

Carnegie Hall Debut Thrills New York City Bar Association

BY SUSAN DESANTIS

YOU WALK Through the Carnegie Hall stage door. You pass the photos of the legends who came before you: Leonard Bernstein, Duke Ellington and Lena Horne to name a few. And when you ascend to the stage and get a glimpse of those plush red seats, you gasp.

“You realize you’re walking through a living museum of musical excellence,” said Kathryn Schneider, who conducted the New York City Bar Chorus in its Carnegie Hall debut and has been with the group for most of its 26-year history.

The Oct. 14 appearance was part of the National Fall Sing Remembering 9/11 program, and the chorus was chosen because of its integral link with the terrorist attacks. Two of its members escaped from the World Trade Center, and in the months that followed, the chorus visited firehouses with heavy casualties to sing to the survivors.

“It was just such a thrill to be part of a group that went to people who



NEW YORK City Bar Chorus on the stage at Carnegie Hall during the dress rehearsal for its Oct. 14 performance.

needed that moment of lightness and music,” said Maryanne Braverman, who worked on the administrative side at four law firms and sang with the chorus for most of its history.

She was in the south tower on Sept. 11 when she saw the fireball. The initial advice was to remain in place but that didn’t feel right to Braverman. So she urged the law firm employees to get out of the tower, and they didn’t need much convincing. She is now a volunteer docent at The National September 11 Memorial & Museum, which pays tribute to the 2,977 killed that day

Listen to snippets of the New York City Bar Chorus performing:

and the six killed during the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

At Carnegie Hall, the 83 members of the chorus who performed—all legal professionals—sang their familiar repertoire. The set list explores themes of transition, grief, reconciliation and healing, the group said in its program notes.

The chorus, accompanied by pianist Beatrice Söderberg, start-

ed with “Golden Slumbers”/”Carry That Weight” from John Lennon and Paul McCartney, then launched into “Somewhere” from West Side Story before bursting into “Make Them Hear You” from Ragtime. Its next rendition was of Coldplay’s “Fix You,” which gained resonance as a tribute to the 2005 London bombing victims. The chorus finished its performance with “You Will Be Found” from the play “Dear Evan Hansen.”

A high school honor choir also performed and two survivors recounted their experiences.

The mission of the New York City Bar Chorus is to boost the reputation of legal professionals and help its 102 members lead healthier lives. Singing elevates endorphins and lowers stress and anxiety.

“It’s beautiful to watch law firm partners talking to support staff and nobody cares what your day job is. It’s really a great meeting point for people and a healthy one, too,” Schneider said.

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CONDUCTOR **Kathryn Schneider** leads the dress rehearsal.



FROM LEFT, chorus members **Stephanie Melzi**; **Adrienne Reina**, flute; and **Diane Temkin**, clarinet, warm up backstage before the performance.



NEW YORK City Bar Chorus members



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