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## RELEASE

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**THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE PRESENTS  
MUSICA SACRA: Te Deum Laudamus:  
Centennial & World Premiere  
Kent Tritle, conductor**



*Includes the world premiere of a new work by Wang Jie*

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The Cathedral of St. John the Divine's Great Music in a Great Space concert series continues with ***Musica Sacra: Te Deum Laudamus: Centennial & World Premiere* on Tuesday, March 22 at 7:30pm, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th Street).**

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 Musica Sacra chorus and orchestra will be led by Kent Tritle alongside soloists Nicole Joy Mitchell, contralto, and John Riesen, tenor. This performance is generously underwritten by the The Viktor Kalabis and Zuzana Růžičková Foundation, Inc.

The concert will be held in person at the Cathedral. Tickets are \$45-\$75, \$20 for students with a valid ID. All visitors to the Cathedral are required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination and wear a mask for entry. For tickets and more information, [visit the Cathedral's website](#). Students are eligible for one free ticket at the door with a valid ID.

To purchase tickets and for more information, please visit:  
<https://www.stjohn divine.org/music/great-music/>

## **PROGRAM**

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

WANG JIE *The Name That Never Dies* (**world premiere**)

VIKTOR KALABIS *Canticum Canticorum*

ARVO PÄRT *Te Deum*

### **About 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; *Cosi 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 4<sup>th</sup>- through 8<sup>th</sup>-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.musicasacra.org](http://www.musicasacra.org)

### **About Kent Tritle**

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](http://www.kenttritle.com)

### **About Nicole Joy Miller**

**Nicole Joy Mitchell**, contralto, is a proud native of Brooklyn, New York and has performed around the country and the world. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut in the 2019/2020 season as part of the ensemble in the GRAMMY winning production (Best Opera Recording, 2021) of the Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. She returned to the Metropolitan Opera in their 2021/2022 season in several productions, most notably *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* by Terence Blanchard, the first opera performed in the Met's history by a Black composer.

Ms. Mitchell's career has taken her to performing more contemporary repertoire both in opera and art songs. In 2019 she performed at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum to sing Julia Perry's *Stabat Mater* with chamber ensemble *A Far Cry*, a rarely performed work by the Black female composer. This fall, Nicole is scheduled to premiere the role of iconic Civil Rights leader

Fannie Lou Hamer at Santa Fe Opera in *This Little Light of Mine, the Story of Fannie Lou Hamer* by composer Chandler Carter and librettist Diana Solomon-Glover.

Nicole enjoys traditional repertoire as alto soloist including Verdi's *Requiem*, Brahms *Alto Rhapsody*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Handel's *Messiah*. She also enjoys sharing her love of classical music and has worked as a Guest Teaching Artist for Ojai Youth Opera for several years. She also has experience in film and narration.

### **About John Riesen**

Hailed as "every inch the hero in stature and voice" (*Classical Voice North America*), award-winning American tenor **John Riesen** is consistently impressing audiences with his "impassioned... and vibrant" voice (*Opera Today*). Riesen's growing career boasts a variety of roles in which he excels and includes significant work in opera, musical theatre, studio recording and concert. He has released two studio recording albums: *What You'd Call a Dream* (2019) and *Christmas at Home* (2020), and several singles, including "Autumn Leaves (2021)," "What a Wonderful World (2021)," and "Maria (from "West Side Story") (2021)" that have reached over 1 million streams on Spotify and Apple Music. He has also collaborated with Emmy-nominated PBS TV pianist Marina Arsenijevic in both video performance (during COVID-19) and in studio recordings.

In the COVID-affected 2020/2021 season, John performed concerts, livestreams, and productions with several companies including Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Shades of Pink Charity Foundation, The FAR Conservatory in Detroit, and Las Vegas Opera. He was able to return to the stage in 2021 as Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore* with Pensacola Opera, Martin in *The Tender Land* with The Hart School, Alfredo in *La Traviata* with the Pacific Symphony, and Younger Thompson in *Glory Denied* with Berkshire Opera Festival.

Looking ahead to the 2021/2022 season, John will return to one of his signature roles, Frederic in *Pirates of Penzance* with Utah Opera and Anchorage Opera, Chris in *Favorite Son*, a new operetta by Grammy award winning song-writer Marcus Hummons, as well as his Carnegie Hall debut as tenor soloist in the *Messiah* with Musica Sacra under the baton of Kent Tritle.

He has been privileged to sing for political figures, including President Barack Obama, President Jimmy Carter, Judge Stephanie Kulp Seymour and Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. He also has been honored to sing the national anthem at several collegiate, semi-professional and professional athletic organizations, including the Detroit Tigers at Comerica Park, the Pensacola Ice Flyers, MSU hockey/baseball and more.

### **About Great Music in a Great Space**

Revived in 2011, Great Music in a Great Space reprises the legendary concert series first held at the Cathedral in the 1980s. Great Music in a Great Space presents choral, orchestral, and instrumental music, in the magnificent, deeply spiritual setting of the world's largest Gothic cathedral. The beloved holiday traditions of the Christmas Concert and New Year's Eve Concert for Peace are an integral part of our concert series. Joined by Rose of the Compass, Musica

Sacra, and the Oratorio Society of New York, the Cathedral Choirs, Orchestra, and a remarkable artistic team of organists and soloists bring the beloved space of the Cathedral to life with this transcendent music.

### **About The Cathedral**

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is chartered as a house of prayer for all people and a unifying center of intellectual light and leadership.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cathedral has responded to changing needs in the local community and across the city and state. People from many faiths and communities worship together in daily services held online and in person; the soup kitchen serves roughly 50,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs to safely provide resources and aid to the hardest-hit New Yorkers; the distinguished Cathedral School prepares young students to be future leaders; Advancing the Community of Tomorrow, the renowned preschool, afterschool and summer program, offers diverse educational and nurturing experiences; the outstanding Textile Conservation Lab preserves world treasures; concerts, exhibitions, performances and civic gatherings allow conversation, celebration, reflection and remembrance—such is the joyfully busy life of this beloved and venerated Cathedral.

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