

# MUSIC THAT MATTERS

*Launching the next quarter century*

**2022-2023 Annual Report**

# MUSIC OF remembrance®

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

**Mina Miller**, President and  
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\* in blessed memory

## Mission

Music of Remembrance is a Seattle-based performing arts organization dedicated to addressing questions of human rights and social justice through the transformative power of music. Established in 1998 with the mission to ensure that the voices of witness to the Holocaust be heard, its vision has evolved to explore the resilience of all who have been persecuted or excluded for their faith, ethnicity, gender or sexuality. Its programs pay tribute to historic memory, and directly confront challenges in today's world.

## A Message from Board Chair David Epstein

As a young boy growing up near Syracuse, NY in the early '60's, my parents frequently got together with their friends Ruth and Fred. They were delightful people; Fred was an engineer like my father, and Ruth spoke with a slight accent that captured my attention. After one of their visits to our home I vividly recall asking my mother "why does Mrs. S. (Ruth) have those numbers on her arm?" I do not recall the answer; in fact, I don't expect they answered me at all, at least not then. What I do recall with crystalline clarity is the look my parents exchanged with each other, posing the unspoken questions of what to tell me, how, and when. That look, oh, that look, and those questions, lay at the core of what motivates me in my unwavering dedication to Music of Remembrance and its mission.

In the ten years I have been privileged to serve as MOR's board chair I have learned of the countless Ruths in many of your lives. You have shared innumerable and deeply personal connections to injustices past and present, which we honor, and we have also introduced you to stories of affected communities about which you might not otherwise have been aware. Through our performances we extract and highlight our common humanity from the seemingly inhumane.

I am personally grateful to our loyal patrons, incomparable artists & creative partners, and dedicated board, staff, & volunteers who have joined us on the first 25 years of our journey, enabling us to tell the stories that need to be told by making music that matters. I can also tell you this: we're just getting started!



## 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.*

### 2022-23 Season

Crescendo (\$7,500 and above)	Sostenuto Platinum (\$5,000 to \$7,499)	Sostenuto Silver (\$1,200 to \$2,499)	
Susan Shanbrom-Krabbe & Morris Krabbe Powell Family Foundation - Nancy E. Powell Division James and Sherry Raisbeck Foundation Lori Laitman & Bruce Rosenblum Mina Miller & David Sabritt Beth Ann Segal	Rickie Crown The Purple Lady/ Barbara J. Meislin Fund Sostenuto Gold (\$2,500 to \$4,999) Sandra Spear Frederick Yudin	Jan & Kenneth Block Henry Butler* Pamela Center Linda Crome Judy & Krijn de Jonge David Epstein Thea Fefer Toni Freeman Alice & Howard Greenwood	Adelaine Hitchcock Nickolas Newcombe Joan Sandler Helen & Dr. Thomas Spiro Kyoko & Michio Taguchi Moya Vazquez Craig Sheppard & Gregory Wallace Nancy & Dr. Stanley Zeitz

## A Message from Founder Mina Miller

*A milestone. A journey. A destination.*

Especially with the attention that we've received during MOR's milestone 25th anniversary season, I am often asked about the inspiration behind Music of Remembrance's founding. Part of my response is highly personal. In 1998, I was established as a university educator and performing pianist. I wanted my next step to be one where I could use music to make a difference in the world. As the child of parents whose entire families were annihilated in the Holocaust, I had grown up with a visceral awareness of the power of memory, and of the vastness of stories that needed telling. Music of Remembrance was a calling for me, a way of pulling these strands together, and of seeking to give voice to those who had been silenced. It was a way to use art to confront compelling issues in today's world.



Mina Miller  
Founder and Artistic Director

For a quarter century, Music of Remembrance has led the way with music honoring the courage of those who stood up to oppression through their art. We started out with a mission to ensure that the voices of witness to the Holocaust be heard, and this vision has grown to encompass the stories of the full range of people and communities who have faced exclusion or persecution for their faith, ethnicity, gender or sexuality. With works that give voice to the voiceless, and that tell stories that the world needs to hear. By commissioning new works by today's leading composers that address compelling challenges to human rights and dignity in our own time.

Our 2023/24 season breaks new ground with an opening program featuring two works honoring Native American experience and heritage. In March 2024 we'll premiere a new work about the current women's rights struggle in Iran. And in May 2024 we'll embark on our second three-city tour with the long-awaited world premiere of *Before It All Goes Dark*, a new opera that we commissioned from the extraordinary creative team of composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer.

We continue to evolve in the kinds of stories we tell and the kinds of music we play. Our relevance depends on responding to a world that changes, often in ways that are sudden and unexpected. None of this would be possible without our extraordinary artists, our talented staff and production team, and our dedicated board members. Most of all we're grateful to all of you, our loyal friends and generous supporters who help us make music that matters.

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mina Miller'.

***"Music of Remembrance reaches into our communities with cultural humility and artistic purpose to promote the impact of music."***

**–Mayor Bruce A. Harrell, City of Seattle**



# Speaking Out for Our Shared Humanity



**2007** Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *For a Look or a Touch* illuminated the persecution of gay people in the Third Reich.



LV Santiago

**2010** Lori Laitman's stirring oratorio *Vedem* captured the courageous idealism of a group of teenage boys and the secret journal they created each week for two years under the noses of their Nazi captors.



Michael Beaton

**2015** Tom Cipullo's award-winning opera *After Life* imagined a passionate debate between the ghosts of Pablo Picasso and Gertrude Stein over the role of artists and the meaning of art in a troubled world.



**2017** Mary Kouyoumdjian's *to open myself, to scream* was the first musical work to explore the fate of the Roma in Nazi-occupied Europe.



**2017** Ryuichi Sakamoto's *Snow Falls* was a soulful reminder of the horrors of nuclear war.



**2018** Christophe Chagnard's *Gaman* depicted the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans through the words and images of people who were there.

## A selection of MOR Commissions

Ben VanHouten



**2019** Ryuichi Sakamoto's *Passage* focused on the plight of a refugee seeking to escape violence in his home country in the Middle East.

*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

Ben VanHouten



**2019** Shinji Eshima's *Veritas* was a heartfelt plea against religious intolerance of all kinds.



Nick Klein

**2020** Sahba Aminika's *Stormy Seas* told the stories of young boat refugees who braved perilous journeys in search of safe shores.



**2021** Eric Hachikian's *Return to Amasia* was a deep personal reflection on the Armenian genocide a century ago.



Ben VanHouten

**2022** Nicolas Benavides' *Tres minutos* shared the anguish of a brother and sister separated by the US-Mexican border.



# Highlights of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season

## The Power of Memory

The world premiere of *Wertheim Park*, Lori Laitman's sixth commission for Music of Remembrance, followed such



Soprano Alisa Jordheim in *Wertheim Park*

important works as her 2010 oratorio *Vedem*. *Wertheim Park*, setting a poem by the late Susan de Sola, is a haunting elegy about the power of bearing witness.

## Honoring a true African American heroine.

The legendary Black singer and dancer Josephine Baker escaped racism in America to find fame and success in France as an artist, a French Resistance hero and a civil rights activist. Composer Tom Cipullo's musical monodrama *Josephine* captures the complicated essence of a woman who fought back against prejudice and discrimination, and stood up through her art and ideals to make a difference in the world.



Soprano Laquita Mitchell as Josephine in a new production directed by Erich Parce

***I am still floating from my time with MOR. It was a joy and honor to work with this special organization.***

**— Sasha Cooke**

## "We were played by proud people!"

Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *INTONATIONS: Songs from the Violins of Hope* was inspired by the collection of lovingly restored instruments that were owned and played by Jews before and during the Holocaust. The violins bore witness to



Mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke

heartbreak and atrocity, and yet they represent belief in a future where music, life and beauty endure.



Joel Myers and Kylie Shea Lewallen in *The Dybbuk Suite*

In 2010, MOR commissioned Spectrum Dance Theater's brilliant Donald Byrd to create original dances to music that Joel Engel composed a century ago for the iconic Yiddish play *The Dybbuk*. In 2023 we reprised this work with the two amazing dancers who premiered it.

## The Dybbuk Suite

In 2010, MOR commissioned Spectrum Dance Theater's brilliant Donald Byrd to create original dances to music that Joel Engel composed a century ago for the iconic Yiddish play *The Dybbuk*. In 2023

## MOR's Inaugural Three-City Tour: Seattle – San Francisco – Chicago

Our three-city tour presented new productions of two of our most acclaimed commissions — *Another Sunrise* and *For a Look or a Touch*, operas by the extraordinary creative team of composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer.

*For a Look or a Touch* was the first and remains the only major musical work to address the Nazi persecution of gay people. *Another Sunrise* is an intense emotional portrait of an Auschwitz survivor's struggle to come to terms with her own memory, and to describe what she witnessed to people who were not there. Metropolitan Opera luminaries Ryan McKinny and Caitlin Lynch, and acclaimed actor Curt Branom, delivered stunning performances in these new productions conceived by director Erich Parce and conducted by Joseph Mechavich.



Bass-baritone Ryan McKinny as Manfred; Actor Curt Branom as Gad in *For a Look or a Touch*



Soprano Caitlin Lynch as Krystyna Zywulska in *Another Sunrise*

**Special thanks to our 25<sup>th</sup> season concert sponsor: The Powell Family Foundation – Nancy E. Powell Division**

# 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've returned to in-person concerts, we continue to make cinema-quality videos available for free streaming on a regular basis. Often we present these streamed performances to mark meaningful occasions. Recently we streamed Nicolas Benavides' opera *Tres minutos* to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. We've streamed Ryuichi Sakamoto's *Snow Falls* to mark the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, and Christophe

Chagnard's *Gaman* to recall the expulsion and internment of Japanese Americans from the Seattle area. We've streamed

Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer's *For a Look or a Touch* to honor Pride Month, and Mary Kouyoumdjian's *to open myself, to scream* to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the birth of Roma artist Ceija Stojka. In November 2023, we streamed a video of our premiere of *Raven and the Box of Daylight* for Native American Heritage month.

And, continuing our annual tradition of honoring the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, we streamed free of charge a program of music by Holocaust-era composers with works performed on instruments that we had the rare honor of borrowing from the Violins of Hope collection.



Mina Miller, guest speaker at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York on the occasion of the Ceija Stojka closing night exhibition and New York premiere of Mary Kouyoumdjian's *to open myself, to scream*.



royal alley-barnes, Interim Director of Officer of Arts and Culture, presents Mayor Harrell's Music of Remembrance Day Proclamation, May 21, 2023

Ben VanHouten

## 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. These young people have gone on to make a difference in the world, with some already in high-profile musical careers. The first recipient, cellist Julian Schwarz in 2005, performs around the world and has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to music of the Jewish experience. Violinist Takumi Taguchi, the 2013 recipient, is the youngest member of the Boston Symphony. Violinist Marié Rossano, the 2008 recipient, is a member of the New York

Philharmonic. We're so proud of them, and of all the other young artists who mirror their ideals in their musicmaking.



Ben VanHouten

16-year old Leyna Kitahama (2021 DTMA recipient) performs Gerard Schwarz's *In Memoriam*

*It would be my greatest honor to express the voices of people who found the courage to speak up in the face of oppression, past and present, through my cello.*

**- Leyna Kitahama**

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, contact Nick Newcombe, Director of Development at [nick@musicofremembrance.org](mailto:nick@musicofremembrance.org) or call us at (206) 365-7770.

### Sincere Thanks to our 2022-2023 Artist Sponsors

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

Joan Sandler, 2022-2023 season artist sponsorship  
- Susan Gulkis Assadi, viola

Donna Benaroya, concert production sponsorship  
- Erich Parce, October 2022

Frederick Yudin, concert artist sponsorship  
- soprano Laquita Mitchell, October 2022

Susan Shanbrom-Krabbe and Morris Krabbe, concert  
artist sponsorship - Laura DeLuca, clarinet, May 2023

Janet Cluff, concert artist sponsorship  
- actor Curt Branom, May 2023

Frederick Yudin, concert artist sponsorship  
- soprano Caitlin Lynch, May 2023

\*In blessed memory



## A Spotlight on our Donors

Double bassist Jonathan Green has been a treasured member of the Music of Remembrance family for over twenty years, gracing so many of our performances with his rare artistry and musical wisdom. Jon has also put his belief in our mission into action. Along with his family, Jon has supported us by helping to underwrite some of our most ambitious and impactful commissions. We are grateful beyond words for his musicianship and his generosity.

“I’ve been performing with Music of Remembrance for over 20 years, the first piece being an MOR commission, Paul Schoenfield’s *Camp Songs*. I remember the excitement and challenge of the performance, the beautiful recording we made, and the pride of being involved with an organization that commissioned new music. I knew that I wanted to be involved in bringing more new music to the concert hall through MOR’s commissioning project.

There is a special satisfaction in performing premieres; even greater is the satisfaction for having helped make it happen. It has been an honor to help bring Jake Heggie’s *Another Sunrise* and *Farewell, Auschwitz*, Nick Benavides’ *Tres minutos* and Paul Schoenfield’s *Ghetto Songs* to the stage. I’m looking forward to the premiere of Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer’s new opera *Before It All Goes Dark*.”



Ben VanHouten

### Freddie Yudin

Freddie’s commitment to remembrance began early in his life. A trip with his father to Auschwitz, Terezín and Treblinka was a life-changing experience for both of them. As an educator at Ingraham High school in Seattle, Freddie embodied the lesson he learned from his father: remembering the past and learning from history is the only way we will not repeat it in the future. He was an enthusiastic participant in Music of Remembrance’s educational outreach program, bringing MOR musicians to the classroom to meet his students and perform. We still hear from those students about how that experience transformed them. Freddie especially loves voices, and finds deep meaning in his support for Music of Remembrance singers. He believes that showcasing the transcendent power of the human voice can help ensure that the voices of those who tragically lost their lives will never be silenced.

### Mel and Leena Sturman

Mel and Leena Sturman, longtime Seattle-area residents, were educated at the University of Washington and worked here until retirement. Both hail from immigrant families: his from Poland and hers from Finland. With their deep roots in the community, they are strongly committed to giving back. Mel and Leena are relatively new to the MOR family, and grateful to their dear friends who made that introduction five years ago. MOR’s mission speaks to three key underpinnings of Mel and Leena’s philanthropy: advancing the performing arts, serving the Seattle area’s diverse communities, and confronting discrimination in all its forms. They are inspired by how sensitively MOR addresses complex human rights issues, by the superlative artistic quality of its performances, and by the organization’s 25-year history of exemplary non-profit management.

### The Heritage Society

The Heritage Society is a group of visionaries dedicated to making sure that MOR will continue to remember the Holocaust and honor its lessons while also speaking out on the urgent questions of human rights in our world. These visionary donors are showing their lasting support of Music of Remembrance by making a legacy gift. A bequest is more

than a pledge. It is a promise that our donors’ commitment to the mission and vision of MOR will continue in perpetuity. Their legacy is a gift to the future of Music of Remembrance.

For more information, please contact Nick Newcombe, Development Director at [nick@musicofremembrance.org](mailto:nick@musicofremembrance.org) or 206-777-5864.

# New Commissions Fund

## Commissioning Music That Matters

Our 2023/24 season includes three world premieres — an instrumental vocal work, a dance, and an opera. Sahba Aminikia's *Phoenix*, with a text by Iranian American Zara Houshmand, is a powerful statement about the current women's right struggle in Iran told through three voices representing different generations of Iranian women. New dances from Spectrum Dance Theater's Donald Byrd will add an intimate dimension to the medieval *Golem* legend that has fascinated many generations as a complex metaphor for the struggle to survive during times of persecution. And in May 2024 we'll embark on a three-city tour for the world premiere of *Before It All Goes Dark*, a new opera by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer that depicts one man's odyssey in search of art, truth and identity. This major work is made possible by the generosity of the Clovis Foundation. Looking further ahead, our tribute to Native American experience continues with composer Jerod I. Tate's setting of US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo's poem *Prepare*. The pipeline also includes a focus on the work of Black composers, and a new work about the little-known 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 to create, and even more to produce. MOR's New Commissions Fund provides the indispensable foundation that this artistic commitment requires.

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



Ben VanHouten

World Premiere: *Raven and the Box of Daylight*

## MOR Commissions

- Jake Heggie, *Before It All Goes Dark* 2024
- Donald Byrd, choreography to Betty Olivero's *Zeks Yiddishe Lider Un Tantz* 2024
- Sahba Aminikia, *Phoenix* 2023
- Raven and the Box of Daylight* 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* (arrangement for child voices) 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 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* (expanded instrumentation) 2014
- 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* (arrangement) 2009
- Paul Schoenfield, *Ghetto Songs* 2008
- David Stock, *Mayn Shvester Chaya* 2008
- 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
- Lori Laitman, *Fathers* 2003
- Thomas Pasatieri, *Letter to Warsaw* 2003
- Paul Schoenfield, *Camp Songs* 2002
- David Stock, *A Vanished World* 1999

## Fiscal Year 2022-23 in Review

FY 2022-23	Total	Cash Position	
Individual Donations	218,085	Operating Accounts	305,104
Fundraising Events	146,553	Investments	1,084,138
Foundations & government grants	187,221		
Earned & Investment	75,675		
	627,534	<b>TOTAL Cash Position</b>	<b>1,389,242</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>703,077</b>		
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(75,543)</b>		

**To MOR's faithful family of friends and supporters, we extend our deepest gratitude  
2022–2023 Season (September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023)**

### Cornerstone (\$25,000 & over)

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*\*In blessed memory*





MUSIC OF remembrance®  
ensuring that the voices of musical witness be heard®

Mina Miller, Mary Winton Green Artistic Director



## Art From Ashes

Commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day

**Monday, January 22, 2024**

Free to the Community

MOR joins forces with the young talents of the University of Washington Chamber Orchestra, the Northwest Boychoir and Seattle Girls Choir in a special program of music and words honoring the millions whose lives were taken.



March 10, 2024

## Two World premieres!

Iranian American composer Sahba Aminikia and librettist Zara Houshmand's *Phoenix* — a powerful statement about the current women's rights struggle in Iran told through three voices representing different generations of Iranian women.

And new dances about the Golem legend from Spectrum Dance Theater's Donald Byrd.

## Before It All Goes Dark



World premiere of a new opera by composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer

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 an identity he had never known, and through art he discovers a deeper truth in his life. Based on a true story reported by Howard Reich in the Chicago Tribune.

Music of Remembrance Ensemble  
Erich Parce, Director Joseph Mechavich, conductor

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



[www.musicofremembrance.org](http://www.musicofremembrance.org)

206.365.7770