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Orchestra of St. Luke’s Presents Bach Festival at Carnegie with Gil Shaham, Jeremy Denk and Hugh Cutting (June 6–20)

(May 2023) — Orchestra of St. Luke’s (OSL) returns to Carnegie’s Zankel Hall to celebrate J.S. Bach’s musical legacy in the annual OSL Bach Festival, presented in association with Carnegie Hall (June 6, 13, 20). This season’s all-star lineup of guest artists includes pianist Jeremy Denk, violinist Gil Shaham, and countertenor Hugh Cutting, with the latter two in performances conducted by OSL Principal Conductor Bernard Labadie. “One of the most versatile and galvanic ensembles in the U.S.” (WQXR), OSL can also be heard this spring in the last concert of the
“Visionary Sounds” series, featuring the music of Julius Eastman (June 22), and in a concert of orchestral premieres by the composers of the 2023 DeGaetano Composition Institute under the mentorship of composer Anna Clyne and conducted by Brad Lubman (July 25).

Marking the third in-person edition of the OSL Bach Festival after two online presentations during the height of the pandemic, this season’s festival opens with 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 as “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 – from Giulio Cesare, Ariodante, Agrippina and Partenope – that showcase Cutting’s dazzling voice (June 20).

Described as a “composer of uncommon gifts and unusual methods” (New York Times), Anna Clyne serves as Composer Mentor of OSL’s annual DeGaetano Composition Institute, which commissions and premieres new orchestral works from exceptional emerging composers each year. 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 under the baton of Brad Lubman, one of the foremost conductors of contemporary music and founding Co-Artistic and Music Director of Ensemble Signal. 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. A concert of world premieres by 2023 Institute composers takes place on July 25 at OSL’s home, the DiMenna Center for Classical Music.

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).
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: OSL Bach Festival and Spring 2023

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 Concerto in D, BWV 1054
BACH: Keyboard Concerto in A, BWV 1055
BACH: Keyboard Concerto in E, BWV 1053
BACH: Keyboard Concerto in F minor, BWV 1056
BACH: Keyboard Concerto in F, BWV 1057
BACH: Keyboard Concerto in D minor, BWV 1052

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, BWV 1068-69
BACH: Violin Concerto in E, BWV 1042
BACH: Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV 1041

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, BWV 170
HANDEL: Select arias from Giulio Cesare, Ariodante, Agrippina, 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
Brad Lubman, conductor
2023 DeGaetano Composition Institute composers (OSL commissions)

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