

Musica Sacra, directed by Kent Tritle, releases a vital recording of 21st-century choral music by Robert Paterson on the AMR label


Funded by an overwhelmingly successful Kickstarter Campaign with over 200 backers, the latest recording from New York's premiere professional choir, Musica Sacra, presents the delightfully eclectic choral music of New York-based composer Robert Paterson. *Eternal Reflections* will be released on March 4, with a concert at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City to celebrate the culmination of this inspiring collaboration.

Kent Tritle, the conductor *The New York Times* calls "the brightest star in New York's choral music world," and award-winning composer Robert Paterson, who met as neighbors in New York City, have engaged in a first-rate artistic collaboration on the newest recording from Tritle's venerable choir Musica Sacra. Recorded at New York's Academy of Arts and Letters and produced by Grammy®-winning producer Adam Abeshouse, the album features eight works by Paterson and will be released on March 4 under the American Modern Recordings label distributed by NAXOS.

The recording features the world premiere of *Lux Aeterna*, a deeply moving setting of the classic devotional text that will be performed live for the first time at St. John the Divine [1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York 10025] on March 4 at 7:30pm.

Tritle explained that "working on recording projects with living composers is essential to Musica Sacra's mission to expand and modernize the world of choral music." For Paterson's part, he says that having his works recorded by a group that *The New York Times* has described as "just this side of perfection" is "as good as it gets."

In addition to *Lux Aeterna*, the album features two works originally commissioned by the Volti Choir of San Francisco: *Eternal Reflections*, atmospheric settings of texts by Czeslaw Milosz, Mary E. Frye, and Paul Lawrence Dunbar; and the buoyant three-movement piece *The Essence of Gravity*. Also included are *A Dream within a Dream*, a fluid, bittersweet setting of a text by Edgar Allen Poe, and the wild international riff on "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" *Life is But A Dream*, both originally commissioned by the Chamber Choir of Europe. *The Suite from a New Earth*, an impassioned four-movement exploration of environmental issues and global warming for orchestra, chorus, and narrator written for the VYOA Choir, sets texts by Wendell Berry, James Joyce, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and William Wordsworth. Youthful concerns bubble up in a pair of pieces with texts by David Cote: *Did You Hear?*, which addresses the life of teens and the consequences of rumors and gossip; and *Snow Day*, which expresses the joy of having an unexpected day off.

Robert Paterson continues to gain attention in the U.S. and abroad for writing "vibrantly scored and well-crafted" music that "often seems to shimmer" (*NewMusicBox*). His works are praised for their elegance, wit, structural integrity, and a wonderful sense of color. Paterson was awarded The Composer of The Year at Carnegie Hall from the Classical Recording Foundation in 2011. Paterson's works have been performed by the Chamber Choir of Europe, Cincinnati Camerata, Volti, 

and Musica Sacra, as well as the Louisville Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Austin Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Albany Symphony and Vermont Symphony Orchestra. His awards include the Utah Arts Festival Commission, the Copland Award, ASCAP Young Composer Awards, and a three-year Music Alive! grant from the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA. Paterson gives masterclasses at numerous universities, most recently the Curtis Institute of Music, New York University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. His CDs continue to be nominated every season for the Grammy® ballot for Best Contemporary Classical Composition, and *Goddesses* was named the Top 10 favorite pieces of the year by NPR's Best Music of 2012. Paterson founded the American Modern Ensemble in 2005, which spotlights American music via lively thematic programming. He serves as artistic director as well as house composer, and he directs the affiliated label, American Modern Recordings, which is distributed via Naxos. Paterson is the newly appointed director of composition at the Atlantic Music Festival. <http://robertpaterson.com>

Now in his seventh season as Music Director of Musica Sacra, **KENT TRITLE** is one of America's leading choral conductors. Concurrently serving as Director of Cathedral Music and Organist of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and Music Director of the Oratorio Society of New York, Maestro Tritle was described as "the brightest star in New York's choral music world" by The New York Times.

A dedicated educator, Kent Tritle is Director of Choral Activities at the Manhattan School of Music and a member of the graduate faculty of The Juilliard School. He is co-chair of the New York Choral Consortium, an advocacy organization for the choral arts composed of more than 50 New York City-based groups.

Also an acclaimed organ virtuoso, he is the organist of the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra, and is in demand internationally as a recitalist. Audiences enjoy his radio show, "The Choral Mix with Kent Tritle," a weekly hour-long program on New York's Classical 105.9 WQXR and www.wqxr.org devoted to the vibrant genre of choral music and the breadth of activity in the choral community.

Kent Tritle has made more than a dozen recordings on the AMDG, Epiphany, Gothic, Telarc, VAI and MSR Classics labels. CDBaby.com has just made available his recent recording of Juraj Filas' Requiem, Oratio Spei with the Prague Symphony Orchestra, vocal soloists Ana María Martínez, Matthew Plenk, Filip Bandzak, and the Kühn Choir. The Requiem is dedicated to the victims of 9/11. www.kenttritle.com.

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, Musica Sacra presents performances each year at prestigious venues throughout New York, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. "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 Musica Sacra Chorus is frequently invited to perform with such ensembles as The New York Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke's, and by concert presenters throughout the region.

Musica Sacra has given the New York premieres of more than 25 choral works, of which twelve were world premieres. *Messages to Myself*, a new recording on the MSR Classics label, demonstrates Musica Sacra's commitment to expanding the choral repertoire. Musica Sacra commissioned works by Daniel Brewbaker and Michael Gilbertson, and gave New York premieres by composers Zachary Patten, Behzad Ranjbaran, and Christopher Theofanidis, which can be heard on this collection of a cappella choral works. This 2012 release joins a growing discography that includes recordings on the BMG, RCA, and Deutsche Grammophon labels.

Musica Sacra's community engagement initiative in partnership with The Family Center and Turtle Bay Music School reflects its dedication to educating students in the appreciation and history of choral music. In addition to this youth program, Musica Sacra presents informational sessions for its adult audience members to contextualize their concert experiences.

Musica Sacra is a member of the New York Choral Consortium and Chorus America. www.musicasacra.com.

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