

**M** Manhattan  
School of Music

*A Memorial for  
Karen Ritscher*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2025 | 1 PM  
GORDON K. AND HARRIET GREENFIELD HALL

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# *A Memorial for Karen Ritscher*

PROGRAM

*Remarks*

**James Gandre**

*President, Manhattan School of Music*

*Remarks*

**David Ritscher**

*Karen's Brother*

*Remarks*

**Miranda Sielaff**

*Former student of Karen Ritscher*

FRANK BRIDGE

*Lament for two violas*

(1879–1941)

VIOLA I

**Hannah Levinson** (MM '12), Principal

**Abigail Rojansky**

**Shane Barker**

**Gregory K. Williams**

**Amelia Hollander Ames**

**Chi-Chi Bestman**

**Sara Dudley** (MM '22)

**Heidi Remick**

**Yen-Hsin Judy Chiang** (MM '23)

**Sophie Parker**

**Samuel Omalyev** ('20)

**Emily Schaad** (P '94)

**Alex McLaughlin**

**Chrysyn Harp**

**Ekaterina Eibozhenko** (BM '24, MM '26)

**Kate Lewis**

**Carrie Davids** (MM '16)

VIOLA II

**Kal Sugatski** (MM '12), Principal

**Sheila Browne** ('99), *Pre-College Faculty*

**Elizabeth Handman** (P '84)

**Miranda Sielaff**

**David Wallace**

**Corinne Ramey**

**Robert Meyer** (P '95)

**Elise Frawley** (BM '12)

**Mason Lee** (PC '26)

**Surai Balbeisi**, *Pre-College Faculty*

**Jordan Pak** (P '25)

**Alma Esser** (P '26)

**Margrét Hjaltested**

**Kerrick Sasaki**

**Laura Manko Sahin**

**Daphne Gerling**

**Lucy Chang** (P '25)

**Aidan Garrison** (P '17)

*Remarks*

**MaryBeth Thielheim**  
*5Rhythms Dance Community*

*Remarks*

**Boti Auster**  
*Karen's Goddaughter*

*Anna Auster*

**A video tribute to Karen**

*Remarks*

**Sheila Browne** ('99)  
*Former student of Karen Ritscher, Precollege Faculty*

JOHANNES BRAHMS  
(1833–1897)

Piano Quartet No. 3, Op. 60  
III. *Andante*

**Chloe Kiffer** (MM '14, PS '15), violin, *College Faculty*  
**Sheila Browne** ('99), viola, *Precollege Faculty*  
**Tommy Mesa** (DMA '23), cello, *College Faculty*  
**Alexandre Moutouzkine** (MM '03, PS '05, AD '06),  
*Piano Dept. Co-Chair*

*Remarks*

**Joyce Griggs**  
*Executive Vice President and Provost*

JOHN NEWTON  
(1725–1807)

*Amazing Grace*  
**Diane Monroe**, violin

# WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

Karen Ritscher was a beloved friend and member of the MSM community. Serving on the MSM college and precollege faculty, Karen was a gifted violist and a sought-after pedagogue. Her performance career included principal positions in orchestras, opera houses, and ballet companies across the United States as well as appearances as soloist with orchestra. Her chamber work championed living women composers and she frequently collaborated with therapeutic outreach programs for Alzheimer's and dementia patients.

Karen's pedagogical reach included serving on the faculties at Manhattan School of Music, New York University, Boston University, Rice University, the Mannes College of Music, Oberlin Conservatory, and the Eastman School of Music. Her expertise on player physicality, movement, and self-expression earned international acclaim. Karen was deeply committed to the importance of music education and the nurturing of young musicians. Tributes from several members of MSM's community follow below.

I had the privilege of knowing Karen for many years, dating back to my first era at MSM, and was delighted to reconnect with her when I returned to the School as President in 2013. She was a major talent and a dedicated teacher, and all of us in the Community are feeling this great loss to the world of music and pedagogy. She is gone far too soon and will be missed by us all.

**James Gandre**, *President of Manhattan School of Music*

My awareness of Karen's legacy as a teaching artist began decades before my arrival at MSM. Having served as Provost here since 2018, I have had the opportunity to observe the impact of Karen's pedagogy and listen to many of Karen's students speak about her approach to mentoring and teaching them. Karen made them feel special, inspired, and nurtured, not just in music, but in navigating their life journey and transitioning from student to professional. The richness of Karen's dedication to our MSM alums and students never waned. We are grateful she chose MSM as her teaching home and value her passion and dedication to the craft of performance and collaboration.

**Joyce Griggs**, *Executive Vice President & Provost*

Karen was a talented and dedicated teacher, beloved by her students and her colleagues. Her warmth, caring and commitment will be deeply missed by all of us.

**Nicholas Mann**, *Chair of Strings*