

**For Immediate Release**  
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## Oratorio Society of New York Presents Brahms' *Requiem*

Evening Marks the 131st Anniversary of the Society's American Premiere of the Work

On Tuesday, May 20 at 8p.m. in Carnegie Hall, the Oratorio Society of New York will feature Johannes Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, one of the most beautiful, majestic, and beloved works in the choral repertoire. Music Director **Kent Tritle** leads chorus and soloists Susanna Phillips, soprano, and Christopher Feigum, baritone, and the Orchestra of the Society. The *Requiem* will be paired with Brahms' evocative, mournful *Tragic Overture*.

On March 15, 1877 the Oratorio Society of New York introduced the work to American audiences. In the *Requiem*, Brahms combines striking harmonies with unusual Biblical text to create a beautifully lyrical, masterfully written, and immensely moving work that has become one of the most cherished oratorios in the classical literature.

"Beloved" by audiences was not always the work's position. George Bernard Shaw, a prolific and opinionated music critic in addition to an accomplished playwright, observed: "There are some experiences in life which should not be demanded twice from any man, and one of them is listening to the Brahms *Requiem*." On another occasion Shaw observed: "Brahms is just like Tennyson, an extraordinary musician, with the brains of a third-rate village policeman." For his own part, Brahms did not shrink from lively repartee, saying at one gathering: "If there is anyone here whom I have not insulted, I beg his pardon."

Of the *Requiem*, Kent Tritle noted: "Brahms' brilliance as a song writer certainly enhanced the lyrical qualities in this monumental choral work. Here he marries the intimacy, character, and expressiveness of the melodic line with a profound sense of harmony. And his devotion to early music is reflected here in some of the greatest fugues of the choral literature. The drama, dignity, and nobility of Brahms' *Requiem* are transcendent."

To enjoy Brahms at his best, join the Oratorio Society of New York at Carnegie Hall on Tuesday, May 20 at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the Carnegie Hall box office or through Carnegie Charge at 212.247.7800.

**The Oratorio Society of New York** has been part of the city's cultural life since 1873. The Society's 200 members come from all walks of life, volunteering their time for the joy of making music. The Society performs choral masterpieces in three concerts annually including Handel's *Messiah*. All concerts are at Carnegie Hall, the landmark 57<sup>th</sup> street music hall built for the Society by then Board president Andrew Carnegie in 1891. In addition, the Society is dedicated to furthering oratorio singing and providing young singers with opportunities to advance their careers through the annual Lyndon Woodside Oratorio Solo Competition, now in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year. For information, visit [www.osny.org](http://www.osny.org).

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