

## Endurance of Hope



## Shining a light with Music that Matters



2020-2021 Annual Report

Mina Miller, President & Artistic Director

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## MUSIC OF remembrance®

ensuring that the voices of musical witness be heard<sup>®</sup>

#### **Mission**

MUSIC OF REMEMBRANCE FILLS A UNIQUE ROLE throughout the world by remembering the Holocaust through music. With concert performances, educational programs, recordings, and commissions of new works by some of today's leading composers, MOR honors those of all backgrounds who found the strength to create even in the face of suffering, and those who had the courage to speak out against cruelty. We tell stories that communicate urgent lessons for today, and we look beyond the Holocaust itself to the experience of others who have been excluded or persecuted for their faith, ethnicity, gender or sexuality.

#### The Sostenuto Society

**Preserve** a precious cultural legacy • **Create** new music through commissions **Educate** our children and grandchildren

Since its inception in 2002, the Sostenuto\* Society has formed the core of MOR's fiscal stability. The Sostenuto Society welcomes as members those farsighted and generous donors who make a three-year gift commitment to Music of Remembrance. Through their dedication to MOR's mission, Sostenuto Society members provide sustained support for MOR programming. This enables us to plan and undertake long-range projects such as the commission of new works by some of today's most important composers, our educational programs, and special initiatives like our documentary film *The Boys of Terezín*.

#### 2020–21 Season

Crescendo (\$7,500 and above)

Susan Shanbrom-Krabbe & Morris Krabbe Powell Family Foundation –

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Sostenuto Platinum (\$5.000 to \$7.499)

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MOR gives a voice to the voiceless. It tells stories for those who could not tell their own story and right now we're living in times of division, sadness and so much isolation. Music is the one thing that heals. It makes us whole. It brings us together. Music of Remembrance inspires us. It unites us and it heals us as a community and as a world one concert at a time. – Mezzo soprano Catherine Cook

UR JOURNEY CONTINUES. This has been yet another year of change and uncertainty, and I take great pride in how Music of Remembrance has navigated through these challenging times. When audiences couldn't come to us, we brought music to them at home with a full season of all-new online concerts, along with outreach programs like our continuing INSIGHTS series of online conversations with artists and composers.

At a time when the pandemic has set us on a voyage that none of us could have expected, a connecting theme of our season was one of journeys – journeys in search of safety and freedom, of identity, of hope in the face of daunting odds, and odysseys to new lives in new lands. Our online concerts featured the world premieres of two MOR commissions – Sahba Aminikia's Stormy Seas, with its inspiring true stories of five child boat refugees, and Eric Hachikian's Return to Amasia, a haunting musical and visual recollection of the Armenian genocide a century ago. We performed the Pacific Northwest premiere of Polina Nazaykinskaya's Haim, an eloquent musical tribute to David Arben, whose odyssey brought him to a new home and a distinguished musical career in America after he survived seven concentration and labor camps as a young boy. In Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's Intonations: Stories from the Violins of Hope, instruments that once belonged to Jews who played them before and during the Holocaust come back to sing again, telling us their own journeys and those of their owners.

As we approach the start of our 25th season less than a year from now, MOR is about to reach an important milestone in our own journey. Our current season combines music that preserves historical memory with new works that draw on those lessons to address urgent questions for today. In May 2022 we'll present the world premiere of *Tres Minutos*, an opera we've commissioned about the story of a family and the border that separates them. Even as we reemerge at last to the live stage, we'll continue to offer virtual programs. These streamed concerts are essential not only for keeping in touch with people who hesitate or are unable to attend public events, but also reach audiences around the world. And by creating this virtual content we're building a permanent legacy where the music and the message endure after the last note is played on the stage.

For all of this I'm deeply grateful to our extraordinary artists, to our talented staff and production crew, and to our dedicated board members. But most of all I'm grateful to you, our loyal friends and generous supporters who've come along with us on this continuing journey.

MOR is on the cutting edge here in Seattle and around the world of producing really great music, really great productions, really important productions. It's one of the few groups that is really plowing forward during Covid to make all of this happen. - Erich Parce, baritone/director

I've been part of Music of Remembrance since the very first concert, and have never been so proud to be part of MOR as in the almost two years during the pandemic. – Violinist Mikhail Shmidt

The breadth of timeless and contemporary themes addressed includes religious intolerance, the worldwide refugee crisis, the urgency of preventing nuclear war, and the separation of families at our border. MOR tells stories that absolutely must be heard! - Composer Jake Heggie





## **Telling Stories of Courage**

Because of the violin, I was the only one that came out alive from 105 people who were shot to death or buried alive. – David Arben

#### Haim: A Story of Hope and Perseverance

COMPOSER POLINA NAZAYKINSKAYA'S *Haim* (Life) is an eloquent musical tribute to David Arben, a survivor of three concentration and four labor camps who as a



young boy was saved by his violin when he was pulled from a crowd of 105 prisoners waiting to be shot or buried alive by the SS. After the war he came to America, penniless and barely speaking a word

Arben playing violin after liberation with soldiers in Germany of English. Eventually he joined the Philadelphia Orchestra for 34 years, more than a dozen as Associate Concertmaster. We were honored to perform the Pacific Northwest premiere



of this powerful work in our November 2020 concert To Life.

Haim represents the grit and grace of survival, an extraordinary perseverance in the face of unimaginable circumstances. Imagine a boy, scared and hungry, holding on to his life with his violin in hand desperately playing the music he so loved and not knowing if this will be the last time. And after all the nightmares, a new hope for a better life.

– Composer Polina Nazaykinskaya



"Music is Life. Music is Hope. Music is Peace." – David Arben

Online performance of Haim

# Rodas Recordada An inspiring musical creation by Sid Robinovitch

#### Honoring a Precious Heritage A musical tribute to Ladino heritage

Rodas Recordada is composer Sid Robinovitch's haunting remembrance of the Sephardic community on the Aegean island of Rhodes and its fate under Nazi occupation. It also reveals a surprising connection to Seattle. On the same program we performed Robinovitch's arrangement of two traditional Ladino songs.

Special thanks to our production sponsor: Isaac Alhadeff Foundation

## **Keeping History Alive**

A profound meditation on memory

**D**OR YEARS WE'VE BEEN BLESSED by our opportunities to

remains too little known and too rarely discussed. We

**L** collaborate with Jake Heggie, considered by many the most important living American opera composer. We'd long planned a special double bill of works by Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer. When the pandemic forced us to cancel those concerts in Seattle and San Francisco we decided instead to produce a cinema-quality video to share with the world. For a Look or a Touch was the first musical work to explore the Nazi persecution of gay people, a topic that



Performing this role reminded me that the human connection only stays alive if we remember. If we force it away it stays away, but if we allow it in it makes so much space for life and joy and love, and I think that's what my character finds in For a Look or a Touch: that there is life after the loss. There is a beginning after such an extraordinary end for so many people. – Actor Curt Branom

commissioned and premiered this intimate musical drama in 2007. and since then it's traveled the world. It was inspired by the true story of Gad Beck and Manfred Lewin, two idealistic young men in Berlin whose lives and love were shattered under Nazi rule. Our new production, conceived and directed by Erich Parce, showcased inspiring performances by the versatile actor Curt Branom and rising star baritone Jarrett Ott.

While For a Look or a Touch is a story about the love between two men, it touches everyone's heart — gay or straight. It's also a profound meditation on memory itself, and on the struggle we face in confronting the ghosts of our own pasts.

Intonations: Songs from the Violins of Hope is a dramatic song cycle inspired by the Violins of Hope, a private collection of string instruments that once belonged to Jews who played them before and during the Holocaust. The instruments have been lovingly preserved by father and son Israeli violin makers Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein. In March 2020, just before the pandemic shuttered our concert stage, we had the privilege of



Intonations ensemble

bringing a quartet of these instruments to Seattle for two concerts of works by murdered composers. In *Intonations,* Heggie's music and Scheer's words give the violins life again as they tell their own stories and those of their owners. Our production featured Metropolitan Opera mezzo soprano Laura Krumm. Our stellar ensemble was led by violin soloist Mikhail Shmidt and joined in a stirring finale by violinist Zoe Lonsinger, our 2019 David Tonkonogui Memoral Award recipient.

The songs relate the extraordinary voyages of the violins and their owners. The violins bore witness to heartbreak and horrible atrocity, and yet they represent belief in a future where music, life and beauty endure. Each of the instruments has its own story to tell, but together they call out to us: "WE WERE PLAYED BY PROUD PEOPLE."

Special thanks to our production sponsors: Stephen & Diane Heiman, Gordon Getty and Diane B. Wilsey

## **Telling Stories for Today's World**

#### **Stormy Seas**

IN DECEMBER 2020 we streamed Stormy Seas, our second digital concert of the season. It featured a very special world premiere that gave this concert its title. *Stormy Seas* is a viscerally gripping work that we commissioned from composer Sahba Aminikia. Aminikia is also a performer and educator with a deep personal commitment to human rights causes. He is the founder and artistic director of the Flying Carpet Festival, a performing arts festival for children in war zones and refugee centers.

For *Stormy Seas*, Aminkia drew on a beautiful book by Mary Beth Leatherdale and Eleanor Shakespeare to tell



five true stories about young people who braved hazardous waters in search of safe harbors



and new lives: Ruth (age 13) from Nazi Germany; José (age 13) from communist Cuba; Phu (age 14) from wartorn Vietnam; Najeeba (age 11) from Taliban-dominated Afghanistan; Mohammed (age 13) from an orphanage in Ivory Coast. The work is a testament to hope and courage, an appeal to our shared humanity. Its message speaks to our hearts at this moment.

MOR's commission of *Stormy Seas* was supported by a generous gift from Marcus Meier.

Based on *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees* (copyright 2017 Mary Beth Leatherdale [text] and Eleanor Shakespeare (illustrator) published by Annick Press Ltd.

This piece has a special place in my heart. It tells the stories of young children who experienced being stateless and lingered on boats in international waters in hope of a new home. These stories are real and they're all gathered from actual children who experienced these horrific conditions. But the majority of them found beauty, inspiration and hope in this condition and later on they lived a free life. The piece is a reminder for all of us to remember where we all came.

-Composer Sahba Aminikia

## Keeping Memories Alive

MUSIC OF REMEMBRANCE SHINES A LIGHT ON THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE





Eric Hachikian

IN ANOTHER NEW MOR COMMISSION that we unveiled, composer Eric Hachikian's *Return* to Amasia explores the Armenian genocide a century ago in a deeply personal way. During and after World War I, about one and

a half million ethnic Armenians in Turkey and adjacent regions were systematically murdered or expelled by the Ottoman authorities. Hachikian is the grandson of survivors from that genocide, and the work is an evocative musical and visual account of his own journey to that city in search of his roots. We premiered this compelling work in the online concert that we streamed in February and March 2021.



## **Keeping Voices Alive**

#### Music of Six Murdered Composers Highlights MOR's Annual Art From Ashes Concert

Continuing our annual tradition of honoring the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, we streamed a chamber music program showcasing six remarkable works by murdered composers from across Nazi-controlled Europe: Prague-born **Erwin Schulhoff** was an audaciously original musical presence between the world wars. **David Beigelman** was a leading figure in Poland's once-thriving Yiddish theater. **Hans Krása** will always be remembered as the composer of *Brundibár*, the opera performed 55 times by casts of child prisoners in Terezín. Dutch composer **Dick Kattenburg**, only ten years older than Anne Frank, spent the war years in hiding before his betrayal and arrest. **László Weiner** and **Paul Hermann** were shaped by Budapest's musical world of Bartók and Kodály. The program's rarely performed works of stunning beauty are new to the MOR stage, some with unpublished scores that we made special arrangements to use. Although their composers perished, the works remain as a testament to courage and resilience in a time of horror. They tell stories that resonate today as strongly as ever.

"These composers continued to create even in the face of unfathomable persecution. We'll never know what they might have accomplished in longer lives and in a normal world." – Mina Miller

**David Beigelman** was born to a musical family in Lodz, Poland, and became an accomplished violinist, conductor and composer. Active in Yiddish theater from an early age, he became director of the Lodz Yiddish Theater in 1912 at the age of 25. Beigelman was forced into the Lodz



ghetto in 1940 and deported to Auschwitz in 1944, where he perished the following year.



**Paul Hermann**'s life and career were always shadowed by the anti-Semitism sweeping across Europe. With doors closing to him under Hungary's fascist regime he left his native Budapest for Berlin in the 1920s, and when the Nazis came to power he moved to the

Netherlands and then in 1937 to Paris. With the German occupation of France he found shelter with friends in a small town in the Vichy zone. Craving a musical life, though, he took an apartment in Toulouse, using false papers and an assumed identity. But he was caught in a street raid in April 1944 and sent to the Drancy transit camp near Paris. A month later Hermann's name appeared on a transport list to Auschwitz that continued on to Lithuania. He was never heard from again.

**Dick Kattenburg** barely had a chance to experience life as an adult before the German occupation of Amsterdam shattered the world he knew. Kattenburg spent the war years in hiding until his betrayal and arrest. He was deported to



the Westerbork transit camp and then Auschwitz, where he likely was murdered on a death march. Kattenburg, who died at the age of 24, never heard most of his music performed.

Hans Krása is probably best known as the composer of *Brundibár*, the inspiring children's opera performed 55 times by children in Terezín. He was imprisoned in Terezín for 26 months before being sent to his death in Auschwitz.





**Erwin Schulhoff**, a composer and pianist, was an audaciously original voice whose fascinating career was brought to an abrupt end. An iconoclastic composer, he saw the performance of his music banned as "degenerate" during the early days of the Reich; as a Jew and a socialist, he was marked for personal destruction. He died

of tuberculosis in the Wülzburg concentration camp in Bavaria.

László Weiner was a composition student of Zoltan Kodály, and also studied piano and conducting at the Budapest Academy of Music. After the enactment of laws that restricted appearances by Jewish musicians, Weiner was one of Hungary's Jewish musical artists who performed at events



presented by OMIKE. Weiner was deported in 1943 to the Lukov forced labor camp in Slovakia and murdered there the following year.

### **Bringing New Generations Along**

Our HOPES REST ON BRINGING NEW GENERATIONS along on a journey that eventually will be theirs to lead. With our David Tonkonogui Memorial Award for Young Artists, we've helped nurture the education and careers of young musicians committed to using their art to advance human rights and social justice. Our 2020 recipient, the gifted **13-year old flautist** Julin Cheung, joined our Art From Ashes concert to perform a work by murdered Dutch composer Dick Kattenburg. And our 2019 recipient, **violinist Zoe Lonsinger**, returned as a soloist in Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *Intonations: Songs from the Violins of Hope*. Soon you'll meet our next recipients: **cellist Leyna Kitahama** and **violinist Tokuji Miyasaka**, both 14.



Julin Cheung



I feel it's made me think more about who I am, what my music means to me. The part I played was about hope, a prayer for peace, a prayer for people who are struggling.

– violinist Zoe Lonsinger

Sometimes it's only later that we learn how we've touched the lives of young people. During the early days of the pandemic lockdown, we received these words from a young man who'd performed with us in the Northwest Boychoir years earlier.

Zoe Lonsinger

"I just wanted to write to thank you all for the gift of performing through your organization . . . I had the honor of performing Vedem with the Northwest Boychoir and I count it as a formative experience in my life. Thank you for telling the stories you do, and I hope that your organization is able to navigate this difficult time." – William Murray

#### Special Thanks To Our 23<sup>rd</sup> Season Concert Sponsor

THE POWELL FAMILY FOUNDATION - Nancy E. Powell Division

	Dear Music of Remembrance,
	Lear music warted to curite to thent you I just warted to curite to through your
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## **Artists Fund**

I cannot express what an important role this organization and this music and these concerts played for me, not just as a musician but as a human being. It enriched my life enormously.

- Mikhail Shmidt

USIC OF REMEMBRANCE OWES ITS ACHIEVEMENTS TO MANY PEOPLE, but most of all L to the extraordinary performers who bring our music to life at every concert. The unrivaled artistry of our stellar core ensemble and world-class guest artists is matched by their loyal dedication to our mission. It's a unique musical family, and through our Artists Fund you can become an intimate part of it. Last year, James and Sherry Raisbeck set an inspiring example by sponsoring a Principal Artist Chair named in their honor and held by the amazing violinist Mikhail Shmidt. We offer many levels of artist sponsorship, and all of them enable you to take an active part in bringing these incomparable talents to the MOR stage. For more information, call us at (206) 365-7770 or write to us at info@musicofremembrance.org.

#### Sincere Thanks to our 2020-2021 Artist Sponsors



James and Sherry Raisbeck, Principal Artist Chair for Mikhail Shmidt, violin

Joan Sandler, sponsorship of Susan Gulkis Assadi, viola 2021-2022 season

Donna Benaroya, sponsorship of Susan Gulkis Assadi, viola, May 2021 concert

Bernice Lindstrom, sponsorship of Laura Krumm, mezzo soprano, May 2021 concert



# cesy Ben VanHouten

HEN THE PANDEMIC shuttered inperson performances in early 2020, we focused immediately on acquiring the skills and the tools to build an online presence that would reach audiences everywhere with online concerts and outreach programs that could speak to the realities

of the changing world we all inhabited. Our 2020-21 season of all-new virtual concerts included two world premieres, and our annual Art From Ashes concert marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We produced and

streamed cinema-quality video productions of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's For a Look or a Touch and their Intonations: Songs from the Violins of Hope. We continued









Haim

by Polina Nazavkinskava



to bring audiences behind the scenes with our INSIGHTS series of online conversations with composers, performers and musical scholars.

Even as we make a longawaited return to live performances, these online programs remain important and we plan to

continue them. They're a way of staying in touch with audience members who might remain reluctant to attend inperson concerts. More than that, they're also a way of reaching people around the

country and the world with our music and our message. They also offer an opportunity to build a library of digital content as part of an enduring legacy.

**Telling Our Story Today — For Tomorrow** 

#### **New Commissions Fund**

Over the years Music of Remembrance has brought forth nearly 40 new musical works that have made a difference in the world. Recently we premiered Sahba Aminikia's *Stormy Seas*, five true stories of young refugees setting sail in search of safe shores; and *Return to Amasia*, composer Eric Hachikian's intimate account of his own journey in search of his roots in the Armenian genocide a century ago. In May 2022 we'll premiere *Tres Minutos* by Nicolas Nell Benavides: the story of a family separated by a border, and their struggle with questions of identity and belonging.

MOR might be a small organization, but our commissioning program is unique in the world. Introducing pathbreaking works like these is an

Tres Minutos is coming at such an important time in our country — a time when we have a refugee crisis at our southern border and we have the choice to make it better or make it worse. – Nicolas Lell Benavides, composer Music of Remembrance has been central and essential to my creative life as a composer for the past 15 years.

#### - Jake Heggie, composer

immense undertaking, however. Major new works can cost \$25,000 to \$50,000 or even more to commission and produce. MOR's **New Commissions Fund** provides the indispensable foundation that this artistic commitment requires. Your donation of any size to the New Commissions Fund will help us continue making a difference with inspiring and meaningful new musical creations.

It's not just music for stories that need to be remembered. It's about music that is going to be remembered going forward. I admire Music of Remembrance for branching out and for including stories that are very much contemporary and are affecting people today. – José Rubio, baritone

### **MOR Commissions**

Nicolas Lell Benavides, Tres Minutos 2022

Eric Hachikian, Return to Amasia 2021

Sahba Aminikia, **Stormy Seas** 2020

Lori Laitman, **Gingko Biloba** 2020

Tom Cipullo, **The Ginkgoes of Hiroshima** 2020

Jake Heggie, *Farewell, Auschwitz* 2020 arrangement for child voices

Shinji Eshima, *Veritas* with media design by Kate Duhamel of Al Farrow's sculptures 2019

Tom Cipullo, The Parting 2019

Ryuichi Sakamoto, Passage 2018

Christophe Chagnard, Gaman 2018

Keiko Fujiie, Wilderness Mute 2017

Ryuichi Sakamoto, Snow Falls 2017

Mary Kouyoumdjian, **to open myself, to scream** with visual design by Kevork Mourad 2017

Olivier Wevers, choreography to Osvaldo Golijov's **Lullaby and Doina** 2017

Jake Heggie, Out of Darkness 2016

Olivier Wevers, choreography to Bohuslav Martinů's **La Revue de Cuisine** 2015

Tom Cipullo, After Life 2015

Donald Bryd, choreography to Arnold Schoenberg's **Transfigured Night** 2014

Donald Byrd, choreography to Dick Kattenburg's **Tap Dance** 2014

Alicia Svigals, *The Yellow Ticket* 2014 (expanded instrumentation)

Lori Laitman, In Sleep The World Is Yours 2013

Pat Hon, **Destination Unknown,** choreography to Betty Olivero's **Zeks Yiddishe Lider Un Tantz** 2013

Jake Heggie, Farewell, Auschwitz 2013

Jake Heggie, For a Look or a Touch (song cycle) 2013

Jake Heggie, Another Sunrise 2012

Betty Olivero, Kolo't 2011

The Dybbuk Suite 2010

Lori Laitman, **Vedem** (song cycle) 2011 Donald Byrd, choreography to Joel Engel's

Lori Laitman, **Vedem** (oratorio) 2010

Donald Byrd, choreography to Franz Schreker's **The Wind** 2009

Aharon Harlap, *Pictures from the Private Collection of God* 2009 (arrangement)

Paul Schoenfield, Ghetto Songs 2008

David Stock, *Mayn Shvester Chaya* 2008 (arrangement)

Gerard Schwarz, Rudolf and Jeanette 2007

Jake Heggie, For a Look or a Touch 2007

Gerard Schwarz, In Memoriam 2005

Lori Laitman, The Seed of Dream 2004

Thomas Pasatieri, Letter to Warsaw 2003

Paul Schoenfield, Camp Songs 2002

David Stock, A Vanished World 1999

Fiscal Year 2020-21 in	In 2020-2021 MOR received	
Individual Donations	\$230,552	contributions from •
Foundations & government grants	\$169,650	240 individual donors
Earned Revenue	\$24,154	• Living in 16 states
Total Revenues	\$424,356	Living in 16 states and 6 countries
Total Expenses	\$343,394	
End of year cash position	\$537,424	52 first-time donors

MOR's story is more than the sum-total of musical works and composers over time. It's a story of the people who have been part of this journey and made it possible. To all of you, we extend the deepest gratitude.

#### 2020 – 2021 Season (September 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021)

#### Cornerstone

(\$25,000 & over) Anne & Gordon Getty Foundation Powell Family Foundation – Nancy E. Powell Division Ululani Foundation Diane B. Wilsey

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\*In blessed memory



## MOR at Your Home!

## **Art From Ashes**

Commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Available for streaming starting Sunday, January 23, 2022

# Injustice

Available for streaming starting Sunday, February 20, 2022

Featuring songs by Black American composer Margaret Bonds; Kurt Weill songs of anti-Nazi satire and anti-apartheid protest; and Portuguese composer Luis Tinoco's recent work Aleppo honoring the perseverance of that besieged city's inhabitants.

## FREE TO THE COMMUNITY

Showcasing the works by murdered composers from across Nazi-controlled Europe who dared to create even in the face of unfathomable persecution. We honor the precious legacy of their courage.

## MOR on the live stage!

## **Stormy Seas**

Illsley Ball Nordstrom Recital Hall, Benaroya Hall March 13, 2022

Journeys of hope. Journeys in search of freedom. Inspiring portraits of child boat refugees.



Also **Rodas Recordada** by **Sid Robinovitch** recalls the island of Rhodes' once-thriving Sephardic Jewish community and reveals a surprising connection with Seattle. Plus a pair of haunting songs based on Ladino poems, and music by three Dutch composers touched by the Holocaust.

## **Tres Minutos**

Sunday, May 15, 2022 (Benaroya Hall, Seattle) Sunday, May 22, 2022 (Presidio Theatre, San Francisco)



Music by Nicolas Lell Benavides Libretto by Marella Martin Koch World Premiere Commissioned by Music of Remembrance

#### Hear their story: a family separated by a border

Vanessa Isiguen, soprano José Rubio, baritone Brendan Touhey, tenor Directed by Erich Parce

## Tickets:www.musicofremembrance.org