

TESTIMONIES FOR TOMORROW

Annual Report 2024-2025





Mina Miller

WITNESS THROUGH MUSIC

One of the things that makes me most proud is how Music of Remembrance has responded to a changing world. We've interpreted our commitment to Holocaust remembrance as a mandate to speak boldly on behalf of all those facing persecution or exclusion. We've commissioned and premiered new works on subjects ranging from the worldwide refugee crisis to the persecution of gay people, the threat of nuclear destruction, the separation of families at borders, and much more.

But while our scope has expanded, we remain passionately committed to our core mission. We honor people who refused to be silent, individuals whose moral strength and compassion lit the way for others in times of darkness. We share stories of people who stood up to their oppressors, and people in search of new beginnings in a dangerous world.

Music has the power not only to remember the past but to help shape a more compassionate present and future. Thank you for being part of the MOR family — for listening with open hearts, and for joining us in bearing witness through music.

“

I've performed with MOR as a bassist for more than 20 years, and no other organization offers performers — or audiences — such variety. From the fiendish difficulty of Paul Schoenfield's *Ghetto Songs* to the unearthly sound world of Mary Kouyoumdjian's *to open myself, to scream*, to the heartbreaking beauty of Jake Heggie's *Another Sunrise* — MOR concerts always challenge and inspire me. It's also been a privilege for my family to sponsor new commissions from leading contemporary composers. MOR is a unique organization and my involvement has been a source of deep pride.

— Jon Green, Bassist Emeritus,
Seattle Symphony; MOR Board Vice Chair



Mina Miller, Mikhail Shmidt, Laura DeLuca and Jon Green

Front cover: Baritone Michael Mayes in *After Life*. Credit: Terry Lorant

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Lorri Staal

A year and a half into this role, I'm still amazed by the scope of MOR's accomplishments. This season alone, we carried our mission to three cities — Seattle, San Francisco and San Diego — premiered two commissions, and explored stories that resonate deeply — refugees searching for hope, the Black American experience past and present, identities forced into hiding, and artists confronting their moral choices during wartime.

My parents were Holocaust survivors, and my father taught me to look for “upstanders” — people who risk everything to save others. That's what drew me to MOR, and watching our work this season reminded me why. Through our 50 commissioned works, we don't just remember those who suffered persecution — we celebrate how they kept creating, kept resisting hate, kept inspiring us to stand up when it matters.

Yes, these are challenging times for arts organizations. But I've never felt more hopeful. Working alongside Mina, whose vision built this remarkable organization, and our extraordinary artists, who bring such passion to every performance — it reminds me daily why this work is essential.

To our Board members and donors: your belief in MOR makes all of this possible. Thank you for standing with us as we use music to amplify voices that must be heard.

FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



David Epstein

“People become the stories they hear and the stories they tell.”

– Elie Wiesel

These words resonate deeply with me. For over 25 years, MOR has told stories of resilience and hope that reveal the enduring power of the human spirit, even when facing the seemingly inhumane. Told through music and dance, they serve as moral testimonies not only for remembering the past, but for understanding our present moment. In this age of policy uncertainty and rising marginalization, we need art that builds empathy and inspires courage.

Our May 2026 performances will feature a new work based on conversations with Professor Wiesel, whose life exemplified reaching across generations to open doors of memory, hope, and compassion. Wiesel understood something profound: the arts serve as a portal for the stories that shape who we become, individually, as an organization, and as a community. Please join us as we share these essential narratives.

NEW COMMISSIONS, NEW ART

MOR continues its unique journey of commissioning art focusing on humanitarian issues. This season, MOR presented the world premiere of two new works, bringing the number of commissions to a total of 50.

TRIBULATIONS

On March 16, 2025, MOR presented the world premiere of *Tribulations* by acclaimed Portuguese composer Luís Tinoco. This piece gives voice to the crypto-Jews who secretly practiced their faith to survive the Inquisition. Scored for soprano and chamber ensemble, the piece reflects centuries of persecution and resilience and resonates deeply in today's world. Tinoco is the 2024 recipient of the Pessoa Prize, Portugal's most prestigious arts and sciences award.



Credit: Jim Coleman

The MOR Ensemble with soprano Vanessa Isiguen

“Crypto-Jews faced daily threats and struggled with persecution through centuries. Their stories are particularly relevant nowadays, as we can see both political and religious persecution growing in many regions of the globe. I hope this music invites us to reflect on the urgency to report injustice and respect the most basic human rights. — Luís Tinoco



Credit: Jim Coleman

Tinoco joined Mina Miller onstage for a discussion about his work.

MOR has proved to be ahead of its time in grappling with issues of social justice and persecution. Commissions in recent years have become, alarmingly, more and more topical.

– Thomas May, The Seattle Times



Nia-Amina Minor, Josephine Howell and Spectrum Theater dancers

SOURCE CODE

Our May 16, 2025 concert featured several pieces by leading Black American composers, including *Source Code* by Jessie Montgomery. To accompany *Source Code*, MOR commissioned a new dance from acclaimed choreographer Donald Byrd of Spectrum Dance Theater. His choreography drew from motifs of Black American spirituals, creating a striking complement to Montgomery's music. Byrd's dance opened with chanteuse Josephine Howell's powerful rendition of the spiritual "I Love The Lord," creating a soulful backdrop for the performance.

THE SEASON BY THE NUMBERS

- 144 Artists
- 35 Works
- 7 Concerts
- 3 Cities
- 2 New commissions

AFTER LIFE: ARTISTS' LEGACIES & MORALITY DURING WARTIME



Mezzo-soprano Gabrielle Beteag and soprano Alisa Jordheim

MOR's award-winning 2015 commission, *After Life*, by composer Tom Cipullo and librettist David Mason, returned in an expanded production. The opera imagines the ghosts of Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso confronting their WWII legacies and moral responsibilities — until a nameless orphan girl forces them to reckon with truth they cannot ignore. The production opened with an onstage conversation among the creators and Mina Miller, followed by a musical salon featuring period chamber works evoking Stein and Alice B. Toklas's legendary Parisian gatherings.



Cipullo and Mason discuss *After Life* with Mina Miller.

REFUGEES, RESILIENCE, HOPE

Milad Yousufi

Emmy-winning Afghan-born composer Milad Yousufi performed two of his own compositions that portrayed his refugee experience. Describing the pieces, he reflected that *I cried* captures the refugee's disorientation of displacement, "whirling through the world, unmoored, away from family, home and country," while *Imaginary Peace* sparks his "hopes of peace, love and generosity carried on the journey."



Milad Yousufi, soprano Vanessa Isiguen and the MOR Ensemble

ART FROM ASHES WELCOMES ALL

MOR's annual free concert honoring International Holocaust Remembrance Day highlights the resilience of those who created music even within the walls of ghettos and concentration camps. We help ensure their voices are never forgotten. This year's sold-out performance included cabaret songs written and performed by prisoners in Terezín, new arrangements of music performed by the Men's Auschwitz Orchestra, and the stirring finale from *Farewell, Auschwitz* by Jake Heggie.



Soprano Karen Early Evans, tenor Brendan Tuohy, soprano Megan Renae Parker with Northwest Boychoir and Seattle Girls Choir

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

SHERRY RAISBECK

For over 20 years, Sherry Raisbeck has been a devoted MOR supporter. Through the James D. and Sherry Raisbeck Foundation, she has sponsored concert productions and an Artist Chair for violinist Mikhail Shmidt. A celebrated artist and educator, Sherry brings creativity and dedication to her philanthropy, nurturing Seattle's cultural community and inspiring new generations of artists. Her enduring commitment keeps MOR's mission alive — honoring the past while using music to inspire action toward a more just world.



“MOR has been part of my cultural life for a long time. I feel fortunate to have experienced many thoughtful and moving presentations regarding human struggles that so many have faced in history. To remember these times with compassion is a great gift. Thank you to Music of Remembrance.
– Sherry Raisbeck

CELEBRATING MOR: THE GALA

Thank you to everyone who helped MOR celebrate a successful season at our annual Gala — and thank you for your extraordinary support! We exceeded our goal!



THE HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Heritage Society includes visionaries who support MOR's mission with a bequest. A legacy gift ensures our work honoring historical and current humanitarian issues continues in perpetuity. For more information, contact Development Director Nick Newcombe at nick@musicofremembrance.org or 206.777.5864.

BEFORE IT ALL GOES DARK

Now streaming on Amazon Prime and Apple TV!

MOR's commissioned opera, *Before It All Goes Dark*, by the renowned team of composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer, premiered in May 2024 to critical acclaim and enthusiastic audience response. The production's rave reviews ranged from *BBC Music Magazine* to the *Financial Times*. The video of MOR's performance is now streaming worldwide — a new milestone for MOR!



Ryan McKinny's "strong, mellifluous bass-baritone conveys acute intimations of agony, foreboding and rapture," and Megan Marino's "lucid and warm" mezzo is a "constant delight."

- Opera Magazine

THE NEXT GENERATION

DAVID TONKONOGUI MEMORIAL AWARD ("DTMA")

The DTMA, established 20 years ago in memory of our beloved colleague, expanded this year after MOR received new donations from two generous sponsors. The Junior DTMA is for middle school and high school students, and the new Senior DTMA is for university-level students. Congratulations to Rachel Jung, violin, and Tom Wang, clarinet — recipients of the 2025 Junior DTMA — who will be performing with MOR in the 2025/26 season.

“

DTMA is a way for me to express the idea of equality. Through my music playing, I hope to inspire people with the ideologies of DTMA.

- Tom Wang



Rachel Jung and Susan Gulkis Assadi

“

Through involvement in MOR, I hope to deepen my understanding and commitment to music as a bridge for empathy and connection.

- Rachel Jung

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September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025

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FISCAL YEAR 2024-25

INCOME

Contributed Revenue	\$477,631
Foundations and Gov't Grants	\$106,540
Earned Income	\$57,305
Investment Income	\$32,916

TOTAL INCOME \$674,392

TOTAL EXPENSE \$852,993

CASH POSITION \$1,047,978

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The Sostenuto Society provides the foundation for MOR's fiscal stability. We are deeply grateful to these donors whose three-year commitments reflect their enduring belief in our mission.

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We regret we cannot print the names of all our donors due to limited space, but we are deeply grateful for your support and generosity.

In Memoriam: Gary Karr (1941-2025)



We join people everywhere in mourning the loss of Gary Karr. With his lyrical virtuosity and expressive depth, Gary had a unique impact in elevating the voice of the double bass in classical music. A gifted educator, he inspired countless young artists to expand their musical horizons. Gary was a dear and special friend who believed passionately in MOR's mission. With his many memorable MOR performances, beginning in 2000, and his years as a member of our Artistic Advisory Board, Gary played an important part in shaping our identity. We remember Gary with great love and will always miss him.

Join MOR in 2026 — Save the dates!

January 26, 2026, 5:30 pm

Art From Ashes: Vedom, Benaroya Hall, Seattle

March 15, 2026, 3 pm (World Premiere)

Echoes of Conscience, Benaroya Hall, Seattle

May 17, 2026, 4 pm (World Premiere)

The Dialogue of Memories, Benaroya Hall, Seattle

May 20, 2026, 7:30 pm

The Dialogue of Memories, Presidio Theatre, San Francisco

May 23, 2026, 7:30 pm

May 24, 2026, 3:00 pm

The Dialogue of Memories, Studebaker Theater, Chicago



MOR

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musicofremembrance.org