lauridsen.

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May 27 – June 1, 2025  
David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center, New York, NY  
**[NEW YORK CITY BALLET](#)**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Musica Sacra, Kent Tritle, director, is featured in performances of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

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*Updated August 19, 2024*