

25

years of

Music that Matters

Music of Remembrance

2021-2022 Annual Report

MUSIC OF remembrance®

ensuring that the **voices of musical witness be heard®**

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Mission

Music of Remembrance has had a unique impact through works that honor the resilience of all people excluded or persecuted for their faith, nationality, gender or sexuality. Its programs pay tribute to historic memory, and directly confront challenges to human rights and dignity today.

A Message from Board Chair David Epstein

Twenty-five years! Music of Remembrance has come so far in this quarter-century and grown in ways that have made its impact even more important in today's troubled world. Its successes are a tribute to Mina Miller's visionary leadership, but they also would not have been possible without the committed support of a host of other extraordinary people: our gifted performers and composers, of course, as well as a myriad of other creative partners who make magic happen, often working behind the scenes. And most of all, it's thanks to you — our supporters and audience members — who have shared the journey and stayed with us through both the peaks and the challenges.

It's been a great honor and privilege to serve as chairperson of MOR's Board of Directors for the past ten years, and I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my board colleagues and to MOR's staff, advisors and volunteers who have worked so tirelessly. I'm constantly awed by our loyal audience members for your continued attendance and participation. Your engagement with MOR is an inspiring affirmation of our core belief that music-that-matters is important to people the world over. It is why Music of Remembrance remains vital, vibrant and indispensable in these challenging times. Thank you once again for the trust you have placed in us. We look forward to having you with us as we embark on our next twenty-five years.



The Sostenuto Society

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.

2021–22 Season

Crescendo (\$7,500 and above)	Sostenuto Platinum (\$5,000 to \$7,499)	Sostenuto Silver (\$1,200 to \$2,499)	
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* In blessed memory

A Message from Founder Mina Miller

We've reached an important milestone — our 25th anniversary season! It's been the privilege of a lifetime to have founded MOR and guided the organization for a quarter century.

Those of you who started this journey with us 24 years ago have seen us come a long way — from a bootstrap startup to a firmly established musical presence that is heard around the world. You've seen us grow from performing mainly small chamber works to producing music as varied as choral and orchestral works, fully-staged operas, dance works, and music for film. You've seen us evolve from performing mainly historical music to commissioning and premiering over 40 new works by some of today's leading composers.

With the dedication of our incomparable artists, and the support of friends like you, we've continued to discover and share a priceless legacy of musicians who refused to be silenced, and we've shed light on the experience of a spectrum of those whose lives were touched by the Holocaust — not only Jews, but other religious groups, gay people, Roma, modernist artists and writers, and political free thinkers. We've not merely looked back at history but confronted its meaning for today with our commissions of major works that address the challenges of religious intolerance, racism, xenophobia, the threat of nuclear war, the worldwide refugee crisis and the plight of families separated by borders. The past meets present in stories of our time.

In May 2023 we'll mark another milestone with a three-city tour with the world premiere of *Before It All Goes Dark*, a new opera we've commissioned from composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer. It is inspired by a true story reported by Howard Reich in the Chicago Tribune depicting an ailing Vietnam war veteran who learns decades later that he is the sole heir to a priceless art collection stolen by the Nazis. His journey to Prague to claim his legacy leads to the discovery of a lost identity and deeper truths. Following the Seattle performance, MOR will bring the same program and cast to San Francisco's Presidio Theatre and to Chicago's Athenaeum Center for Thought and Culture in collaboration with Chicago Opera Theater.

I often hear from people who are amazed that we've done all this as the small organization that we are. And the fact that we have is a tribute to our amazing artists, our dedicated board, and our loyal family of friends and supporters. All of you have helped us to make music that makes a difference in the world. Please know that you have my gratitude always.



Mina Miller
Founder and Artistic
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jake Heggie'.

The journey I've been able to take with MOR has forever touched and changed me as a composer. Being able to explore and tell important, often surprising stories of Holocaust survival, remembrance and legacy in this powerful way has affected every aspect of my work as an artist and human being.

– Jake Heggie, composer

MOR Returns to the Live Stage

The Power of Perseverance – a tribute to the spirit of resilience

Welcome Back!

As we continue emerging from a time like no other, we're grateful beyond words for the resilience of the artists, staff and other team members – and especially you, our friends and supporters – who made it possible for us to produce and deliver a season of

live performances and on-line programs, with world premieres among the varied works speaking to people's hearts.

We returned to the Benaroya Hall stage on November 7, 2021 with a **Welcome Back!** concert that we offered free as a tribute

to our community's fortitude through this difficult time. The special program featured new songs that **Lori Laitman** and **Tom Cipullo** created for us, inspired by the perseverance of the ginkgo tree that survived nuclear

devastation to sprout anew. There were cabaret songs from Terezin that prisoners wrote and sang under the noses of their Nazi captors, and **Polina Nazaykinskaya's Haim** – a tribute to David Arben, who survived seven labor and concentration camps thanks to his violin and went on to an illustrious career in America. The program was dedicated to the memory of **James Raisbeck** (1936-2021), whose visionary leadership was an inspiration to MOR, the Seattle community and the world.



Ben VanHouten



Haim

Ben VanHouten

MOR's commissions of new works by younger composers bring a fresh perspective on contemporary topics.

– Clarinetist Laura DeLuca

Telling stories of hope and courage for our own time

Stormy Seas

Our second Benaroya Hall concert, on Sunday, March 13, 2022, featured **Sahba Aminikia's Stormy Seas**. Earlier, at the height of the pandemic, we introduced Sahba's piece as the featured work in one of our online concerts. The response of viewers was

overwhelming, and during the recent season we brought this powerful work to live audiences in Seattle and San Francisco. *Stormy Seas* draws on a beautiful children's book by Mary Beth Leatherdale and Eleanor Shakespeare to tell five true stories about young people who braved



Nick Klein

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 war-torn Vietnam; Najeeba (age 11) from Taliban-dominated Afghanistan; Mohammed (age 13) from an orphanage in Ivory Coast.

The imaginative production created by director Erich Parce with visual designs by Peter Crompton harnessed the vocal and dramatic talents of young performers in Seattle and the Bay Area. It's a work that speaks to our hearts with a message of our shared humanity.

Facing Today's World

Speaking out for human rights and dignity

MOR concluded its 2021-22 season of live performances in May with the world premiere of *Tres minutos* in Seattle and at the Presidio Theatre, our new home in the Bay Area.

When we commissioned this one-act opera by composer **Nicolas Benavides** and librettist **Marella Martin Koch**, our goal was to address a complicated question of immigrant rights in intimate human terms. By the time of the work's premiere, this need had become even more urgent.

Tres minutos imagines the story of Nila and her brother Diego. Allowed a brief supervised reunion at the border that separates them, they wrestle with questions of identity, duty and belonging. Our production, directed by **Erich Parce**, featured soprano **Vanessa Isiguen** and baritone **José Rubio** as Nila and Diego, and tenor **Brendan Tuohy** as the unsympathetic border guard standing over them as their seconds together click down.

MOR is that rare organization that presents music with a conscience, performances with a conscience.

– José Rubio, baritone

“Tres minutos reminds us that beyond the political arguments about immigration policy, immigrants are actual people with real lives, deep emotions and complicated relationships.”

This intense musical drama brings the story and its characters to vivid life, never seeking to provide easy answers but challenging us to look within as we consider such a critical issue.

At our San Francisco concert, we also brought composer **Shinji Eshima's** *Veritas* to the Bay Area for the first time. Accompanied by compelling visual projections of Al Farrow's sculptures from his “Vandalized Doors” exhibition, the work makes a powerful statement about the consequences of religious intolerance of all kinds.

MOR is so special because it champions the works of new composers, and gives a voice and a life to new art through stories such as Tres minutos.

– Vanessa Isiguen, soprano



Ben VanHouten



Ben VanHouten



Ben VanHouten

Special Thanks To Our 24th Season Concert Sponsor:
The Powell Family Foundation – Nancy E. Powell Division

Worldwide Outreach

Making a difference across the community, the country and the world

When we tell stories that need to be told, we want the music and the message to reach people everywhere – not just those able to attend the performance in person. Even though we reemerged at last to the live stage, we have continued to offer virtual programs. Our streamed concerts are essential not only for keeping in touch with people who hesitate or are unable to attend public events, but also to reach audiences around the world.

MOR's annual *Art From Ashes* concert A Tribute to Voices that Could Not Be Silenced

Continuing our annual tradition of honoring the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, we produced and streamed a program of all-new performances paying tribute to musical talents whose very existence the Nazis hoped to erase from history. Works by Gideon Klein, Viktor Ullmann, Ilse Weber, Carlo Taube and James Simon exemplified the astonishing creative life in the Terezin concentration camp before those composers were sent to their deaths in Auschwitz. Amsterdam-born composer Dick Kattenburg spent the war years in hiding until his betrayal, arrest and murder. His delightful *Escapades* for two violins dates from 1938, a work discovered in the attic of the composer's niece, the daughter of his sister who survived the Holocaust. The concert also



included revelations like two amazing but rarely-performed tangos created by prisoners in Auschwitz and Buchenwald, arranged for MOR by Bruce Rosenblum. Although their creators perished, all of these works remain as a testament to courage and resilience in a time of horror.



Ben VanHouten

Mikhail Shmidt, Susan Gulkis Assadi, Walter Gray



Sara Larsen in *Auschwitz Tango*

MOR shows how important it is to continue the discussion about the Holocaust and about other persecuted people. We cannot allow hate to flourish.
– Violist Susan Gulkis Assadi

Ghetto Songs



Our streamed concert **Ghetto Songs** featured director Erich Parce's new dramatic realization of composer Paul Schoenfield's setting of verses that the great Yiddish poet Mordecai Gebirtig wrote in the months before and during his forced confinement in the Krakow ghetto. **Ghetto Songs** was commissioned by Music of Remembrance in 2008.

There were also musical gems by Mieczyslaw Weinberg and Géza Frid. Weinberg fashioned a distinguished

career despite the unfortunate distinction of persecution at both Nazi and Soviet hands. Frid, facing mortal danger as a stateless Jew in occupied Amsterdam, organized clandestine concerts and helped the Dutch resistance as a document forger.



Stacey Mastrian and Erich Parce in *Ghetto Songs*

Injustice



With today's alarming rise of antisemitism, racism and violent hate, we're reminded how important it is to raise our voices against intolerance and injustice wherever they exist. Our streamed concert **Injustice** featured **Aleppo**, a recent work by Portuguese composer Luis Tinoco inspired by the resilience of that city's besieged inhabitants, and **Three Dream Portraits**, Black composer Margaret Bonds' setting of poems by Langston Hughes.

We also made archived performances available online throughout the season, often featuring MOR-commissioned works to honor community milestones and remembrances. For example, on March 30, 2022 we streamed Christophe Chagnard's *Gaman* to mark the 80th anniversary of the removal of Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island. For Pride Month, we streamed Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *For a Look or a Touch*. We featured Nicolas Benavides' *Tres minutos* during Hispanic Heritage Month.



Mikhail Shmidt, Laura DeLuca and Jessica Choe perform *Aleppo*

Help MOR build a permanent legacy ensuring that the music and the message endure after the last note is played.

Guiding New Generations

As we honor memory and speak out with stories the world needs to hear, we can't forget the importance of bridging generations and bringing young people along on the 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 2021 recipients were the talented cellist **Leyna Kitahama** and violinist **Tokuji Miyasaka**, both 14 years old.



Tokuji Miyasaka and Leyna Kitahama performing the Klein Duo

If you've been following MOR over the years, you surely remember violinist **Takumi Taguchi**. Takumi was the award's 2013 recipient at age 12, and we watched him grow as he returned to perform with us many times. After graduating from the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, Takumi has recently joined the Boston Symphony. At age 21, he is this great orchestra's youngest member!

It's been such a thrill and honor to have played even a small part in the development of this remarkable artist and young man.



I'm grateful to MOR for opening me up and exposing me to possibilities making music that makes a difference in our society.

– Takumi Taguchi

Sincere Thanks to our 2021-2022 Artist Sponsors

James and Sherry Raisbeck, Principal Artist Chair for Mikhail Shmidt, violin
Joan Sandler, 2021-2022 season sponsorship - Susan Gulkis Assadi, viola
Drs. Eugene May and Patricia Shuster, concert sponsorship - Cristina Valdes, March 2022
Susan Shanbrom-Krabbe and Morris Krabbe, concert sponsorship - Laura DeLuca, May 2022
Donna Benaroya, concert production sponsorship - Erich Parce, October 2022
Frederick Yudin, concert sponsorship Laquita Mitchell, October 2022

Artists Fund

Music of Remembrance owes its achievements to many people, but most of all 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. In 2020, **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.



Ben VanHouten

Performing music I love that calls attention to those who have experienced oppression is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.
– Walter Gray

My life as a musician would be so much poorer without being part of this incredible organization and its many musical discoveries.
– Mikhail Shmidt

Music of Remembrance Receives Transformative Gift from Mary Winton Green



Mary Winton Green

In early 2022, Chicago philanthropist Mary Winton Green donated one million dollars to Music of Remembrance. Her extraordinary generosity is an inspiring statement of faith in what we have done and what we remain committed to doing. This gift continues her decades of selfless philanthropy, along with her late husband David, supporting organizations and causes in the arts, education, and human services.

Mary has spoken of how much it has meant to her to help growing organizations like Music of Remembrance build a future for realizing their dreams. We will do everything we can to make Mary Winton Green and her family proud of their belief in our work and our mission.

“What I hope for in giving to Music of Remembrance is that it will continue the process of keeping the memory of Holocaust musicians and other persecuted people alive. I find the performances extraordinarily moving and well done.”
– Mary Winton Green

A Spotlight on our Donors

Nancy E. Powell

Nancy’s father, a successful real estate developer and philanthropist, instilled in her the value of giving back and helping to support local community organizations. She found her passion for Holocaust remembrance when she attended lectures at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. She continued this involvement by helping to establish PLU’s Kurt Mayer Chair in Holocaust Studies, and with her sister Carol Heller she launched the university’s annual Powell-Heller Conference for Holocaust Education that has brought together scholars, survivors, students and members of the public every year since 2007. Nancy’s family foundation gives to organizations around the world mainly supporting Jewish education.

“I support Music of Remembrance because I love theatre, music, and drama. The mission of this organization resonates with me; life stories to be celebrated and not to be forgotten. The compositions also represent human rights issues facing the world today. The musicians are outstanding, their music stays in my soul and is not forgotten.” –Nancy Powell

Beth Ann Segal

Beth Ann’s relationship to philanthropy began early in her life. Her family believed that their good fortune of wealth and prosperity gave them a responsibility to be generous to those who were deserving and less fortunate. Beth Ann learned of MOR in 2003 through an article in Hadassah Magazine, and she was moved to help underwrite our recording of Thomas Pasatieri’s *Letter to Warsaw*. Now living in Tarrytown, New York, she gives to science, medicine and public broadcasting. She is honored to support Music of Remembrance, an organization that draws public attention to antisemitism past and present. She believes whole-heartedly that, for 25 years, Mina Miller and David Sabritt have been the best possible stewards of its mission.

“I have survivors in my family and believe that those whose lives were cut short can only live on in our memories. Thank you to Music of Remembrance for keeping me involved in its mission.”
–Beth Ann Segal

New Commissions Fund

Launching MOR's next quarter century

Over the years Music of Remembrance has commissioned and produced over 40 new works that have made a difference in the world. We see their impact not only in how they touch our own audiences, but also in how their impact grows as they make their way into the world. In just the few months since we premiered *Tres minutos*, we've heard from numerous companies interested in presenting it, and we're already partnering with the San Diego Symphony with plans for a performance there in January 2024.

Our milestone 25th season unveils two important works by composers with whom we have enjoyed long relationships. Lori Laitman's *Wertheim Park* weaves



Alisa Jordheim in *Wertheim Park*

music and poetry together in a deeply elegiac remembrance of the Dutch Jews lost to the Holocaust. *Before It All Goes Dark*, a new opera by Jake

Heggie and Gene Scheer, depicts one man's odyssey in search of art, truth and identity. This major new work is made possible by the generosity of the Clovis Foundation.

Our pipeline of commissions for the next two years includes new works about Native American experience, the courageous human rights struggle of women in Iran, and the story of Portugal's Crypto Jews. Our commissioning program is truly unique in the world, and it's made possible by the support of people who share our vision of how these new works can make a difference. Major new commissions can cost \$25,000 to \$50,000, and even more to 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.

Music of Remembrance tells stories that remind us why memory is so important.

—Lori Laitman, composer

MOR Commissions

- Jake Heggie, *Before It All Goes Dark* 2023
- Lori Laitman, *Wertheim Park* 2022
- Nicolas Lell Benavides, *Tres minutos* 2022
- Eric Hachikian, *Return to Amasia* 2021
- Sahba Aminikia, *Stormy Seas* 2020
- Lori Laitman, *Ginkgo 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
- 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

Fiscal Year 2021-22 in Review

FY 2021-22		MWG	Total	
Individual Donations	192,623	1,004,203	1,196,825	Cash Position
Fundraising Events	77,125		77,125	
Foundations & government grants	103,210		103,210	Operating Checking
Earned & Investment	29,275		29,275	Investment
	402,233	1,004,203	1,406,435	TOTAL
Total Expenses	483,921		483,921	
Net Income	(81,688)	1,004,203	922,514	1,467,638

To MOR's faithful family of friends and supporters, we extend our deepest gratitude

2021 – 2022 Season (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022)

Cornerstone (\$25,000 & over)

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**In blessed memory*

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AN EXCITING DOUBLE BILL FROM
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Two True Stories — a profound tribute to the restorative power of memory

Before It All Goes Dark

Seattle May 21, 2023
San Francisco May 24, 2023
Chicago May 27 and 28, 2023
in collaboration with Chicago Opera Theater

World Premiere

COMMISSIONED BY
MUSIC OF REMEMBRANCE

An ailing Vietnam war veteran learns he is the sole heir to a priceless art collection stolen by the Nazis. His journey to Prague to claim his legacy leads to the discovery of a lost identity and deeper truths. Inspired by a true story reported by Howard Reich in the Chicago Tribune.



Jiang Chen



Gillian Reisen

Starring bass-baritone Ryan McKinny and mezzo-soprano Megan Marino



Benjamin Weatherston

Starring soprano
Caitlin Lynch

Another Sunrise

A Polish Auschwitz survivor searches for words that could possibly describe what she witnessed and endured to live another day.

Music of Remembrance Ensemble
Erich Parce, *Director* Joseph Mechavich, *Conductor*