Orchestra of St. Luke’s Winter-Spring 2023 Includes Bach Festival at Carnegie with Gil Shaham, Jeremy Denk and Hugh Cutting; Continuation of New “Visionary Sounds” Series; Focus on Women Composers and Creators

(January 2023) — Orchestra of St. Luke’s (OSL) gives seven performances at Carnegie Hall this winter and spring, highlighted by the annual OSL Bach Festival in Zankel Hall with pianist
Jeremy Denk, violinist Gil Shaham, and countertenor Hugh Cutting as special guests, the latter two in performances conducted by Principal Conductor Bernard Labadie. “One of the most versatile and galvanic ensembles in the U.S.” (WQXR), the orchestra and Labadie also give two performances in Carnegie’s Stern Auditorium: a concert of Mozart and Schubert with pianist Emanuel Ax, and an all-Handel program featuring La Chapelle de Québec, along with soloists Joëlle Harvey, Iestyn Davies and Matthew Brook. Finally, the concerts in OSL’s Chamber Music Series – with one featuring guest pianist Marc-André Hamelin – are each performed twice, first in Merkin Hall and then in Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall. OSL’s “Visionary Sounds” series, new this season and spotlighting contemporary artists in the intimate Cary Hall at The DiMenna Center for Classical Music, includes a program of the minimalist, improvisatory music of Julius Eastman, and another featuring the music of composer Anna Clyne. Clyne also serves as Composer Mentor for OSL’s DeGaetano Composition Institute, and she represents part of a season-long focus on women and gender-expansive composers and creators, eight of whom are featured in upcoming programs.

James Roe, OSL’s President and Executive Director, elaborates:

“This winter and spring, Orchestra of St. Luke’s is doing what we do best: performing seven concerts of Bach, Mendelssohn, Mozart and other Baroque, Classical and 20th-century composers at Carnegie Hall with world-renowned soloists; presenting a one-of-a-kind concert at Temple Emanu-El on Holocaust-related string instruments; showcasing the works of modern composers Anna Clyne, Tania León, inti figgis-vizueta, Julius Eastman and more at venues in all five boroughs of New York City; presenting performances of the Youth Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and more. We’re called New York’s ‘hometown band’ and love sharing the modern world of classical music with our city.”

Called by New York Magazine “one of our perpetually underappreciated hometown groups,” and New York’s “hometown band” by the New York Times, OSL is also an ensemble of great stylistic versatility across a large spectrum of music from Baroque to contemporary. After the St. Matthew Passion performance last spring, Opera News noted:

“OSL is in part an assemblage of chamber-music players, a quality that came through in the small-ensemble passages with which the work abounds. But it is also a top-notch orchestra, and its playing in massed passages was marked by unity of ensemble and transparent textures.”

**OSL at Carnegie Hall**

In February, Bernard Labadie, whose contract as OSL’s Principal Conductor was recently extended through the orchestra’s 50th anniversary season in 2023-24, leads the orchestra on Carnegie’s mainstage with pianist Emanuel Ax. Praised by the Houston Chronicle for his “fleeting, seemingly effortless, un-showy virtuosity” and “unpretentious, masterful way with Mozart,” the pianist performs Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 18, on a program that culminates with Schubert’s Symphony No. 9, “The Great” (Feb 9).

For OSL’s April Carnegie performance, Labadie leads an all-Handel program with La Chapelle de Québec, of which he is the Founding Conductor, and soprano Joëlle Harvey, countertenor Iestyn.
Davies, and bass-baritone Matthew Brook as soloists. The royal-themed program comprises Handel’s four coronation anthems composed for King George II; his Music for the Royal Fireworks, composed under contract for the same monarch to celebrate the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; and his Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne (April 13).

OSL Bach Festival in association with Carnegie Hall (June 6–20)

In June, OSL returns to Carnegie’s Zankel Hall to celebrate J.S. Bach’s musical legacy with its annual OSL Bach Festival. The first program features pianist Jeremy Denk, “an artist you want to hear no matter what he performs” (New York Times), playing and directing six of Bach’s keyboard concertos (June 6).

Labadie, renowned worldwide for his interpretations of eighteenth-century repertoire, leads the other two programs. His leadership of the St. Matthew Passion last spring was met with unanimous acclaim: the New York Times declared that under his baton “the music was unwaveringly measured but balanced; its flashes of grandeur didn’t need to be overstated to land powerfully.” The first of his two programs, “Suites and Concertos,” comprises violin concertos and orchestral suites in the French Baroque style, showcasing the intricate brilliance of Bach’s purely instrumental music. Violinist Gil Shaham – declared by the New York Times to be “a virtuoso and a player of deeply intense sincerity” and by The Guardian “among the most inspired violinists of his generation” – joins Labadie and OSL for the performance (June 13).

The festival closes with a program of vocal virtuosity, titled “The Baroque Voice.” Countertenor Hugh Cutting, a rising international star who made his acclaimed Carnegie Hall debut in OSL’s St. Matthew Passion last season, returns as featured artist, singing Bach’s fervent and dramatic Cantata 170 and virtuoso opera arias by George Frideric Handel that showcase Cutting’s dazzling voice (June 20).

Anna Clyne collaboration and DeGaetano Composition Institute

Described as a “composer of uncommon gifts and unusual methods” (New York Times), Anna Clyne continues her expanded collaboration with the orchestra this winter and spring in three of OSL’s signature initiatives: “Visionary Sounds,” the Chamber Music Series, and the DeGaetano Composition Institute.

OSL has renewed Clyne’s role as Composer Mentor of its annual DeGaetano Composition Institute – which commissions and premieres new orchestral works from exceptional emerging composers each year – through 2025. Participants receive personalized mentorship, tailored professional guidance, and creative opportunities over the course of seven months, culminating in a week-long residency in New York City and a world premiere performance by OSL. Named for the late pianist and composer Robert DeGaetano (1946–2015), the DeGaetano Composition Institute was founded in 2019 with a visionary gift from the composer’s estate.

The culmination of the 2023 Institute will be a concert of world premieres by Institute composers on July 25 at OSL’s home, The DiMenna Center for Classical Music. The composers
will base their compositions on poetry by a living poet, and this season’s three commissioned world premieres bring the total to eleven new works for orchestra since the Institute’s founding. Clyne says:

“I am delighted to continue my role as a mentor for three exceptional composers as they develop their skills for orchestral writing as part of the DeGaetano Composition Institute. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to develop their craft in collaboration with OSL musicians and to receive career advice from industry professionals through a series of workshops and masterclasses during a summer residency in New York City in summer 2023. At the heart of this new Institute is a commitment to developing the orchestral repertoire over two decades.”

The three composers participating in the 2023 DeGaetano Composition Institute are: Carlos Bandera, Tommy Dougherty, and Molly Herron.

Clyne is one of nine women and gender-expansive composers and creators featured in OSL’s programming this winter and spring, including composers inti figgis-vizueta, Gabriela Lena Frank, Molly Herron, Tania León, Keyla Orozco, Florence Price and Fanny Mendelssohn, as well as filmmaker Jyll Bradley.

“Visionary Sounds” at DiMenna Center

Earlier this season, OSL launched “Visionary Sounds,” a new, interdisciplinary series at The DiMenna Center that spotlights twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists. Each concert’s program focuses on one artist while including a wide variety of related visual art, literature, music, and more.

After a fall program – lauded as “an especially satisfying and rewarding experience” by Seen and Heard International – that featured Pulitzer Prize-winning former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove, the second “Visionary Sounds” program of the season is dedicated to Anna Clyne’s chamber works. In counterpoint to the music are films from cutting-edge visual artists Josh Dorman – who constructs “fantasy lands and visual puns with the wonky, romantic intensity of a daydreaming ten-year-old” (New Yorker) – and Jyll Bradley, whose acclaimed work in sculpture, installation, and drawing uses light to explore ideas of place, space, and identity. Also on the program will be selections from Bach’s Art of the Fugue and Steve Reich’s New York Counterpoint (March 16).

Last season’s digital “Sounds and Stories” series featured an account of Femenine, an improvisatory tour de force by the late Julius Eastman, who strove to be “Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, [and] a homosexual to the fullest,” and whose take on minimalism was “idiosyncratic and perhaps ahead of its time” (New York Times). Celebrating Pride Month and queer artistry, the last “Visionary Sounds” performance of the season features Eastman’s Gay Guerilla and Stay On It (June 22).

Chamber Music Series
OSL’s Chamber Music Series hearkens back to the ensemble’s roots in 1974, when it was formed by a group of virtuosic chamber musicians performing in Greenwich Village. This season, the series highlights music by women, and each program will be performed twice, first at Merkin Hall and then in Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall.

In February and March, the series pairs piano quintets by Florence Price and Johannes Brahms. Price, the first Black woman to have a work performed by a major American orchestra, has received sustained attention by OSL since 2018, including the Carnegie Hall premiere of her String Quartet in the 2021-22 season. Price’s Piano Quintet in A minor – heard for the first time at Carnegie Hall in this performance, as far as is known – is paired with Brahms’s F minor contribution to the same genre, with the piano part in both quintets performed by guest pianist Marc-André Hamelin (Feb 28 & March 1).

Finally, in keeping with both OSL’s multi-season focus on the works of Felix Mendelssohn and OSL’s Chamber Series focus on women composers, the last concert in the series this season highlights the works of both Mendelssohn and his sister, Fanny Mendelssohn. Her Piano Trio in D minor – again, in its first known Carnegie Hall performance – and a selection of her songs are heard alongside her brother’s Piano Sextet in D. Guest performers are pianist David Fung and soprano Liv Redpath, an audience favorite who made her debut with OSL during last season’s Chamber Music Series (May 2 & 3).

Education and Community Engagement Concert Series
Each season, OSL travels to all five New York City boroughs with its free Five Borough Tour, representing the orchestra’s longstanding commitment to offering accessible performances to the New York City community. This season’s program, Viajes y Raíces (Journeys and Origins), is an intimate reflection on memory, place, and identity that features the music of Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Tania León alongside two formidable composers from her creative community: inti figgis-vizueta and Keyla Orozco. Paying homage to a wide variety of traditions, the concert program comprises a series of string quartets, illuminating how each composer reflects on their own origins and explorations through their distinct musical language (March 2–12).

Twice a year, OSL invites New York City’s public-school students to attend Free School Concerts, outstanding classical music performances designed especially for young people. These OSL concerts reach more than 10,000 children annually, and for many it is their first live orchestral experience. In the spring, the School Concerts celebrate composer Gabriela Lena Frank, who was included in the Washington Post’s 2017 list of the 35 most significant women composers in history and currently serves as Composer-in-Residence with the Philadelphia Orchestra. During this interactive performance, students will learn about Frank’s multicultural heritage and musical inspiration. Hosted by writer, musician, and performance artist Aya Aziz and led by Charleston Symphony Associate Conductor and Royal Scottish National Orchestra Assistant Conductor Kellen Gray, the program highlights Frank’s belief in the power of music as a vehicle for civic engagement. Performances will be at Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center (May 10–12).
Other performances
On April 24 at New York’s Plaza Hotel, OSL’s annual Gift of Music Gala, hosted by David Hyde Pierce, recognizes outstanding individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the world of music. The event includes cocktails, dinner, an OSL concert, and dancing.

At Temple Emanu-El’s Streicker Center this winter, OSL performs “Violins of Hope,” memorializing those who were lost during the darkest days of the Jewish people with a collection of Holocaust-related string instruments (Jan 27). In May, the orchestra joins the Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue under the baton of Jeremy Filsell for a program titled “American Lamentations,” with Trevor Weston’s composition by the same name sharing the bill with music of Barber, Copland and the late Ned Rorem (May 16).

About Orchestra of St. Luke’s
Orchestra of St. Luke’s (OSL) grew from a group of virtuoso musicians performing chamber music concerts at Greenwich Village’s Church of St. Luke in the Fields in 1974. Regular seasons see OSL perform in diverse musical genres at New York’s major concert venues, drawing on an expanded roster for large-scale works, and collaborating with artists ranging from Joshua Bell and Renée Fleming to Bono and Metallica. The orchestra has commissioned more than 60 new works and has given more than 175 world, U.S., and New York City premieres, while also participating in 118 recordings, four of which have been recognized with Grammy Awards. Internationally celebrated for his expertise in 18th-century music, Bernard Labadie was appointed as OSL’s Principal Conductor in 2018, continuing the orchestra’s long tradition of working with proponents of historical performance practice. Built and operated by OSL, The DiMenna Center for Classical Music opened in 2011. New York City’s only rehearsal, recording, education and performance space expressly dedicated to classical music, it serves more than 500 ensembles and 30,000 musicians each year.

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Orchestra of St. Luke’s: Winter/Spring 2023
Jan 27
New York, NY
The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center
Orchestra of St. Luke’s
“Violins of Hope”
ELMAN: “In a Gondola Impromptu”
MENDELSSOHN: “Grave-Allegro” from Symphony No. 9 in C
BEETHOVEN: “Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo” from String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor
BACH: Concerto for Two Violins in D minor
John WILLIAMS: Schindler’s List

Feb 9
New York, NY
Carnegie Hall (Stern Auditorium)
Orchestra of St. Luke’s
“Emanuel Ax Plays Mozart”
Bernard Labadie, Principal Conductor
Emanuel Ax, piano
MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 18 in B-flat
SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 9, “Great”

Feb 14
New York, NY
Radio City Music Hall
“Lang Lang – The Disney Book”
Featuring scores from Mary Poppins, Frozen, Mulan, Beauty and the Beast and more

Feb 28
New York, NY
Kaufman Music Center (Merkin Hall)
St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble
OSL Presents: Chamber Music Series
“Piano Quintets with Hamelin”
Marc-André Hamelin, piano
PRICE: Piano Quintet in A minor
BRAHMS: Piano Quintet in F minor

March 1
New York, NY
Carnegie Hall (Weill Recital Hall)
St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble
“Piano Quintets with Hamelin”
Marc-André Hamelin, piano
PRICE: Piano Quintet in A minor
BRAHMS: Piano Quintet in F minor

March 2-12
New York, NY
OSL Presents: NYC Five-Borough Tour
“Viajes y Raíces”

Tania LEÓN: Esencia

inti FIGGIS-VIZUETA: Talamh (land)

Keyla OROZCO: Souvenirs
  March 2: Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, Bronx
  March 3: Americas Society, Manhattan
  March 5: Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn
  March 11: Snug Harbor Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art, Staten Island
  March 12: Flushing Town Hall, Queens

March 16
New York, NY
The DiMenna Center for Classical Music (Cary Hall)
St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble
OSL Presents: Visionary Sounds, Anna Clyne
With films by Josh Dorman and Jyll Bradley
BACH: Selections from The Art of the Fugue
Anna CLYNE: Woman Holding a Balance
Anna CLYNE: Pardes
Anna CLYNE: Selections from The Violin
Steve REICH: New York Counterpoint

April 13
New York, NY
Carnegie Hall (Stern Auditorium)
Orchestra of St. Luke’s
“Handel’s Royal Fireworks”
Bernard Labadie, Principal Conductor
Joélle Harvey, soprano
Iestyn Davies, countertenor
Matthew Brook, bass-baritone
La Chapelle de Québec
HANDEL: Coronation Anthems
  "Zadok the priest," HWV 258
  "The King shall rejoice," HWV 260
  "My heart is inditing," HWV 261
  "Let thy hand be strengthened," HWV 259
HANDEL: Music for the Royal Fireworks
HANDEL: Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne, HWV 74

April 24
New York, NY
Plaza Hotel
Gift of Music Gala
Orchestra of St. Luke's
Bernard Labadie, Principal Conductor
David Hyde Pierce, host
Sterling Elliott, cello
SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 5
HAYDN: Cello Concerto in C

May 2
New York, NY
Kaufman Music Center (Merkin Hall)
St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble
OSL Presents: Chamber Music Series
“Mendelssohns Salon”
David Fung, piano
Liv Redpath, soprano
Fanny MENDELSSOHN: Piano Trio in D minor
Felix MENDELSSOHN: Piano Sextet in D

May 3
New York, NY
Carnegie Hall (Weill Recital Hall)
St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble
OSL Presents: Chamber Music Series
“Mendelssohns Salon”
David Fung, piano
Liv Redpath, soprano
Fanny MENDELSSOHN: Piano Trio in D minor
Felix MENDELSSOHN: Piano Sextet in D

May 10-12
New York, NY
Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center
OSL Presents: School Concerts
“The Inspiration of Gabriela Lena Frank”
Kellen Gray, Conductor
Aya Aziz, Host
Gabriela Lena FRANK: Selections from Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout
Gabriela Lena FRANK: Selections from Milagros

May 16
New York, NY
Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue
Orchestra of St. Luke's
Jeremy Filsell, conductor
The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys
Trevor WESTON: American Lamentations (world premiere)
BARBER: Knoxville: Summer of 1915
ROREM: O God, My Heart is Ready
COPLAND: Four Motets
June 6
New York, NY
Carnegie Hall (Zankel Hall)
Orchestra of St. Luke’s
Bach Festival: “Keyboard Concertos with Jeremy Denk”
Jeremy Denk, piano and director
BACH: Keyboard Concertos

June 13
New York, NY
Carnegie Hall (Zankel Hall)
Orchestra of St. Luke’s
Bach Festival: “Suites and Concertos”
Gil Shaham, violin
Bernard Labadie, principal conductor
BACH: Orchestral Suites No. 3 and No. 4
BACH: Violin Concerto in E
BACH: Violin Concerto in A minor

June 20
New York, NY
Carnegie Hall (Zankel Hall)
Orchestra of St. Luke’s
Bach Festival: “The Baroque Voice”
Bernard Labadie, principal conductor
Hugh Cutting, countertenor
BACH: Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust
HANDEL: Select arias from Giulio Cesare, Tolomeo, and Partenope

June 22
New York, NY
The DiMenna Center for Classical Music (Cary Hall)
St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble
OSL Presents: Visionary Sounds, Julius Eastman
EASTMAN: Gay Guerilla
EASTMAN: Stay On It

July 25
New York, NY
The DiMenna Center for Classical Music (Cary Hall)
World Premieres for Orchestra
2022 DeGaetano Composition Institute composers (OSL commissions)

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