

MUSICA SACRA

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Musica Sacra Celebrates the Holidays with “Classics for Christmas: Mozart, Bach & Beethoven” at Carnegie Hall on Wednesday, December 18, at 7:30 pm

Susanna Phillips and Simone Dinnerstein Are Guests



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

After an esteemed, longstanding annual tradition of performing Handel’s *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall during the holiday season, Musica Sacra, New York’s elite professional chorus, is offering something different this year. On Wednesday, December 18, at 7:30 pm at Carnegie, Music Director Kent Tritle leads **“Classics for Christmas: Mozart, Bach & Beethoven,”** a festive program with two renowned guest artists: Mozart’s ebullient motet *Exsultate, jubilate* with soprano Susanna Phillips as soloist; Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy* for solo piano, chorus, and orchestra with soloist Simone Dinnerstein; selections from Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*, and Christmas motets by Biebl, Poulenc, James Bassi, and Morten Lauridsen.

“With Musica Sacra joining the New York Philharmonic for its annual performances of *Messiah* this year,” said Kent Tritle, “we were presented with an opportunity to expand not only our own offerings at Carnegie Hall, but the holiday music choices in the city! This is exuberant, joyful music, and we look forward to celebrating at Carnegie with Susanna, Simone, and our audience.”

Opera star Susanna Phillips’s season includes two additional Carnegie Hall appearances of note: the world premiere of the Paul Moravec/Mark Campbell oratorio *All Shall Rise* with the Oratorio Society of

New York (also led by Kent Tritle), and "Evgeny Kissin and Friends: A Tribute to Shostakovich." www.susannahillips.com. Simone Dinnerstein, a pianist known for her singular voice and programmatic imagination, recently gave the world premiere of *The Eye Is the First Circle*, the first multi-media production she conceived, created, and directed, which uses as source materials her father Simon Dinnerstein's painting *The Fulbright Triptych* and Charles Ives's Piano Sonata No. 2. www.simonedinnerstein.com



Susanna Phillips, photo by Dario Acosta; Simone Dinnerstein, photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

Musica Sacra's 2024-25 season continues with "SurRound II" on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Returning after a sold-out debut in October 2023, "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.

Musica Sacra continues its tradition of collaborations with other top-tier organizations this season: 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, all led by Jaap van Zweden, the chorus will be featured in the Philharmonic's annual presentation of Handel's *Messiah* in four performances in December 2024 led by Ton Koopman. Earlier this fall, Musica Sacra joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic, led by Gustavo Dudamel, for a Carnegie Hall performance of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; upcoming are engagements with the Juilliard Orchestra, led by Gemma New, for Holst's *The Planets*, and a return 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 18th as Music Director. Formed with the mission to create definitive, professional, choral performances of the highest caliber with concerts, recordings, and the commissioning of new works, 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 its collaboration with New York Philharmonic in Mozart's Requiem, *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, singled out 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."

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. www.musicasacra.org

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>

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

Carnegie Hall, New York, NY

MUSICA SACRA

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

October 29, 2024