



The Cathedral  
Church of **Saint John**  
**the Divine**

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**THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE PRESENTS  
U.S. PREMIERE OF ALAN SEEGER: INSTRUMENT OF DESTINY**



*Kent Tritle to conduct Patrick Zimmerli's WWI oratorio based on works by Alan Seeger*

(October XX, 2019 – *New York, NY*) – The Cathedral of St. John the Divine will present the first U.S. performance of Patrick Zimmerli's World War I oratorio *Alan Seeger: Instrument of Destiny* as part of its 2019-2020 season of Great Music in a Great Space on Wednesday, November 20 at 7:30 pm at the **Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112<sup>th</sup> Street), Manhattan.**

Kent Tritle, Director of Cathedral Music and Organist, conducts the Cathedral Choir, Orchestra, and soloists for this premiere performance. The libretto, by Mirabelle Ordinaire, is based upon diary entries, letters, and poems by Alan Seeger. Born on June 22, 1888, in New York City, Alan Seeger graduated from Harvard in 1910. After two years in the artistic milieu of New York's Greenwich Village, and two more years spent among the American expatriate bohemian circles in Paris, he volunteered in the French Army's Foreign Legion in August 1914. For the 26-year old idealist, fighting for the cause of freedom and dying in war was the highest destiny a human being could achieve.

During his two years of service in Champagne, on the Aisne, and in Alsace, he wrote some of his most beautiful poems, as well as letters and a journal, both detailed and lucid on the atrocities of the war, and passionately exalted regarding the ideals it defended. Seeger was killed in action during the first days of the Battle of the Somme, on July 4, 1916, America's Independence Day.

Conceived by French director Mirabelle Ordinaire, with music by American jazz/classical composer Patrick Zimmerli, the piece features a selection of Seeger's war poems set to music, as well as excerpts from his letters and diary entries. For this American premiere, American tenor Alex Richardson stars as Alan Seeger, along with the choir of the Cathedral Saint John the Divine, conducted by legendary Kent Tritle. The singers are accompanied by French rising-star jazz pianist Thomas Enhco and maverick percussionist David Rozenblatt.

This performance is presented in partnership with the Mission Centenaire, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, and the United States World War I Centennial Commission.

Tickets start at \$25. To purchase tickets and for more information, please visit:

<https://www.stjohndivine.org/calendar/29423/instrument-of-destiny>

### **SOLOISTS**

Alex Richardson, *tenor*

Thomas Enhco, *piano*

David Rozenblatt, *percussion*

### **PROGRAM**

Patrick Zimmerli

*Alan Seeger: Instrument of Destiny* (U.S. Premiere)

### **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. Concerts take place in many locations: the vast space of the Crossing, the more intimate setting of the Great Choir, and the exquisite Chapels of the Tongues. The beloved holiday traditions of the Christmas Concert and New Year's Eve Concert for Peace are an integral part of our concert series.

### **About Kent Tritle**

Kent Tritle is 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, the acclaimed 200-voice avocational chorus. 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

and the American Symphony Orchestra.

Among his recent honors are the 2017 Distinguished Achievement Award from Career Bridges and the 2016 President's Medal for Distinguished Service from the Manhattan School of Music. Kent is on the advisory boards of the Choral Composer/Conductor Collective (C4) and the Clarion Music Society, and was the 2016 honoree at Clarion's annual gala.

### **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. People from many faiths and communities worship together in services held more than 30 times a week; the soup kitchen serves roughly 25,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs; 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 a 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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