



Press Release

**ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S ANNOUNCES ITS 2020–2021 SERIES PRESENTED BY CARNEGIE HALL
AND LED BY PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR BERNARD LABADIE**

December 2020 Program Begins Multi-Year Exploration of Mendelssohn's Masterpieces with Violinist Isabelle Faust, Soprano Lauren Snouffer, Mezzo-Soprano Cecelia Hall, Women of the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and Actor David Hyde Pierce

Pianist Emanuel Ax Joins OSL in January 2021 for a Concert Celebrating Mozart and Schubert

La Chapelle Québec Joins OSL for Festive *Music for Royals* in March 2021, with Soprano Amanda Forsythe, Tenor Samuel Boden, and Bass-Baritone Matthew Brook

New York, NY, January 28, 2020 — **Orchestra of St. Luke's (OSL)** announced details of its 2020–21 subscription series presented by Carnegie Hall. Principal Conductor **Bernard Labadie**, a specialist in music of the Baroque and Classical era, will lead the three programs. Joining OSL will be an array of soloists, some of them making their Carnegie Hall or OSL debuts, as well as such returning favorites as the chamber choir founded by Labadie, La Chapelle de Québec, and internationally celebrated pianist Emanuel Ax. In the Carnegie Hall programs, Maestro Labadie will bring his singular artistic vision and historically informed performance practice to New York audiences with works by Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schubert, Handel and Bach.

Maestro Labadie opens the series with two works by Felix Mendelssohn on **December 3, 2020**. The concert serves as a point of departure for the ensemble to embark on a multi-year exploration of the composer's works. Celebrated violinist **Isabelle Faust**, praised for her "passion, grit and electricity" by *The New York Times*, makes her OSL debut with Mendelssohn's beloved Violin Concerto. Emmy and Tony Award-winning actor **David Hyde Pierce** joins as narrator of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which will also feature soprano **Lauren Snouffer**, mezzo-soprano **Cecelia Hall**, and **Women of the Westminster Symphonic Choir**.

For the second concert on **January 28, 2021** Labadie takes us to Vienna with celebrated Mozartean, pianist **Emanuel Ax**, with works composed by Mozart and Schubert. He joins the orchestra for his OSL Carnegie Hall debut in a performance of the composer's Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major. This will be followed by a work influenced by Beethoven: Schubert's Symphony No. 9 in C Major "The Great," written in 1825 in reaction to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which had premiered in Vienna the year before.

Music for Royals is the theme for the third concert, on **March 18, 2021** with Labadie and OSL joined by guest artists soprano **Amanda Forsythe**, tenor **Samuel Boden**, and bass-baritone **Matthew Brook**. Three of Handel's four magnificent anthems written for the coronation of George II in 1727 — *Zadok The Priest*, *The King Shall Rejoice*, and *My Heart Is Inditing* — will be presented featuring **La Chapelle de Québec**, as well as the bombastic *Fireworks* music written for the outdoor celebration of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the 1748 treaty that brought a temporary end to the War of Austrian Succession. Following two years of OSL's exciting Bach Festival, Labadie brings J.S. Bach to the mainstage of Carnegie Hall for the first time with the orchestra with a performance of the cantata, *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen*, written to celebrate the anniversary of the election of Augustus III as king of Poland in October 1734.

For more information on Orchestra of St. Luke's 2020–2021 Season, visit OSLmusic.org.

About Orchestra of St. Luke's

Orchestra of St. Luke's (OSL), an independent orchestra and arts organization, evolved from a group of virtuoso musicians who began performing concerts at Greenwich Village's Church of St. Luke in the Fields in 1974. Now in its 45th season, the Orchestra performs over 70 times each year at venues throughout New York City and beyond. Celebrated expert in 18th-century music, Bernard Labadie, became OSL's Principal Conductor in 2018, continuing the Orchestra's long tradition of working with proponents of historical performance practice.

OSL's signature programming includes an orchestra series presented by Carnegie Hall, now in its 33rd season; the OSL Bach Festival, presented in association with Carnegie Hall and at other venues; the Chamber Music Series presented at The Morgan Library & Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and Merkin Hall; the *Music in Color* free community concert tour of New York City's five-boroughs; a summer residency at Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, now in its 42nd season and a creative partnership with Paul Taylor American Modern Dance, where OSL provides live musical accompaniment during the company's annual Lincoln Center season.

OSL's education programs includes the Free School Concerts series, presenting innovative concerts to student audiences since 1977; Youth Orchestra of St. Luke's, providing free instrumental coaching to elementary and middle-school students; and the DeGaetano Composition Institute, providing emerging composers mentorship and creative support as they develop new works to be performed by the Orchestra.

In 2011, OSL opened The DiMenna Center for Classical Music New York City's only rehearsal, recording, education, and performance space expressly dedicated to classical music. The Center serves more than 500 ensembles and more than 30,000 musicians each year.

Learn more at OSLmusic.org or @OSLmusic on Instagram, Facebook, Spotify and more.

About Bernard Labadie, Principal Conductor

Widely recognized as one of the world's leading conductors of Baroque, Classical, and Early-Romantic repertoire, Bernard Labadie made his debut with OSL as Principal Conductor Designate at the Caramoor Summer Music Festival on July 2, 2017 leading an all-Mozart program. Now, as OSL's fifth Principal Conductor, he joins the distinguished roster of Pablo Heras-Casado (2011-2017), Roger Norrington (1990-1994), Charles Mackerras (1998-2001), and Donald Runnicles (2001-2007). Bernard Labadie received an Honorary Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Manhattan School of Music in May 2018.

In addition to his appearances with Orchestra of St. Luke's, in 2020–2021 Maestro Labadie will guest conduct the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Cleveland Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, Berlin Radio Symphony, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Opera National de Bordeaux-Aquitaine, and NDR Radiophilharmonie. Recent guest conducting highlights include the Chicago Symphony, Handel & Haydn Society, National Arts Center Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, Utah Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Orchestre symphonique de Québec, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Orchestre National de Lyon and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

French-Canadian Labadie founded the celebrated chamber orchestra Les Violons du Roy in 1984 and brought it to international renown during his 30-year tenure as Music Director until 2014. Labadie is a regular guest conductor with all the major North American orchestras and has appeared locally with the New York Philharmonic, The Metropolitan Opera, and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra. His notable European engagements include the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and has frequent assignments with period-instrument orchestras including Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The English Concert, and Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin. An eminent opera conductor, Maestro Labadie has served as Artistic Director of Opéra de Québec and Opéra de Montréal. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut during the 2009–2010 season with Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

Bernard Labadie's extensive discography comprises many critically acclaimed recordings on the Dorian, ATMA, Hyperion, and Virgin Classics labels, including a collaborative recording of Mozart's Requiem with Les Violons du Roy and La Chapelle de Québec, both of which received Canada's Juno Award. He has received Paris' Samuel de Champlain award, the Canadian government's Officer of the Order of Canada, and his home province has named him Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Québec.

[OSL 2020-21 CARNEGIE HALL SERIES](#)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2020, 8:00 PM

Mendelssohn Midsummer and Violin Concerto

Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage

Orchestra of St. Luke's

Bernard Labadie, Principal Conductor

Isabelle Faust, Violin

Lauren Snouffer, Soprano

Cecelia Hall, Mezzo-Soprano

Women of the Westminster Symphonic Choir

David Hyde Pierce, Narrator

MENDELSSOHN Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64

MENDELSSOHN A Midsummer Night's Dream, Op. 61

Violinist **Isabelle Faust** joins OSL for this performance of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, his last large orchestral work, and one of the most popular and frequently played violin concertos in history. During the summer of 1838, Mendelssohn wrote to his longtime friend and collaborator Ferdinand David: "I should like to write a violin concerto for you next winter. One in E minor runs through my head, the beginning of which gives me no peace." Due to concerts and other commitments it took six years to complete and was

premiered in 1845 in Leipzig. The concerto was innovative in its time in many ways, and an example is the almost immediate entrance of the violin at the beginning of the work.

At age 17 Mendelssohn, having read German translations of Shakespeare as a boy, wrote a piece of music inspired by the comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The piece, the embodiment of the Romantic ideal of the marriage of music and poetry, quickly became a popular favorite as a concert overture throughout Europe. Sixteen years later King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia commissioned him to write incidental music to accompany performances of the play at the royal court. Close to the end of his life, the composer was able to recapture the spirit of his youthful imagination. Decades later Mendelssohn's music inspired George Balanchine's first original full-length ballet, a masterpiece created in 1962.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2021, 8:00 PM

Schubert "Great" and Emanuel Ax

Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage

Bernard Labadie, Conductor

Emanuel Ax, Piano

MOZART Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major, K. 453

SCHUBERT Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D.944, "The Great"

Composed in April 1784 in Vienna for his pupil Barbara Von Ployer, whose father was a Viennese agent for the Salzburg Court, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major is one of the few piano concertos published during the composer's lifetime and one of his few works subject to written criticism by his contemporaries. Six weeks before it was first publicly performed, Mozart heard a caged starling in a pet shop near his home singing the theme from the final movement, the Allegretto. He was so charmed he bought the bird, who lived with the family as a beloved pet for four years, one of the most prolific periods in Mozart's life.

Franz Schubert came of age in Vienna when Mozart, who had died six years before Schubert was born, was beginning to receive his due as a great composer. Beethoven and Schubert co-existed in the small city for 31 years, traveling in different social circles, and while it is unknown if Schubert and Beethoven ever met, Schubert attended the historic premiere of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. A year later he had completed his own Ninth Symphony, which famously includes a quotation from the Ode to Joy theme from Beethoven's epic finale, explicitly acknowledging his debt to the master. As for Beethoven, on his deathbed he read through some manuscripts of Schubert's songs and said to a friend, "Truly in Schubert there is the divine spark."

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021, 8:00 PM

Music for Royals: Handel and Bach

Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage

Orchestra of St. Luke's

Bernard Labadie, Principal Conductor

Amanda Forsythe, Soprano

Samuel Boden, Tenor

Matthew Brook, Bass-Baritone

La Chapelle de Québec

HANDEL *Zadok The Priest*, HWV 258
HANDEL *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, HWV 351
HANDEL *The King Shall Rejoice*, HWV 260
HANDEL *My Heart Is Inditing*, HWV 261
J.S. BACH Cantata *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen*, BWV 215

The halls of Stern Auditorium will ring with timeless celebratory vocal works by Handel and Bach in this concert which was inspired by music written for royal occasions. Labadie and OSL are joined by the vocal forces of **La Chapelle de Québec**, soprano **Amanda Forsythe**, tenor **Samuel Boden**, and bass-baritone **Matthew Brook**.

Before his death from a stroke in 1727, George I of Great Britain signed an act making George Frideric Handel and others naturalized citizens. When the king died, it was announced that “Mr. Hendel [sic], the famous composer for the opera, is approved by the King to compose the Anthem at the Coronation” for George II and his queen, Caroline, which would take place on October 11 of that year. The OSL program includes three anthems written for that splendid occasion, showing Handel’s choral writing and orchestral accompaniment at its most convincing and magnificent. When some interfering bishops implied his ignorance of Holy Scripture, Handel replied, “I have read my Bible very well, and shall chuse for myself.”

Known for its opening orchestral build-up and mighty first choir entry, based on a Biblical text on the anointing of Solomon first used for the coronation of King Edgar in Bath Abbey in 973, Handel’s *Zadok, The Priest* has been heard at the coronation of every English sovereign since that of George II. *The King shall rejoice*, from a text from Psalm 21, has an elegantly swung middle movement, ‘Exceeding glad shall he be’, full of melismata and suspensions. *My heart is inditing* follows its grand opening with two lyrical movements, ‘Kings’ daughters’ and ‘Upon thy right hand’ and is based on a text by Henry Purcell who had composed it for the coronation of King James II in 1685.

Already known for his ‘Fire Musick’ from *Atalanta* (which was a regular accompaniment to firework displays in the London pleasure gardens), Handel was commissioned to supply suitable music for a public event with fireworks, marking the signing of the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which ended the War of Austrian Succession. The creation of *Music for the Royal Fireworks* was marked with disagreements between the composer and the Master General of the Ordnance, who was responsible for military music, and the Comptroller of his Majesty’s Fireworks as well as for War as for Triumph. The king himself got involved, saying, “he hoped there would be no fiddles.”

J.S. Bach’s joyous secular cantata, *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen* (“Praise your good fortune, blessed Saxony”) was first performed in 1734 in celebration of the anniversary of the election of August III, Elector of Saxony, as King of Poland. The Elector and his family watched from the balcony of their residence in Leipzig, as, following a torch-light procession of 600 students, the musicians and singers performed al fresco. The cantata is the basis for the Osanna in Bach’s Mass in B minor.

Subscription tickets for OSL’s 2020–2021 Carnegie Hall Season are on sale now at carnegiehall.org.

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