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For Immediate Release  
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**The Cecilia Chorus of New York, Mark Shapiro, Music Director**  
**2018-2019 Concert Season at Carnegie Hall -**  
**Handel's Messiah – Music Inspired by Poetry of Walt Whitman – New Work from The**  
**Brothers Balliett**

New York, NY – The Cecilia Chorus of New York, Mark Shapiro, Music Director, has announced its 2018-2019 concert season, including two concerts at Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage and a third concert at Manhattan's Church of St. Francis Xavier. Dates and programs are:

**Saturday, December 8 at 8:00PM – Handel's *Messiah***

Carnegie Hall, Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage, 57th Street & 7th Avenue

Handel's perennial classic in a suspenseful and luminous interpretation.

The Cecilia Chorus of New York will perform this timeless masterwork with full orchestra and soloists Shakèd Bar, soprano, Nicholas Tamagna, countertenor, Michael St. Peter, tenor and William Guanbo Su, bass.

Maestro Shapiro said, "One of the myriad elements that make conducting Handel's *Messiah* ever new and exhilarating is the opportunity to discover what different soloists bring to its perfectly written roles. An individual vocal color or turn of phrase can illuminate a passage in a way that is completely new, even surprising. The Cecilia Chorus of New York has a longstanding practice of identifying and presenting remarkable up-and-coming singers in role and hall debuts. This year's outstanding quartet of *Messiah* soloists is sure to impart fresh poignancy and sparkle to this timeless music."

This performance will be the Carnegie Hall mainstage debut for both Shakèd Bar (<http://ceciliachorusny.org/shaked-bar-soprano>) and Michael St. Peter (<http://encompassarts.com/artist/michael-st-peter/>). Nicholas Tamagna (<http://nicholastamagna.com/>) was soloist in CCNY's *A Bach Family Christmas* in December 2016 - his Carnegie Hall main stage debut - and William Guanbo Su (<https://williamguanbosu.com>) was soloist in the group's presentation of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in December 2017. This was also Guanbo Su's Carnegie Hall debut.

More concert information at <http://ceciliachorusny.org/>.

**Saturday, March 2, 2019 at 8:00PM - *Sing Me the Universal* - A Walt Whitman Bicentennial**

Church of St. Francis Xavier, 46 W 16th St. in Manhattan

American composers Vincent Persichetti (in his *Celebrations*) and Jorge Martín (in his *One Hour to Madness and Joy*) capture the power and transcendence of the words of Walt Whitman, while excerpts from the *Mass in D minor* (1860) of Bostonian John Knowles Paine highlight the poet's radical individualism. With soloists, chorus, organ and percussion.

Mark Shapiro writes, "The American original Walt Whitman has long been a favorite of composers. I think this is because his poetry, itself, sings. Its rhythms and textures leap from the page, calling out to be not merely read silently, but heard aloud. There is music already latent in Whitman's sound, as well as his meaning. Not surprisingly, we turn to American composers to give heightened expression to this free-spirited poet's take-no-prisoners sensuousness and fire. To do further honor to Whitman's amazing breakthrough, we introduce each of the two cycles with excerpts from the monumental and beautiful *Mass in D minor* by John Knowles Paine, a justly admired musical emissary from Whitman's time and place."

Soloists in the Paine excerpts will be Ganson Salmon, tenor (<https://www.gansonsalmon.com>) and Nicole Mitchell, contralto (<https://www.contraltocorner.com/nicole-mitchell.html>).

More concert information at <http://ceciliachorusny.org/>.

**Friday, May 3, 2019 at 8:00PM - Brahms, Elgar and the Brothers Balliett**  
Carnegie Hall, Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage, 57th Street & 7th Avenue

A triptych of choral-orchestral works featuring the solo mezzo-soprano voice. Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* and Elgar's buoyantly optimistic *The Music Makers* frame the newly commissioned *Fifty Trillion Molecular Geniuses* (working title) from The Brothers Balliett. With soloists, chorus and orchestra.

Shapiro said, "Presenting three electrifying mezzo-soprano soloists in a single program makes me deeply happy. Although all vocal categories are irresistible, who among us has not secretly got a crush on the mezzo voice? And I love the idea of surrounding a commission from the lean and slyly lyrical Brothers Balliett — and their absolutely *sui generis* contemporary imaginations — with the warm embrace of two luxurious works evoking the height of Romanticism."

Soloists will be mezzo-sopranos Renée Tatum, Amanda Lynn Bottoms (<https://www.amandalynnbottoms.com/>), and Naomi Louisa O'Connell (<http://www.naomiocConnell.com/>). Ms. Tatum, who is appearing with CCNY courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera, sang mezzo solo with the chorus's Bach *Christmas Oratorio* of December 2017 and Ms. Bottoms sang Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with them in May 2016 (her Carnegie hall debut.)

This concert honors the life and legacy of mezzo-soprano Alice Mandelick Flagler (1872-1918), a founding member, officer and benefactor of The Cecilia Chorus of New York.

More concert information at <http://ceciliachorusny.org/>.

#### For tickets:

Single tickets for the December 8 and May 3 concerts range from \$25 to \$85 and are available online at <http://www.carnegiehall.org/>, by calling CarnegieCharge at 212-247-7800 or visiting the box office at 57<sup>th</sup> Street and 7th Avenue. Season subscriptions are also available.

For more information about these concerts, visit <http://www.ceciliachorusny.org/> or call 646-638-2535. CCNY Carnegie Hall concerts are ADA accessible. For MTA transportation information, visit [http://tripplanner.mta.info/MyTrip/ui\\_web/customplanner/TripPlanner.aspx](http://tripplanner.mta.info/MyTrip/ui_web/customplanner/TripPlanner.aspx).

The Cecilia Chorus of New York was founded in 1906 as The St. Cecilia Chorus. The Chorus was the 2015 winner of the Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award. Recent highlights include the New York premiere of *The Prison* by Dame Ethel Smyth, the U.S. premiere of Thierry Escaich's *Messe Romane*, and the World Premiere of The Brothers Balliett's *Oedipus the King*. The Chorus takes pride in offering hall and role debuts to talented young singers, recently including soprano Julia Bullock and baritone Ryan Speedo Green.

Music Director Mark Shapiro was appointed the seventh Music Director of The Cecilia Chorus of New York in 2011. He is one of a handful of artistic leaders in North America to have won a prestigious ASCAP Programming Award six times, achieving the unique distinction of winning such an award with three different ensembles. The *New York Times* has praised his work as "insightful" and has noted its "virtuosity and assurance," as well as its "uncommon polish." His bio is online at <http://www.ceciliachorusny.org/music-director-mark-shapiro/>.

For photos or press inquiries, please contact Jeffrey James Art Consulting at 516-586-3433 or [jamesarts@att.net](mailto:jamesarts@att.net).

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