

# MUSICA SACRA

PROFESSIONAL CHORAL MUSIC AT ITS FINEST  
RICHARD WESTENBURG, FOUNDER

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SCOTT LETHBRIDGE, PRESIDENT | JANICE L. MAYER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | KENT TRITLE, MUSIC DIRECTOR

## MUSICA SACRA LAUNCHES NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE PILOT PROGRAM WITH THE FAMILY CENTER AND TURTLE BAY MUSIC SCHOOL ANNOUNCED

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**New York, New York, October 3, 2013:** **Janice L. Mayer**, Musica Sacra's Executive Director, today announced a new community engagement program in partnership with two valued New York organizations: The Family Center and Turtle Bay Music School. The pilot program will be conducted in fall 2013.

Centered around Musica Sacra's annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, (December 12 and 15, 2013 at 8pm led by Kent Tritle), an innovative and interactive educational program has been developed by a community engagement task force comprising: Janice L. Mayer, Michael Sheetz and Silvia Callegari representing Musica Sacra; Julie Rulyak Steinberg, Executive Director of Turtle Bay Music School; Juan Carlos Payero, Buddy Program Coordinator, Camille Davis, a Mentor and member of The Family Center Leadership Council, and Mary Suk, a Teaching Artist in New York City Public Schools through New York City Ballet, Franklin Furnace Archive and Pentacle Dance.

In announcing the program, Ms. Mayer said, "Educating audiences, students and the general public in the appreciation and history of choral music has been an essential tenet of Musica Sacra's mission since its inception. In The Family Center and Turtle Bay Music School, we have found partners who bring real-time youth and music education expertise to the project and enable Musica Sacra's long-held commitment to be put into practice. We are very grateful to **Julie Rulyak Steinberg** of **Turtle Bay Music School** and **Juan Carlos Payero** of **The Family Center** for generously sharing their ideas and resources with us as we collaboratively developed and now launch Musica Sacra's youth program."

A one-hour introduction to Handel's *Messiah*, providing an historical context and musical insight into the choral masterwork, will be led by **Musica Sacra's Assistant Music Director, Michael Sheetz**. "An important part of our mission at Musica Sacra is to reach out to the community and cultivate the appreciation of great choral music. This is a fantastic program for young people to learn about *Messiah* and to see and hear this musical masterpiece live at one of the most renowned concert halls in the world," said Mr. Sheetz in speaking about the program.

Turtle Bay Music School will host the preparatory session on Saturday, December 7, 2013. Speaking for the school, Julie Rulyak Steinberg said, "Turtle Bay Music School is honored to collaborate with Musica Sacra and The Family Center to provide this enriching opportunity to young New Yorkers. We hope that it will inspire in each student a new-found appreciation for the beauty of choral music!"

Turtle Bay Music School students and Buddy Program teams from The Family Center will attend the workshop. All of the young participants and their chaperones will attend a Carnegie Hall performance of Handel's *Messiah* as guests of Musica Sacra. This season, Musica Sacra's *Messiah* performances at Carnegie Hall will take place on Thursday, December 12 and Sunday, December 15, 2013 at 8:00pm. Musica Sacra will build on this pilot program in future seasons by offering the introduction to the *Messiah* session to schools in the New York area, as well as to its collaborative organizations.

Juan Carlos Payero described the benefit for the Buddy Program participants: "The experience provided by Musica Sacra will expose the children in our program to music they may never have had an opportunity to hear. My hope is that this will plant a seed for a lifetime of education and exploration." Camille Davis added insight, "As a Mentor, it's always challenging to find activities to do with our mentees that are both engaging and affordable. It's nice to be able to mix up our usual 'lunch and a movie' with a live event in an iconic location as guests of Musica Sacra."

### **Group Sales**

To make tickets more accessible to youth groups, Musica Sacra has revamped its group sales program; lowering both the cost of student tickets and the required group size for group sales eligibility. Student tickets are priced as low as \$15 each and are eligible for a 15% discount when purchased as part of a group. A group is now defined as 15 or more people purchasing a block of tickets together. A free chaperone ticket is also provided for each student group. For information on the 15/15 group sales program, please contact Cindy Rhys, Patron and Ticket Services Manager, by telephone at 646.596.5049 or e-mail at [tickets@musicasacrany.com](mailto:tickets@musicasacrany.com).

### **Adult Education**

Adult education programs are scheduled in conjunction with Musica Sacra's offerings in the 2013-2014 season. New York University Professor Carol Herselle Krinsky will give a talk titled "Art and Architecture: From Romanesque Toward Tudor at St. John's" as a prelude to the Tudor Traverse program. The event will take place at the Chapel of St. James at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on Wednesday, October 23, 2013, beginning at 6:15pm (1047 Amsterdam Avenue at 112<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10025). The talk is free to performance ticket holders for the musical event featuring works by William Byrd, Thomas Weelkes and Orlando Gibbons.

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 at 6:30pm a free public discussion with composers Jocelyn Hagen and Meredith Monk, and Music Director Kent Tritle, will be moderated by Nancy Shear at The Bruno Walter Auditorium, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (111 Amsterdam Avenue at 65<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10023). The Composer Conversation is programmed in advance of Musica Sacra's concert on Monday, March 31, 2014 at 7:30pm at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. The New York premiere of Jocelyn Hagen's oratorio titled *amass*, as well as compositions by Meredith Monk, with Miss Monk and members of her ensemble participating, will be performed on the concert.

## **About the Partners:**

### **Musica Sacra**

Founded in 1964, Musica Sacra is the longest continuously performing professional chorus in New York City. Founded by Richard Westenburg, and now under the artistic leadership of Kent Tritle, the mission of Musica Sacra is to create definitive, professional choral performances of the highest caliber for the widest possible audience. It supports its mission by presenting concerts; recording, commissioning and performing new choral works; and educating audiences, students, and the general public in the appreciation and history of choral music.

Musica Sacra presents performances featuring a wide range of repertoire each year at prestigious venues throughout New York, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. "Presented with musical skill and stylistic insight," (*The New York Times*) the chorus and orchestra's annual performances of Handel's *Messiah* at Carnegie Hall are a New York holiday tradition. In addition, the Music Sacra Chorus is frequently invited to perform with such ensembles as the New York Philharmonic and Orchestra of St. Luke's, and in festival appearances throughout the region.

*Messages to Myself*, a new recording on the MSR Classics label, represents Musica Sacra's commitment to expanding the choral repertoire. Musica Sacra commissioned works by Daniel Brewbaker and Michael Gilbertson, and New York premieres by composers Zachary Patten, Behzad Ranjbaran and Christopher Theofanidis, may be heard on the collection of *a cappella* choral works. The 2012 release joins a growing discography that includes recordings on the BMG, RCA, and Deutsche Grammophon labels.

For more information, please visit: [www.musicasacrany.com](http://www.musicasacrany.com).

### **The Family Center**

The Family Center offers unique social and legal services, including health care and wellness programs, to New Yorkers struggling with a family crisis or loss. Our team combines a keen business sense with a personalized approach, partnering with these families to plan their next steps and long-term solutions. Our trademarks are at-home visits and coordinated support strategies. Many of our clients face a life-threatening illness of a parent or other primary caregiver. By staying with these families every step of the way, we build stability, trust, and sustainable results. Together, The Family Center works with constituents and client families to provide immediate care and ensure a secure future for parents and children.

The Buddy Program is a mentoring program for children age 6 to 16 impacted by parental absence or loss due to illness, crisis, incarceration or other destabilizing factors. This Family Center program provides a young person with support, guidance, and the opportunity to participate in enjoyable, growth-promoting activities with a mentor. Children benefit from developing a positive stable relationship with an adult mentor while enjoying recreational activities, outings and cultural events. For more information, please visit: [www.thefamilycenter.org](http://www.thefamilycenter.org)

## **Turtle Bay Music School**

Turtle Bay Music School (TBMS) strives to spread the transformative power of music by providing the highest quality music education and experiences to all in the community who seek them. TBMS reaches more than 5,000 New Yorkers each year. Our school community consists of nearly 1,000 children, teens, adults and seniors, 3,000 public school children and families from our partner schools, and all members of our neighborhood community, whom we welcome and encourage to attend our free concerts, workshops, and events. TBMS students range in age from 18 months to 90 years and come from throughout the five boroughs and the tri-state area. No student is ever turned away for lack of financial resources.

Founded in 1925, TBMS has grown from a small organization with a handful of students into a major community institution with a wide range of music programs. We offer year-round, weekly instruction in a wide range of instruments and voice, as well as a variety of group and ensemble classes. Our *Hear It Now!* concert series provides more than 50 free workshops, performances, recitals, and master classes, allowing students at any level to share their skills in appropriate settings.

In New York City, access to arts education is often beyond the financial means of lower-income New Yorkers. For over 20 years, TBMS has helped to fill this gap by providing music opportunities to students through Public School Partnerships with eight high-needs New York City schools; our Saturday Music Project offers tuition-free music education to motivated students and their families who might not otherwise have access to arts programs.

For more information, please visit: [www.tbms.org](http://www.tbms.org)

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