TIMELESS

OUR THIRD DECADE CONTINUES with Music that Matters

2019-2020 Annual Report
Music of Remembrance®

ensuring that the voices of musical witness be heard

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 Terezin.

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MOR’s mission to remember the Holocaust through music is by no means limited to a focus on the past. MOR has actually proved to be ahead of its time in grappling with issues of social justice and persecution.

– Thomas May, Memeteria
WE'RE ON A JOURNEY THAT NONE OF US EXPECTED. Before the pandemic brought the world to a stop, MOR had already performed three impactful mainstage concerts in its 2019-2020 season. The November 2019 program unveiled two pathbreaking world premieres that confront intolerance in our own time. On January 27, 2020, we joined the world in marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. And in March we presented a special concert performed on instruments from the Violins of Hope collection. Only days later, the pandemic shuttered stages everywhere for the rest of the year and beyond.

Nothing can compare to the experience of sharing live performances together, and we’re eagerly waiting for the day when we can do that in a way that’s safe for our audience members, performers and staff. But in the meantime, we’ve not wavered in our mission of making a difference through music — a mission that resonates with particular meaning now in our troubled time. Almost immediately after the pandemic’s onset, we began adapting how we deliver our mission and our work to the world.

We set for ourselves two big goals — to continue performing for the sake of our audience and artists, and to ensure that our works and performances will last long after the lockdowns end. Through the spring and summer, we curated and streamed a series of 16 weekly free programs that included musical selections, documentary films, webinars, and meet-the-artist conversations with performers and composers.

Drawing on expert professional guidance, we also used this time to develop and begin producing a full 2020-2021 season of five all-new online concerts. They feature the world premieres of new commissions like Sahba Aminikia’s Stormy Seas, about the true stories of child boat refugees, and Eric Hachikian’s Return to Amasia, reflecting on the Armenian genocide. We’ll also produce a compelling online production of the double bill of Holocaust-inspired works by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer — Intonations and For a Look or a Touch — that the pandemic forced us to cancel in May 2020.

Eager as we are to return to the live stage, the mastery of this new digital world gives us an opportunity to reach new audiences, and to create a permanent legacy of digital content that remains available to people everywhere. We have established an Online Performances Fund to help us build on this impressive beginning. It joins our newly-established Artists Fund and New Commissions Fund to round out these efforts.

This has been a truly difficult time for everyone, and especially for our performers whose careers and livelihoods have been thrown into turmoil. MOR is what it is because of our amazing artists, and we take pride in making it a priority to provide them with every opportunity we can.

So yes, we’re on a journey, and traveling it together with you means so much. All of us miss the intimacy and emotional connection of experiencing live music together. But sharing music, however we can, matters even more now as we struggle to help one another through these uncertain times. We hope that you’ll find special meaning in our programs this season with their messages of strength and perseverance for our troubled moment.

**Holocaust-era composers performed in our 2019-2020 season**

- **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.

- **Robert Dauber** experienced the war years as a prisoner in Terezín before deportation to Dachau, where he succumbed to typhus. A talented pianist and cellist, he played the cello in the Terezín orchestra, including performances of Brundibár. The Serenata for violin is his only surviving composition.

- **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.

- **Gideon Klein**, a young composer and pianist at the threshold of a promising career, was deported to Terezín in late 1941. Besides continuing to perform and compose, he became an avid educator and devoted himself to the teaching of Terezín’s orphans. Klein was deported to Auschwitz and then the Fürstengrube camp, where he perished.

- **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** was an audaciously original voice whose career was brought to an abrupt end in a Nazi labor camp. An avant-garde 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.

- **Sándor Vándor** is often remembered for the illustrious Budapest choir that he led for eight years and now bears his name, but he also had a broader influence in Hungary’s musical life between the world wars as a conductor and composer. Vándor was sent by Hungarian Nazis to his death in a forced labor camp. At the time he was working on his second opera, which was never finished.

- **Mieczyslaw Weinberg** bears the unfortunate distinction of persecution at both Nazi and Soviet hands. He fled eastward from Warsaw after the German invasion of Poland to the Soviet Union. His parents and sister stayed behind and were imprisoned in the Lodz ghetto before perishing in the Trawniki concentration camp. Dmitri Shostakovich arranged an invitation in 1943 for Weinberg to move to Moscow, where he remained for the rest of his life. After the war, Weinberg fell prey to Stalin’s renewed wave of anti-Semitic purges, but he still maintained a remarkable career for five decades.
Confronting Intolerance

In two timely world premieres, MOR confronts the threats today of religious hatred and fear of the stranger.

It's not enough to tell Holocaust stories if we see them only as reminders of a tragic past. We honor the Holocaust's lessons by also looking at the experience of other people whose fundamental rights have been threatened because of who they are or what they believe. And, most of all, we honor those lessons by recognizing their urgency in our own world. On November 3, 2019 MOR opened its 22nd concert season with two pathbreaking world premieres confronting intolerance in our own time.

“When we think about human history, we see countless tragedy. But as long as we live, we can’t forget each of these tragedies. It is very important to pass on this lesson to the next generation.”

– Ryuichi Sakamoto

Passage

Struggle: a refugee flees violence in his own land

Japanese composer Ryuichi Sakamoto’s new work, simply titled Passage, focuses on the plight of a refugee seeking to escape violence in his home country in the Middle East. This somber piece for string quartet and spoken voice is based on the experience of the composer’s young Egyptian friend — whom he met on Facebook. Kareem Lotfy was forced to flee after enduring unimaginable cruelty and seeing his friends killed in front of his own eyes. The work reminds us, once again, of how people’s worlds are shattered by war.

The commission of Passage was made possible through the generous support of Yoshiaki and Naomi Minegishi, and James and Sherry Raisbeck.

Special Thanks
To Our 22nd Season Concert Sponsor

The Powell Family Foundation – Nancy E. Powell Division
Confronting Intolerance with Music that Matters

threats today of religious hatred and fear of the stranger.

**Veritas**

**Soulful: a statement against religious intolerance**

Shinji Eshima’s *Veritas* is a profound meditation on the terrible consequences of religious intolerance in all its forms. It fuses the composer’s soulful music with riveting visual imagery of works from sculptor Al Farrow’s “Vandalized Doors” series. In the sculptures, Farrow crafted large doors from actual munitions – like bullets, shell casings and weapons – to resemble the damaged entrances of a mosque, church and synagogue. *Veritas* calls on us to reflect on what we can do to change our world.

“While working on the architectural sculptures of religious temples, I became aware of the importance of doors as portals.” – Al Farrow

“Charles Baudelaire once said ‘the idea of human progress is totally absurd.’ This is still true as we as a species remain continuously and non-sensibly violent. My music attempts to connect these expressions together through and across time. As Music of Remembrance constantly reminds us, isn’t it time to change?”

– Shinji Eshima

**Camp Songs**

**Sardonic: a Sachsenhausen prisoner speaks**

Almost 20 years ago, MOR commissioned and premiered American composer Paul Schoenfield’s *Camp Songs*, a setting of five texts that dissident Polish journalist Aleksander Kulisiewicz wrote as a non-Jewish political prisoner in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

At our November 2019 concert, we brought the work back in a brilliant new dramatic production conceived and directed by Erich Parce. The production’s vivid stagecraft makes the songs’ bitter humor even more powerful, depicting the cruel absurdity of what passed for life there and laying bare the fury seething beneath the terrors.

“The poems that I am setting are caricatures which (in Joseph Conrad’s words) ‘put the face of a joke upon the body of truth.’ They are an affirmation of dignity; a declaration of man’s superiority to all that befalls him.”

– Paul Schoenfield
Marking a Milestone: MOR’s Art From Ashes concert
Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz

At Benaroya Hall on January 27, 2020 MOR presented a free community-wide concert to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day exactly 75 years after the liberation of Auschwitz. We joined people and organizations around the world in honoring this important moment in history. Reaching across generations, we invited three of our city’s talented youth ensembles: the University of Washington Chamber Orchestra, The Northwest Boychoir and the Seattle Girls Choir. The two choirs joined our artists in the concert’s stirring conclusion: composer Jake Heggie’s new arrangement for child voices of “Farewell, Auschwitz,” the riveting finale of his opera Out of Darkness.

“Being part of MOR has made me more compassionate for other people who are oppressed or struggling in this day.”
  – Zoe Lonsinger

Our hopes rest on bringing new generations along on a journey that eventually will be theirs to lead. Since 2005, our David Tonkonogui Memorial Award has nurtured young artists with an interest in performing music from and about the Holocaust, and in music addressing questions of human rights and social justice. The first award recipient, cellist Julian Schwarz, has launched a distinguished solo career. Marié Rossano, the 2008 recipient, is now a member of the New York Philharmonic. Violinist Takumi Taguchi, who received the award in 2013 at the age of 12, is now studying at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. The award includes an invitation to perform with MOR, and this year’s Art From Ashes concert showcased our 2019-2020 co-recipients, double bassist Sophie Denhard and violinist Zoe Lonsinger. Immersing herself in MOR’s mission, Zoe traveled with her parents to Terezín and learned the story of Robert Dauber, whose Serenata she performed with us.
Just before the pandemic shuttered our concert stage, we had the honor of presenting chamber music concerts in Seattle and Tacoma where we performed on a quartet of instruments from the Violins of Hope, a private collection of string instruments that belonged to Jews who played them before and during the Holocaust. Lovingly restored by Israeli violin makers Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein, they now sing again even though their former owners were silenced. They help keep history alive and connect us to inspiring and intimate human stories.

Our core ensemble performed a program of music by composers lost to the Holocaust: David Beigelman, Gideon Klein, Hans Krása, and Erwin Schulhoff. We also featured a work by Mieczyslaw Weinberg, who suffered persecution at both Nazi and Soviet hands, and contemporary Israeli composer Betty Olivero’s klezmer-infused suite from her music to the classic 1920 silent film The Golem. These musical treasures remain as a testament to inspiring courage and resilience in a time of unfathomable horrors. They tell stories that resonate today as strongly as ever.

Bringing the instruments to Seattle for this concert was made possible through MOR’s partnership with Music at Kohl Mansion (Burlingame, CA). These special programs were part of MOR’s year-long observance of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

“It was an extraordinary experience for me holding this gorgeous viola that had such a somber history and then playing music written during the Holocaust on this viola in a synagogue. It was a powerful and emotional concert.”

– Susan Gulkis Assadi

“We were played by proud people.”

“I’ve been part of MOR since the very first concert. 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
MOR releases 8th CD on Naxos

The Parting

In April 2020, MOR’s eighth CD recording was released on the Naxos label. The Parting, the new opera by composer Tom Cipullo and librettist David Mason that we premiered in Seattle and San Francisco in 2019, tells the story of the great Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti, one of the most important literary witnesses to the Holocaust. Cipullo and Mason are the same team that gave us After Life in 2015, imagining a confrontation between the ghosts of Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein over the role of art and artists in a troubled world. The Parting features a stellar vocal cast: Michael Mayes as Radnóti, Laura Strickling as his wife Fanni, and Catherine Cook as a spectral presence hovering over both of them. The opera is a profound meditation on what it is about art that outlives us and that can enable one to create even in the face of unimaginable adversity.

“From first-tier composers to world-class artists, you are creating a unique forum for this music.”

– Cantor Mark Childs

“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.”

– Catherine Cook

“Your online CD release event had a lot of interesting information that gave added perspective to this magnificent work.”

– H. David Kaplan

“I am honored to be associated with an organization that puts action behind a very important idea. Words and music matter. They have the power to change hearts, which is harder than changing minds.”

– Laura Strickling
MOR and the new digital world

It’s a new world that we live in! Nobody would have chosen for it to arrive when and how it did, and very few in the world were prepared at the start for a transition to this era of meeting via Zoom and performing across the internet. MOR began immediately to reach out through the spring and summer with a streamed series of 16 weekly free programs that included musical selections, documentary films, webinars, and meet-the-artist conversations with performers and composers.

Not knowing with any certainty when a return to the live stage would be possible, we focused on acquiring the skills and the tools to launch a new video streaming channel and produce a full season of all-new online concerts. These include pathbreaking new commissions like Sahba Aminikia’s *Stormy Seas* and Eric Hachikian’s *Return to Amasia*, in addition to our annual *Art From Ashes* concert marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and a new online production of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *For a Look or a Touch* with baritone Jarrett Ott and actor Curt Branom.

Producing online concerts like these is far more expensive and time-consuming than many people imagine. But recorded performances do represent an investment in creating a permanent legacy and reaching new audiences around the country and the world. For an organization with remembrance at the core of its mission, creating a permanent record becomes an even more essential element of our work. A return to the concert hall can’t happen soon enough, but even after it does we expect digital programming to continue to be part of the creative world we inhabit.

“Music of Remembrance has highlighted the reality that in the end we really are like a like a grove of aspen trees. We all share a common root network and if one tree is sick we all feel the effects. We’re not just learning about what happened. We’re learning about how we can grow as human beings.”

– Gene Scheer

August 6th Webinar marking the 75th Anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Bombings

“Music of Remembrance tells stories that need to be told, that deserve to be told, and there are endless stories, and I think that the way that they choose to tell them through music and art is absolutely the best way.”

– Caitlin Lynch

Webinar: Jake Heggie and Gene Sheer’s Another Sunrise
Why do we remember? MOR reminds all of us that we can never afford to look the other way when we see injustice in the world. MOR’s recent premieres like Shinji Eshima’s Veritas and Ryuichi Sakamoto’s Passage speak to our common humanity. Our 2020-2021 season will unveil Sahba Aminikia’s Stormy Seas, about the stories of five child boat refugees and their accounts of setting sail in search of safety and freedom, and Eric Hachikian’s Return to Amasia, recalling the Armenian genocide. Our following season will bring the premiere of Tres Minutos, a new opera by Nicolas Benavides and Marella Martin Koch about a brother and sister separated at the U.S. - Mexican border. With works like these, we make a difference one concert at a time.

Telling Our Story Today — For Tomorrow

MOR Commissions

MOR’s supporters have funded the creation and production of thirty-one new musical works and seven dances.

Lori Laitman, Gingko Biloba 2020
Tom Cipullo, The Ginkgoes of Hiroshima 2020
Sahba Aminikia, Stormy Seas 2020
Jake Heggie, Farewell, Auschwitz 2020
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 Fujii, Wilderness Mute 2017
Ryuichi Sakamoto, Snow Falls 2017
Mary Koyoumdjian, 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 Martinu’s La Revue de Cuisine 2015
Tom Cipullo, After Life 2015
Donald Byrd, choreography to Arnold Schoenberg’s Transfigured Night 2014
Donald Byrd, choreography to Dick Kattenburg’s Tap Dance 2014
Alicia Stvigals, 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

Lori Laitman, Vedem (song cycle) 2011
Donald Byrd, choreography to Joel Engel’s The Dybbuk Suite 2010
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

“Commissioning new music, as well as producing and recording these works, has been the most rewarding part of my musical career. It’s a rare privilege to create this musical legacy. This music will live on.”

— Mina Miller, artistic director

Sincere Thanks to our 2019-2020 Artist Sponsors

Susan Shanbrom Krabbe and Morris Krabbe for their sponsorship of Mina Miller, Artistic Director
Donna Benaroya for her sponsorship of Susan Gulkis Assadi, viola

Janet Cluff for her sponsorship of Curt Branom, actor
Frederick Yudin for his sponsorship of Takumi Taguchi, violin and Laura DeLuca, clarinet
H. David Kaplan for his sponsorship of Curt Branom, actor and Jarrett Ott, baritone
Fiscal Year 2019-20 in Review

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In 2019-2020 MOR received contributions from:

- 296 individual donors
- Living in 16 states and 4 countries
- 95 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.

2019 – 2020 Season (September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2020)

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MOR 2019-20 Season Annual Report 11
**Art From Ashes**

Commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 76th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz

Available for streaming starting Sunday, January 24, 2021

**Return to Amasia**

Available for streaming starting Sunday, February 28, 2021

Featuring the world premiere of *Return to Amasia* recalling the Armenian genocide. American composer Eric Hachikian is the grandson of survivors from that genocide. His work is an intimate musical and visual account of his own journey in search of his roots.

We dedicate our production of *For a Look or a Touch* to the memory of Robert Orth (1947-2019), whose artistry, wisdom and humanity remain inspirations to us all.

**For a Look or a Touch**

Music by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer

*a rare double bill*

Available for streaming in June 2021

Commissioned by Music of Remembrance

*For a Look or a Touch*

*a new production of this intense musical drama of two idealistic young gay men whose lives and love were torn apart by Nazi persecution.*

Jarrett Ott, baritone
Curt Branom, actor

AND

**Intonations:**

*Songs from the Violins of Hope*

Inspired by the same Holocaust instruments

*MOR brought to Seattle in March 2020*

Laura Krumm, mezzo soprano
Mikhail Shmidt, violin

Tickets: www.musicofremembrance.org

Many thanks to our production sponsor Stephen and Diane Heiman.