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## ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK 2019-20 SEASON:

The world premiere of *A Nation of Others* by Paul Moravec & Mark Campbell, an OSNY commission about Ellis Island

The U.S. premiere of a new critical edition of Brahms's *A German Requiem* (of which the OSNY gave the U.S. premiere in 1877)

The OSNY's 146<sup>th</sup> annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*

Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* (excerpts) and Duruflé *Requiem* in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine

A Naxos Records release of the OSNY's world premiere performance of the Moravec/Campbell work *Sanctuary Road* (also an OSNY commission)



Oratorio Society of New York's performance of *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall, Dec. 21, 2016 – [photo](#) by Cloud Huter

The 2019-20 season of the Oratorio Society of New York, the city's standard for grand choral performance led by its acclaimed music director, Kent Tritle, is highlighted by two premieres that reflect its 146-year history: the U.S. premiere of a new critical edition of a Brahms masterwork that the Society performed in 1877; and the world premiere of *A Nation of Others*, an OSNY-commissioned oratorio for soloists, chorus, and orchestra by composer Paul Moravec and librettist Mark Campbell on the subject of immigrants' arrival at Ellis Island.

*A Nation of Others*, which will be paired on the program with a 2016 work by Robert Paterson, *Whitman's America*, is the second work commissioned by the OSNY of Moravec and Campbell – the first was *Sanctuary Road*, an oratorio about the Underground Railroad, that the Society premiered to acclaim in 2018. Naxos Records will release a recording of that performance in early 2020.

The Oratorio Society of New York was founded in 1873; in 1877 it gave the U.S. premiere of Brahms's *A German Requiem*, eight years after the first performance of this deeply humanist interpretation of a mass for the dead. The work, for soprano and baritone soloists, chorus, and orchestra, is acknowledged as one of Brahms's masterpieces, and was in 2017 described in [The New York Times](#) as "something of an anthem for our time, with grand social and political reverberations."

In 2020 the OSNY will perform the U.S. premiere of a new critical edition of *A German Requiem* that has been produced by an international team of scholars led by noted Brahms authorities Michael Musgrave and Michael Struck.

The OSNY's four-concert season also includes a program at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, of repertoire that shines in the cathedral's resonant acoustic: Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* (excerpts) and Duruflé's *Requiem*; and the Society's 146<sup>th</sup> annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*, a holiday tradition that this year launches the OSNY's annual three-concert Carnegie Hall series.

The season's vocal soloists include Susanna Phillips, Jennifer Zetlan, Leslie Fagan, and Maeve Höglund, sopranos; Raehann Bryce-Davis, mezzo-soprano; Kirsten Sollek and Heather Petrie, contraltos; John Riesen, Brian Giebler, and Isaiah Bell, tenors; Takaoki Onishi, Steven Eddy, and David Pike, baritones; Joseph Beutel, bass-baritone; and Adam Lau, bass.

The Oratorio Society's annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition, the only major competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing, will again present its final round at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall.

*The chronological listing of the events is below.*

***A Nation of Others by Paul Moravec & Mark Campbell, World Premiere of an OSNY Commission – Wednesday, May 6, 2020, at Carnegie Hall***

The world premiere of *A Nation of Others*, a new oratorio for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, bass soloists, chorus, and orchestra by composer Paul Moravec and librettist Mark Campbell about immigrants' arrival at Ellis Island, headlines this program, that also features Robert Paterson's 2016 work for soprano and baritone soloists, chorus, and orchestra, *Whitman's America*, settings of poems from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. The Moravec/Campbell work is an OSNY commission, as was the pair's 2018 oratorio *Sanctuary Road* (see information below regarding the Naxos Records release of the world premiere performance). The program's soloists are **Jennifer Zetlan** and **Maeve Höglund**, sopranos; **Raehann Bryce-Davis**, mezzo-soprano; **Isaiah Bell**, tenor; **Steven Eddy**, baritone; and **Joseph Beutel**, bass-baritone. Steven Eddy won first prize in the OSNY's 2019 Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition; Isaiah Bell and Joseph Beutel won prizes in 2017.

***Brahms's A German Requiem, New Critical Edition U.S. Premiere – Monday, March 2, 2020, at Carnegie Hall***

*A German Requiem (Ein deutsches Requiem)*, one of the masterpieces of choral music, was inspired by the deaths of Robert Schumann and Brahms's own mother. Rather than using the Latin Mass for the

Dead, Brahms, who referred to this as a “human requiem,” drew his libretto from Luther’s translation of the Bible and the Apocrypha. It offers consolation for the living rather than prayers for the dead.

The new critical edition being given its U.S. premiere performance on this program is by an international team of scholars led by the noted scholars Michael Musgrave and Michael Struck. Michael Musgrave is the author of, among other books, *The Music of Brahms* and *Brahms: A German Requiem*. The new edition is being published by G. Henle Verlag in collaboration with Breitkopf & Härtel. The performance features soloists **Susanna Phillips**, soprano, and **Takaoki Onishi**, baritone.

When the OSNY performed the U.S. premiere of the work in 1877 – in its fourth season – it was the first premiere the fledgling group had presented; it was joined on the program by a Bach cantata and an excerpt from Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

### **Handel’s Messiah – Thursday, December 19, 2019, at Carnegie Hall**

To launch its Carnegie Hall concert series, the Oratorio Society continues its annual holiday tradition of presenting Handel’s beloved oratorio, as it has every December since 1874, and at Carnegie Hall every year that it has been open. This year’s soloists are OSNY favorite **Leslie Fagan**, soprano; **Heather Petrie**, contralto; **Brian Giebler**, tenor; and **Adam Lau**, bass. Both Heather Petrie and Brian Giebler were finalists in the OSNY’s Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition in recent years.

### **Rachmaninoff and Duruflé – Tuesday, November 5, 2019, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine**

Sergei Rachmaninoff conducted the Oratorio Society in 1920 in a program of his music, and the OSNY performed the U.S. and New York premieres of some of his works on that and a later program. His *Vespers* (also known as *All-Night Vigil*), written in 1915, in a world riven by WWI and the lead-up to the Russian Revolution, is an *a cappella* work of remarkable spirituality, and was one of the composer’s own favorites. **John Riesen**, tenor, is featured in this performance of excerpts of the work. Maurice Duruflé composed his Requiem mass in 1947, and it is the piece for which he is best known; this marks its first performance by the OSNY. There are several arrangements of the work; it will be heard here in the version for soloists, chorus, and organ. Featured performers are **Kirsten Sollek**, contralto; **David Pike**, baritone; **Arthur Fiacco, Jr.**, cello; and **David Briggs**, organ.

### **Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition Finals Concert—Saturday, April 18, 2020, in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall**

The Oratorio Society’s annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition, founded in 1977, remains the only major competition to focus exclusively on oratorio singing. On April 18, the OSNY will hold the final round in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall as a public event. The Competition receives applications from around the world; OSNY Associate Conductor David Rosenmeyer leads the process to identify the eight finalists. Each performs two works, and the winners are announced after the judges’ deliberations. “Through the Competition we’ve been able to shine a bright spotlight on this repertoire and encourage singers, who would otherwise just prepare for opera, to consider the richness of oratorio music,” says Kent Tritle.

### **Sanctuary Road, by Paul Moravec and Mark Campbell, a Naxos Records Release – January 2020**

Naxos Records in January 2020 will release a recording of the world premiere performance of the Paul Moravec/Mark Campbell oratorio *Sanctuary Road*, which took place at Carnegie Hall on May 7, 2018. The Oratorio Society of New York was conducted by Kent Tritle, and the performance featured soloists Laquita Mitchell, Raehann Bryce-Davis, Joshua Blue, Malcolm J. Merriweather, and Dashon Burton. *Sanctuary Road* is based upon the writings of William Still, a conductor for the Underground Railroad.

Praising the premiere, Opera News called the work “extraordinary ... an astonishing illumination of multiple slaves and their escape experiences,” and said, “Kent Tritle showed magnificent command of [this] challenging new work and his massive musical forces.”

Three-concert subscriptions for the Carnegie Hall concerts are \$252–\$70, and will be available at [www.oratoriosocietyofny.org](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org) starting August 1. Single tickets for December 19 are priced at \$100–\$25; single tickets for the March 2 or May 6 concerts are \$90–\$25; they will be on sale starting August 1 through Carnegie Hall. [Tickets](#) for the Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition Final Concert on April 18 are \$40; they will go on sale in February. All these tickets may be purchased at the Carnegie Hall Box Office, through CarnegieCharge at (212) 247–7800, or at [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org). Tickets for the November 5 concert at St. John the Divine, priced at \$25–\$65 (student tickets free with I.D.), are available starting August 1 at [www.oratoriosocietyofny.org](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org).

Since its founding in 1873, the **Oratorio Society of New York** has become the city’s standard for grand choral performance. It has given world, U.S., and New York premieres of works as diverse as Brahms’s *Ein deutsches Requiem* (1877), Berlioz’ *Roméo et Juliette* (1882), a full-concert production of Wagner’s *Parsifal* at the Metropolitan Opera House (1886), Britten’s *The World of the Spirit* (1998), Filas’s *Requiem* (2015), Moravec’s *Blizzard Voices* (2013) and *Sanctuary Road* (2018), and Ranjbaran’s *We Are One* (2018). On its 100th anniversary the Oratorio Society received the Handel Medallion, New York City’s highest cultural award, in recognition of these contributions. [www.oratoriosocietyofny.org](http://www.oratoriosocietyofny.org).

The Oratorio Society’s Music Director since the 2005-6 season, **Kent Tritle** is also Music Director of the professional chorus Musica Sacra, and Director of Cathedral Music and Organist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, where he directs the concert series *Great Music in a Great Space*. Mr. Tritle is Director of Choral Activities at the Manhattan School of Music and a member of the graduate faculty of The Juilliard School. An acclaimed organ virtuoso, he is the organist of the *New York Philharmonic* and the *American Symphony Orchestra*. [www.kenttritle.com](http://www.kenttritle.com)

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**ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK**  
**Kent Tritle, Music Director**  
**2019-20 Concert Season / 147th Season**

**Tuesday, November 5, 2019, at 7:30 pm**

**Cathedral of St. John the Divine**

**[ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK](#)**

Kent Tritle, conductor

Kirsten Sollek, contralto

John Riesen, tenor

David Pike, baritone

Arthur Fiacco, Jr., cello

David Briggs, organ

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF *Vespers* (excerpts)

MAURICE DURUFLÉ *Requiem*

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**Thursday, December 19, 2019, at 8:00 pm**

**Carnegie Hall**

[ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK](#)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Leslie Fagan, soprano

Heather Petrie, contralto

Brian Giebler, tenor

Adam Lau, bass

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL *Messiah*

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**Monday, March 2, 2020, at 8:00 pm**

**Carnegie Hall**

[ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK](#)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Susanna Phillips, soprano

Takaoki Onishi, baritone

JOHANNES BRAHMS *A German Requiem* (U.S. premiere of a new critical edition)

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**Saturday, April 18, 2020, at 1:30 pm**

**Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall**

[Oratorio Society of New York](#) presents

**Lyndon Woodside Oratorio-Solo Competition Finals Concert**

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**Wednesday, May 6, 2020, at 8:00 pm**

**Carnegie Hall**

[ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK](#)

Kent Tritle, conductor

Jennifer Zetlan, soprano

Maeve Höglund, soprano

Raehann Bryce-Davis, mezzo-soprano

Isaiah Bell, tenor

Steven Eddy, baritone

Joseph Beutel, bass-baritone

PAUL MORAVEC/MARK CAMPBELL *A Nation of Others*, an oratorio about Ellis Island (World premiere of an OSNY commission)

ROBERT PATERSON *Whitman's America*

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*Updated August 16, 2019*