MUSICA SACRA

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Musica Sacra Presents "Classics for Christmas: A Ceremony of Carols," a Festive Holiday Concert, at Carnegie Hall on Thursday, December 17, 2026, at 7:30 pm



Mariko Anraku, Kent Tritle, and Musica Sacra at Carnegie Hall, December 17, 2025, photos by Brian Hatton

Musica Sacra, New York's elite professional chorus led by Music Director Kent Tritle, presents "Classics for Christmas: A Ceremony of Carols," a program of festive delights, for its annual holiday concert at Carnegie Hall on Thursday, December 17, 2026, at 7:30 pm.

Benjamin Britten's magical Christmas classic *A Ceremony of Carols* for chorus and harp leads off the program, which also features music for chorus and orchestra such as *Sleigh Ride* by Leopold Mozart, *The King Shall Rejoice* by Handel, and works for the season by Reena Esmail, Morton Lauridsen, and Wayne Oquin. Mariko Anraku, Associate Principal Harpist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, is the soloist in the Britten work, and Maximillian Morel, Principal Trumpet of American Ballet Theater, and David Pushkoff, Principal Trumpet of New York City Ballet, are featured in a Baroque confection, Manfredini's Concerto for Two Trumpets (the complete program follows below).

Called "one of the best pieces of Christmas classical music" by BBC Music, *A Ceremony of Carols* was penned by Britten while the composer was returning home from the U.S. to war-torn Britain on a cargo ship in 1942. Kent Tritle says, "I first heard *A Ceremony of Carols* sung by a boy choir in a church, and it has become one of my very favorite pieces of holiday music. The magic of treble voices with virtuosic harp accompaniment evokes for me both the wonder and hope of the season and a deep connection with Christmases past. Musica Sacra can't wait to perform it for our Carnegie Hall audience."

As a soloist and chamber, orchestral, and recording artist, **Mariko Anraku** has enchanted audiences with her “manifestation of grace and elegance” (Jerusalem Post) and as “a masterful artist of intelligence and wit” (The New York Times). Since her debut with the Toronto Symphony led by Sir Andrew Davis, she has been guest soloist with numerous orchestras and given recitals at major concert halls around the world. Since 1995, Mariko has held the position of Associate Principal Harpist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Her list of awards includes First Prize at the First Nippon Harp Competition, First Prize, the Channel Classics Recording Prize, and the ITT Corporation Prize at the Concert Artists Guild Competition in New York.

Musica Sacra’s 2026-27 season continues with *The Voices of Our Ancestors* on April 20, 2027, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. *The Voices of Our Ancestors* is a 2014 work for narrator, chorus, brass, and organ by Thea Musgrave that sets the creation hymn from the *Rigveda*, an ancient Sanskrit verse dating in its written form from 1500-1200 B.C., and eleven other poems translated into English from almost as many languages. The Scottish-born Musgrave, who has lived in the U.S. since 1972, celebrates her centenary in 2028. Poet and author David Mills will narrate the Musgrave work, and the program begins with selections of medieval polyphony and works by Josquin des Prez and Adrian Willaert from the Medici Codex of 1518.

Musica Sacra is New York’s longest continually performing professional chorus. Since its founding in 1964, the group’s mission has been to create definitive, professional, choral performances of the highest caliber; it does so with concerts, recordings, the commissioning and performing of new choral works, and by collaborating with other top tier performing arts organizations. Musical America, in its coverage of the 2023 performances of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with the New York 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.” www.musicasacrany.com

Kent Tritle, Music Director of Musica Sacra since 2008, marks his 20th season with the chorus in 2026-27. 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

Thursday, December 17, 2026, at 7:30 pm
Carnegie Hall
MUSICA SACRA
“CLASSICS FOR CHRISTMAS: *A CEREMONY OF CAROLS*”
Kent Tritle, conductor
Mariko Anraku, harp
Maximillian Morel & David Pushkoff, trumpets

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)	*A Ceremony of Carols*
Francesco Onofrio Manfredini (1648-1762)	Concerto for Two Trumpets in D
Morton Lauridsen (b. 1943)	*O Magnum Mysterium*
Reena Esmail (b. 1983)	“The unexpected early hour” from *A Winter Breviary*
Edward Elgar (1857-1934)	*The Snow*
Leopold Mozart (1719-1787)	*Sleigh Ride* (*Schlittenfahrt*)
Marcel Grandjany (1891-1975)	*Aria in Classic Style* for harp and strings
Wayne Oquin (b. 1977)	*O Magnum Mysterium*
George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)	*The King Shall Rejoice*

November 5, 2026