

MUSICA SACRA

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Musica Sacra's Three Spring 2022 Performances: Arvo Pärt, Wang Jie, Viktor Kalabis, and Brahms on March 22; Debussy with Juilliard Orchestra and Barbara Hannigan on March 31; and Bach Magnificat and Mozart Mass in C Minor on April 6

The season concludes with nine performances in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the New York City Ballet



Musica Sacra led by Kent Tritle at Carnegie Hall, photo by Richard Ten Dyke

Musica Sacra, Kent Tritle, Music Director, performs in three concerts this spring whose variety is emblematic of its identity as New York's elite professional chorus. The group presents two of the events: a diverse program of works by Arvo Pärt, Wang Jie, Viktor Kalabis, and Brahms at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on March 22, and Bach's *Magnificat* and Mozart's Mass in C Minor at Carnegie Hall on April 6. And the chorus is featured in a performance with the Juilliard Orchestra led by Barbara Hannigan of Debussy's *La damoiselle élue* at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall on March 31.

The **March 22** program led by Kent Tritle continues Musica Sacra's history of engagement with new and recent repertoire, featuring the world premiere of *The Name That Never Dies*, a commissioned work by Wang Jie; the Te Deum of Arvo Pärt; and Viktor Kalabis's *Canticum canticorum* (marking the Czech composer's centennial); along with Brahms's motet *Schaffe in mir, Gott*. The Kalabis work is a cantata, with text from the biblical Song of Songs, for alto and tenor soloists, choir, and chamber orchestra commissioned in 1986 by conductor Helmuth Rilling for his Gächinger Kantorei choir.

The **March 31** Juilliard Orchestra concert, which will be [livestreamed](#), is also new to the schedule, part of Barbara Hannigan's work as a Juilliard Creative Associate in the 2021-22 season. *La damoiselle élue* (*The*

Blessed Damsel) is a cantata setting of a poem by Dante Gabriel Rossetti for soprano soloist, children's and contralto choirs, and orchestra. The performance is the latest in Musica Sacra's series of high-profile collaborations this season that included the January 31 Carnegie Hall concert by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Vassily Petrenko (Holst's *The Planets*) that was the first performance by a foreign orchestra at the hall in almost two years; a performance by the Orchestra of St. Luke's and Bernard Labadie of Mozart's Requiem and Haydn's Te Deum on November 19; and the New York premiere of Robert Paterson's *Graffiti Canons* as well as motets by Palestrina on a program with the American Modern Ensemble on November 5.

The **April 6** concert was scheduled when Musica Sacra's annual Carnegie Hall performance of Handel's *Messiah* on December 21 had to be canceled at the last minute due to pandemic protocols. Tickets for the Dec. 21 date will be honored on April 6. Kent Tritle leads the program of Bach's *Magnificat* and Mozart's Mass in C Minor, which continues Musica Sacra's celebrated history performing the jewels of the choral repertoire, particularly the music of Bach. The program's soloists are Jennifer Zetlan, soprano; Heather Petrie, mezzo-soprano; Bernard Damon Holcomb, tenor; and Enrico Lagasca, bass-baritone.

The Musica Sacra season concludes **May 21-29** with guest appearances with the New York City Ballet in nine performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, George Balanchine's ballet to Mendelssohn's score, continuing Musica Sacra's collaboration with the NYCB.

Musica Sacra, the notable professional chorus and mainstay of the New York choral scene, has a strong reputation both for its interpretations of the classics, such as the annual performances of Handel's "Messiah," and for its commissioning of new works.

--The New York Times, 2015

MUSICA SACRA

Since its founding in 1964 by conductor Richard Westenburg, the mission of Musica Sacra has been to create definitive, professional, choral performances of the highest caliber: profound statements made simply and elegantly. 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 first commissioned a new work in 1982, when Alan Hovhaness's *Revelations of St. Paul* was composed for and premiered by the group 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, Libby Larsen, Meredith Monk, Robert Moran, and Kim D. Sherman.

A tradition of collaborations

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 Orchestra of St. Luke's; *Così fan tutte* at the Mostly Mozart Festival; the New York City Opera Renaissance production of *Tosca*.

Educational outreach

Musica Sacra maintains a long-term partnership with the Newark Boys Chorus School through which the chorus of 4th- through 8th-graders receive workshops with Musica Sacra Assistant Music Director Michael Sheetz and Musica Sacra singers, and perform pre-concert recitals at Musica Sacra's concerts at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Musica Sacra partnered with the Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing & Visual Arts in Harlem to offer monthly virtual singing workshops. In addition, each year 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*; the students are given tickets to the annual performance of the work at Carnegie Hall to hear the classroom concepts applied in a live performance.

Musica Sacra has recorded on the RCA, BMG, MSR Classics and Deutsche Grammophon labels, including the first digitally recorded performance of *Messiah*, 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 Drew Brewbaker and Michael Gilbertson; and *Eternal Reflections*, recent choral compositions by Robert Paterson.

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 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. www.kenttritle.com

March 2, 2022

MUSICA SACRA SPRING 2022

Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at 7:30 pm

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, NYC

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Kent Tritle, conductor

Nicole Joy Mitchell, contralto

John Riesen, tenor

Musica Sacra Orchestra

VIKTOR KALABIS *Canticum Canticorum*

ARVO PÄRT Te Deum

WANG JIE *The Name That Never Dies* (World premiere, Musica Sacra commission)

JOHANNES BRAHMS *Schaffe in mir, Gott, Op. 29, No. 2*

Thursday, March 31, 2022, at 7:30 pm

Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, NYC

[JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA](#)

Barbara Hannigan, conductor

Musica Sacra

Kent Tritle, Music Director

Program to include:

CLAUDE DEBUSSY *La damoiselle élue*

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at 8 pm

Carnegie Hall, NYC

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Kent Tritle, conductor

Jennifer Zetlan, soprano

Heather Petrie, mezzo-soprano

Bernard Damon Holcomb, tenor

Enrico Lagasca, bass-baritone

J. S. BACH *Magnificat*

W. A. MOZART Mass in C Minor

May 21-29, 2022

David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center, NYC

[NEW YORK CITY BALLET](#)

Musica Sacra

Kent Tritle, Music Director

George Balanchine's ballet to Felix Mendelssohn's score of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
