

For immediate release  
OSL's DiMenna Center turns 10 this March

Contact Glenn Petry (212) 625 2038  
gpetry@21cmediagroup.com

## Orchestra of St. Luke's Celebrates 10th Anniversary of DiMenna Center for Classical Music This March: A Story of Vision, Service & Philanthropy



*The DiMenna Center for Classical Music (courtesy of OSL)*

The **DiMenna Center for Classical Music** celebrates its **tenth anniversary** this March. Located in midtown Manhattan, the \$36 million, 20,000 square-foot complex was designed and built by [Orchestra of St. Luke's \(OSL\)](#) – “a mainstay of New York’s classical scene” (*New Yorker*) – to

serve both as the ensemble's home and as the **city's only rehearsal, recording and production space optimized for classical music**. Since the venue's opening in 2011, more than 30,000 musicians and 500 ensembles have created art at the DiMenna Center, where OSL subsidizes all rentals to ensure access to its superlative facilities. In addition to serving the rehearsal needs of NYC's musical community, the DiMenna Center is one of the busiest rehearsal and recording studios on the east coast, hosting recordings of Oscar-, Tony-, Grammy- and Golden Globe-winning titles. When the pandemic closed concert halls, the DiMenna stepped in with the installation of **new, state-of-the-art audiovisual production services**. Today the complex is New York's leading venue for recording and live-streaming digital performance, including OSL's own rich array of virtual offerings. Hailed at its opening as "**a proven success**" (*New York Times*) and paid for in its entirety since July 2019, the DiMenna Center represents a **triumph of vision, service and philanthropy**.

**James Roe**, OSL's President and Executive Director, comments:

"OSL Board of Directors and New York City's philanthropic community embraced the vision for the DiMenna Center with an outpouring of financial support. The two fundraising campaigns associated with the DiMenna Center raised over \$50 million and transformed music production in New York City. Through performance, recordings and broadcasts, millions of people around the world have heard music created at the DiMenna Center."

The DiMenna Center for Classical Music was first conceived in 2004, when a study identified the pressing need of New York City's classical community for first-rate, affordable rehearsal and recording space. In November 2008, OSL purchased a suite of off-Broadway theaters in midtown Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood. An exceptional project leadership team – including **H3 Hardy Collaboration Architecture, A'kustiks, and Barr and Barr** – set to work designing and developing a space that would meet classical musicians' unique needs. Construction began in May 2010, and OSL celebrated the grand opening of the DiMenna Center on March 8, 2011.

The DiMenna Center project has transformed OSL's mission and business. Always a collaborative organization, OSL built the complex as a hub for creative enterprises throughout New York's classical sector. This contributed to financial growth that is rarely seen in the cultural world. At the project's outset in 2004, OSL's operating budget was \$4.5 million with net assets of \$1.6 million. In the years that followed, OSL's operating budget grew to **\$7.7 million** and today the organization has net assets of **\$40 million**.

The DiMenna Center has inspired a harmonious chorus of approval. The *New York Times* observed:

"**Bright, clean, acoustically live, with even a bit of natural light filtering in**, ... the center is intended as a boon not only to the Orchestra of St. Luke's, a 36-year-old ensemble made up of top freelancers and renowned especially for its versatility, but also to the New York classical music world as a whole."

*Arch Daily* agreed:

“The DiMenna Center is the city’s **first subsidized rental rehearsal and recording center for the classical music community**. ... The project team designed the center around the musicians’ experience – creating a **warm, welcoming, and healthy interior environment**.”

As *Sonic Scoop* concluded:

“**The DiMenna Center is a significant addition to the NYC musical landscape**: The facility fills a big hole for symphony-sized ensembles that will no longer have to beg, borrow and steal practice time at stages scattered around the city. ... Most of the music may be classical, but **the infrastructure ... is pure 21st century for maximum record and playback flexibility**.”

In its ten years of operations, the DiMenna Center has hosted many of today’s leading artists and ensembles, including **Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Philip Glass, John Legend, Audra McDonald, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Questlove, Rhianna and Sting**, as well as the **International Contemporary Ensemble, Manhattan Girls Chorus, Metropolitan Opera, New York Youth Symphony** and **Orpheus Chamber Orchestra**, among many notable others.

Operated by OSL’s longtime audio partner, **Audiosmith Digital Solutions**, the ideal acoustics and technological capacity of the DiMenna Center have made it a sought-after sound stage for scoring major motion pictures and television. Top studios – including **Amazon, Amblin, Columbia Pictures, DreamWorks, ESPN, Fox 2000 Pictures, HBO, Netflix, Paramount Pictures, Universal** and **Warner Brothers Pictures** – have recorded 38 film and television scores at the DiMenna Center. Celebrated examples include ***Collateral Beauty; Gemini Man; The Girl on the Train; The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel; The Greatest Showman; In the Heights; I, Tonya; Joker; Little Women; Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*** and ***West Side Story***. The DiMenna Center is also an essential resource for New York’s theater community. The music for the **Tony Awards** is recorded at the DiMenna Center, as have been 26 Broadway cast albums.

**Norman Benzaquen**, Chairman of OSL’s Board of Directors, says:

“When OSL built the DiMenna Center, we built a strong future for our orchestra and for New York City’s music industry. Our vision was growth and the results exceeded our highest expectations.”

Superstar violinist **Joshua Bell** adds:

“The DiMenna Center is one of New York City’s jewels. I love recording there!”

Building on the success of its digital fall offerings, tomorrow (**Feb 17**) OSL launches the **OSL Live Wednesday Night Series** with “**Fanny and Felix**,” the first of nine curated concerts, all conceived expressly for the online experience, and streaming live from the DiMenna Center under the superlative direction of award-winning filmmaker **Tristan Cook**. Featuring Grammy-winning violinist **Augustin Hadelich** and **St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble** in **Fanny Mendelssohn’s** String Quartet in E-flat and the iconic Octet by her brother, **Felix Mendelssohn**,

the program is one of three hosted by WQXR's **Terrance McKnight**. Click [here](#) for tickets to "Fanny and Felix" and [here](#) to learn more about the OSLive Wednesday Night Series.

## About St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, OSL & the DiMenna Center for Classical Music

**St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble** was founded in 1974, when a group of virtuoso musicians began performing chamber concerts at Greenwich Village's Church of St. Luke in the Fields. Today, the 24 ensemble musicians make up the artistic core of **Orchestra of St. Luke's**, pairing beloved chamber works with lesser-known gems in OSL's Chamber Music Series and anchoring almost every program presented by the orchestra. Regular seasons also 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 50 new works and has given more than 175 world, U.S., and New York City premieres, as well as 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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