Every work helps tell a story…


In Hiroshima, some gingko trees near the center of the atomic blast withstood the inferno because of their resilience and deep roots, sprouting new leaves within days. The "survivor trees" have come to represent the endurance of hope and need for reconciliation.
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.

2017–18 Season

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“While MOR’s mission is to remember the Holocaust through music, its focus is also emphatically on the present-day relevance of humanity’s darkest chapters.”

- Thomas May, The Seattle Times
Music of Remembrance has come far in its first twenty years and grown in ways that no one could have imagined, yet we’ve remained faithful to our founding mission of remembering the Holocaust through music. Sometimes the music is hopeful and sometimes it’s heartbreaking – and often both at the same time. But it always tells stories that matter for us in today’s world.

In two decades of remembering composers who experienced the Holocaust, we’ve performed nearly two hundred works. The repertoire we continue to explore is vast, and infinitely varied in scope. We’ve played music by composers who were banned by the Third Reich either for their ideas or their Jewish identities. We’ve played music that was created, miraculously, in the horrific conditions of ghettos and concentration camps. We’ve played music by activist composers who used their art in protest. We’ve played works that sample the cultural traditions of different groups – not only Jews – that were targeted by the Nazis. Some of the composers and their works were already known, but others were not, and part of our mission has been to help rescue them from obscurity. Their stories and their music were different, but they all found ways of standing up through their art to the evil they saw and the cruelty they faced.

We’ve also commissioned and premiered over 30 new works by some of today’s leading composers, exploring the lives of people who experienced the Holocaust in different ways and in different places, and allowing us to honor the Holocaust’s lessons by looking at the experience of other people who have faced persecution because of their ancestry, beliefs or sexuality.

When we search for meaning in the unspeakable tragedy that was the Holocaust, we’re looking not just back in history, but also at the lessons we need to draw for making a better world today and in the future. As we enter our third decade, we continue to seek new ways of giving voice to those who speak out to confront challenges to human rights and dignity.

**Holocaust-era composers performed in our 20th season**

**Marius Flothuis** lost his position in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw’s artistic management after refusing to cooperate with Nazi authorities. He sheltered Jews going into hiding and organized concerts to help support the anti-Nazi resistance. Betrayed, he was sent to the Vught concentration camp, and later to Sachsenhausen. He survived the war to enjoy a distinguished musical career.

**Émile Goué** mobilized by France in 1939 as an artillery lieutenant, was captured in 1940 and spent the next five years in a prisoner of war camp. After the camp’s liberation in 1945, Goué returned to Paris and briefly resumed his musical and teaching career. Weakened and in failing health, he died barely a year later.

London-born **William Hilsley** moved to Amsterdam to pursue his musical career but landed in a prison camp when Nazi Germany occupied the Netherlands. Hilsley returned to the Netherlands after the war. Before his death in 2003, he published a moving diary from his prison years.

**Gideon Klein**, a composer and pianist of great promise, was deported to Terezín and eventually 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 deported to Terezín and imprisoned there for 26 months before being sent to his death in Auschwitz.

**Erwin Schulhoff**, an audaciously original composer and pianist, saw his music banned as “degenerate” during the early days of the Reich. As an iconoclastic innovator, a Jew and a socialist, he was marked for personal destruction. He died in the Wülzburg concentration camp.

**Carlo Taube** was a concert pianist before his imprisonment in Terezín. His only surviving composition, *Ein Jüdisches Kind*, sets a text by his wife Erika. In 1944 the Taubes and their child were murdered in Auschwitz.

**Karl Svenk**, a talented Czech writer, producer, director and performer, arrived with the first transport to Terezín. While he was there, he created cabaret shows that lifted morale. Svenk was eventually sent to Auschwitz and died on a subsequent transport to the Mauthausen concentration camp.

**Ilse Weber** was a poet and a writer of children’s books. In Terezín, she worked in the children’s infirmary, and comforted many children with her words and music. Ilse had arranged for her elder son Hanus to leave Czechoslovakia on a Kindertransport. She and her younger son Tommy were murdered in Auschwitz.

**Viktor Ullmann** was raised a Catholic, converted to Protestantism and later returned to Catholicism. Still he was classified Jewish under Nazi racial laws and sent to Terezín. During his two years there, he was at the center of the camp’s intellectual and artistic life. He was on the same transport to Auschwitz as Hans Krása and Gideon Klein.

**László Weiner**, a composition student of Zoltán Kodály, also studied piano and conducting at the Budapest Academy of Music. He was deported to the Lukov forced labor camp in Slovakia and murdered there.

**Mieczyslaw Weinberg** bears the unfortunate distinction of persecution at both Nazi and Soviet hands. With the Nazi invasion of Poland, he fled eastward and soon settled in Moscow at the invitation of Dmitri Shostakovich. 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.
SHARING PERSONAL MEMORY AND WITNESS

It’s not possible to reflect on the Holocaust without also speaking up about all people who faced exclusion or persecution simply because of who they were. Our twentieth concert season included musical contemplations on Japanese and Japanese American wartime experience. In November 2017 we premiered two works that make eloquent pleas about the urgency of preventing nuclear war, and in May 2018 we unveiled a major new commission recalling the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans through the words and eyes of people who were there.

SNOW FALLS – An impassioned prayer

Composer Ryuichi Sakamoto’s musical setting of the poem by Kiyoko Nagase draws on melodies from Sakamoto’s score for the film “Nagasaki: Memories of My Son,” in which an aging mother is visited by the ghost of the son she lost in the atomic bombing.

Snow falls
Day and night
Like a long and plaintive dirge,
As though to say, “Calm the sobbing cry of your heart:
Enclose yourself in your sorrow
Like birds in their nests and foxes in holes.
Bear the winter cold as do strong leaves of grass
rooted in the earth.”
Snow falls as though to say,
“Revive, good spring, from under the snow.”

Quietly, so quietly, from the infinitely deep sky
Snow falls — ah, with what merciless mercy.

Snow falls
On this country of sorrow.

from Snow Falls by Kiyoko Nagase
(English translation by Empress Michiko)

Dedicated with gratitude to Ryuichi Sakamoto and offered as a prayer that the horror of nuclear war will never be visited on humanity again.

World premiere of Snow Falls: Naho Shioya, actor; Takumi Taguchi, violin; Mina Miller, piano.

Ryuichi Sakamoto has had a unique impact in Japan and around the world as a composer, musician and peace activist. He has dedicated himself to the cause of denuclearization, with compositions and performances that call on us to reflect on the human cost of tragedies from Hiroshima to Fukushima.

“MOR’s mission is a reminder to me that music has a purpose beyond simple enjoyment, to convey and enhance moral messages for our audiences. It affirms my belief that music is something that connects the world and reaches the humanity in each person.”

– Takumi Taguchi, violinist – December 2017
Music of Remembrance David Tonkonogui Memorial Award Recipient (2013)
WILDERNESS MUTE — The endurance of hope

In his visit to Hiroshima, President Barack Obama remembered the dead whose mourning he had come to join:

“Their souls speak to us. They ask us to look inward, to take stock of who we are and what we might become.”

Keiko Fujiie’s Wilderness Mute recalls Hiroshima and Nagasaki with a setting of texts in English translation by victims and survivors of the atomic bombs.

“We often find in music a consoling way to remember the atrocities that are too painful to describe in words. Music often expresses events and preserves memories just as effectively and potently as any book, documentary or oral history. I would like to commend Music of Remembrance and the Jewish community for the way in which they keep the history and its lessons alive and current.”

– Consul General of Japan in Seattle, Yoichiro Yamada

In addition to the milestone premieres of Snow Falls and Wilderness Mute, we introduced our audience to the soulful music of composer Shinji Eshima’s August 6th, a haunting memorial to the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and an eloquent prayer that others will never suffer the same fate.

Keiko Fujiie’s Wilderness Mute recalls Hiroshima and Nagasaki with a setting of texts in English translation by victims and survivors of the atomic bombs.

from At a Field-Dressing Station by Sankichi Toge, (English translation by Karen Laura Thornber)


Baritone Robert Orth and soprano Ann Moss with MOR instrumentalists in Wilderness Mute.

SPECIAL THANKS
To our 20th Season Concert Sponsor
THE POWELL FAMILY FOUNDATION
I n our 20th season’s *Voices of Witness* project, we recall the experience of people, most of them American citizens, who were taken from their homes and placed in incarceration camps because of their Japanese ancestry. *Gaman*, by the French-born American composer Christophe Chagnard, refers to the struggle to endure the unbearable with patience and dignity. It combines traditional Japanese and classical Western instruments, bringing a powerful story to life through the witness of artists and writers among the prisoners in Minidoka — the wartime diary of Kamekichi Tokita, the poetry of Suma Yagi, and paintings by Roger Shimomura, Takuichi Fujii and Kamekichi Tokita.

The Japanese term Gaman, “enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity,” first caught my ear during one of the dozen interviews I conducted during my extensive search for stories and texts. It was an undertaking that was both deeply rewarding and daunting, one that left me humbled and saddened over the poignant stories of broken families and shattered dreams. For many, these wounds remain open, making the need for raising awareness on this injustice all the more relevant.

– Christophe Chagnard

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May 20, 2018 – Music of Remembrance Day Proclamation by Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan
from souls pierced by the barbed wire that imprisoned them for their “crime” of ancestry,

from souls who answered our nation’s call as Americans. They dragged limbs on rugged terrain while being bombarded.

Go for Broke
Go for Broke echoed above guns and mortar echoed above moans of pain
from Gaman (poetry by Suma Yagi)

December 7, 1941
My diary begins today. I intend to continue writing until the day peace returns... until the day when Japan and the United States shake hands again. I keenly hope that day will come as soon as possible. As I envision the constant torment we will have to face, I see that we will need to be both extraordinarily courageous and patient. It will be a blessing if our family can somehow survive the grave difficulties that lie ahead... My heart is full to bursting. In a moment, we have lost all the value of our existence in this society. Not only have we lost our value, we’re unwanted. It would be better if we didn’t exist.

The cold wind of December did not blow directly on me until yesterday. It’s now blowing right through me.

-Kamekichi Tokita

Composer Christophe Chagnard with poet Suma Yagi, and Yuzo Tokita, son of artist Kamekichi Tokita.


SPECIAL THANKS
To our May 2018 Concert Production Sponsors
Ululani Foundation • The Powell Family Foundation
Sharing with our Community

From the beginning, it’s been an important part of MOR’s identity to reach people beyond our usual concert audiences. For the fourth consecutive year we performed our free “Art From Ashes” concert marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Made possible through the generous sponsorship of Jack and Adina Almo, this concert brings the Seattle community together in remembrance to experience a small part of the musical legacy left by those whose art is a testament to survival and hope. In addition to MOR’s core performers we featured the amazing talents of The Northwest Boychoir under their music director Joseph Crnko. We also showcased two recipients of MOR’s David Tonkonogui Memorial Award, cellist Kina Pak and violinist Takumi Taguchi.

With our 20th season Voices of Witness project, we were privileged to work closely with the Japanese and Japanese American communities in Seattle and beyond. On April 28, 2018, we offered a free program at Seattle’s Wing Luke Asian Art Museum. “The Making of Gaman” featured a conversation with composer Christophe Chagnard and a preview of his new work with Asako and Ringtaro Tateishi’s mesmerizing performance on taiko drum and fue flute.

San Francisco: our second home

For the fourth straight year, we brought our music and our mission to the Bay Area. The program at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music spanned a spectrum ranging from songs that prisoners in Terezín sung and wrote under the noses of their Nazi captors, to Paul Schoenfield’s Sparks of Glory and its passionate accounts of heroic Holocaust resistance, to the California premieres of Ryuichi Sakamoto’s Snow Falls and Christophe Chagnard’s Gaman. With MOR’s growing Bay Area presence, we’ve been invited to perform on the prestigious Music at Kohl Mansion chamber music series on January 27, 2019. And we’ll be back again in May at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with a program that features Tom Cipullo’s powerful new opera The Parting.
Commissioning and producing new musical works is always special to us, and we take even greater satisfaction when our new works take on lives of their own and make an impact around the world. So it was especially gratifying when Atlanta Opera launched a stunning new production of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s *Out of Darkness* in April 2018. This was hardly the first Heggie/Scheer commission from MOR to have a broad impact. Their intense musical drama *For a Look or a Touch*, illuminating the Nazi persecution of homosexuals, has traveled across North America and Europe, most recently to the Dutch National Opera in 2017. And these are only a few examples. Composer Tom Cipullo and librettist David Mason’s opera *After Life*, with its confrontation between the ghosts of Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso, has generated significant interest after it was honored by the National Opera Association as Best Chamber Opera in 2017, and it is now entering the ranks of the contemporary opera repertoire with five already sold-out performances slated at Opera Colorado in February 2019. This kind of impact isn’t new for the works we’ve brought into the world. One of MOR’s larger early commissions was Thomas Pasatieri’s *Letter to Warsaw*, which we premiered in 2004 with opera star Jane Eaglen to tell the story of murdered cabaret artist Pola Braun. The following year, the work was performed by the Israel Chamber Orchestra and featured at Yad Vashem’s Holocaust Remembrance Day concert.

For our next major commission, we’ve brought back the amazing team of Tom Cipullo and David Mason to create a new musical drama. *The Parting* is an intimate exploration of the life and art of the Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti, widely considered one of the most important poetic witnesses to the Holocaust. You can attend the world premiere in May 2019 in either Seattle or San Francisco — and be among the first to experience yet another pathbreaking work that we expect to make a broad mark in the world.

"Our mission is to speak out for oppressed people, to give musical witness to all those who have been persecuted. These are the lessons of the Holocaust"

– Mina Miller
Music of Remembrance Commissioning & Recording Circle

MOR's Commissioning and Recording Circle consists of visionary donors who enthusiastically embrace MOR's unique Testimonies for Tomorrow — the commissioning and recording of new works by leading contemporary composers inspired by Holocaust themes and stories. Through their generosity, members of the Commissioning and Recording Circle are committed to providing MOR the resources necessary to continue these uniquely important projects. Learn more about MOR's Commissioning and Recording Circle: call MOR at (206) 365-7770 or email MOR's artistic director: mina@musicofremembrance.org

MOR Commissions

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

Christophe Chagnard, Gaman 2018  
Keiko Fujie, 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  
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
We can tell stories thanks to our generous donors

2017 – 2018 Season

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MOR received contributions from
• 229 individual donors
• Living in 15 states and 3 countries
• 59 first-time donors

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“Music of Remembrance inspires us to gather, reflect and listen; to honor, pay homage and pay attention to silenced voices and the stories they yearn to tell us. With the dazzling gifts of extraordinary artists and Mina Miller’s visionary programming, MOR demonstrates the powerful good that can come from connection to the past with vital perspective for the future.”

– Jake Heggie

"The Parting"

a new chamber opera by composer Tom Cipullo and librettist David Mason

It’s May 19, 1944 — the final evening at home for the great Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti and his beautiful, devoted wife Fanni. Foreseeing Miklós’s likely fate in a forced labor camp, they ponder why we are given life. Together they find a bright awareness of being: “To learn what love is. To live. To make beautiful things. To die.”

World Premiere

Seattle: May 19, 2019 • 7:30 p.m.
San Francisco: May 23, 2019 • 7:30 p.m.

Iillsley Ball Nordstrom Recital Hall, Benaroya Hall
Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall, San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Michael Mayes, baritone
Catherine Cook, mezzo soprano
Laura Strickling, soprano

Music of Remembrance instrumental ensemble
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