

## Section 6: Local Content & Services Report– CPB Station Activity Survey for 2020

**1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station’s vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.**

New York Public Radio (NYPR) is an independent nonprofit news and cultural organization that owns and operates a portfolio of radio stations, digital properties, and a performance space in Manhattan.

One of the many ways we strengthen community connections throughout the New York metropolitan area is through our development of content across the station’s distribution channels and platforms on-air, online and on the ground. We strive to serve our diverse audiences through groundbreaking local news and programming that invites ongoing civic dialogue. We develop partnerships, promotions and special events to provide cultural experiences and community information that address the needs of our local audience members. We are constantly exploring new platforms and making responsive services and tools that increase the accessibility of our content.

### **NYPR STRATEGIC PLAN**

As part of our strategic plan, we not only produce and deliver public service content on multiple platforms to serve more diverse audiences, but we also have increased our local accountability journalism. With the expansion of our local news coverage, we work to increase our relevance to listeners who depend on us as a resource for local news and inclusive programming.

### **COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**

New York Public Radio has a Community Advisory Board (“CAB”), a volunteer group of interested listeners who meet six times per year to gather public comments, advise on the programming and policies of WNYC and WQXR and provide feedback on how we are meeting the specialized educational and cultural needs of our community. The CAB reviews our programming goals, services and policy decisions. Deliberating independently of station management and New York Public Radio's Board of Trustees, the CAB determines its own agenda and elects its own leadership. The CAB is an advisory body and conveys its findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees based on the public’s input.

### **MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS**

Media partnerships are a key part of our efforts to engage meaningfully with our local communities. We seek and select media partners who address the issues relevant to our local residents and audience members. By providing air time and promoting the events of our media partners online through media spots, social posts and newsletters, we increase the opportunities for listeners in the metropolitan area to have access to programming, conversations, information and activities that inform, inspire and cultivate greater understanding and awareness. As a result of the marketing support NYPR offers our media partners, listeners often learn about cultural, artistic, educational and civic events that they might not have otherwise.

## **DIGITAL COMMUNITIES**

NYPR's social media and digital strategies help us identify and reach new audiences in our area and generate more dialogue across our local communities. Our social media and digital teams collaborate with our content teams to foster community dialogue through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Instagram Stories, and YouTube. We continuously look for ways to use the unique power of our digital platforms to make our programming more relevant and inclusive. NYPR uses our social media and digital resources to engage new audiences and open up conversations that are traditionally more challenging to have in our communities on a daily basis.

Below are just a few of the ways we have used digital and social technologies to increase the reach of our programming this year.

### *Brian Lehrer 2020 Time Capsule*

*The Brian Lehrer Show* is making a 2020 "time capsule" to hold listeners' stories and photos from this unprecedented year. Listeners sent in their contributions through our digital landing page. The time capsule itself will be a hard-drive stored safely with our transmitter at the top of the Empire State Building from March, 2021 until 2030. As we reflect on the past year, NYPR will begin to play a selection of the stories on-air.

### *Death, Sex & Money Race and Friendship Project Digital Survey*

This year, *Death, Sex & Money* created a project with the NPR podcast *Code Switch* about race and friendship. The project included episodes around how race, identity, and racism have impacted listeners' friendships. Included in this project was a digital survey about race and friendship as well as an interactive tool, culminating in a data pool from more than 5,000 participants.

### *Radio Rookies Slack Channel*

Rookies and YR Media's collaboration this year, the "18-to-29 Now: Young America Speaks Up" project, used a Slack channel to provide a place where participants could check-in with Radio Rookies and YR producers and discuss the process and project with their fellow participants.

## **PODCASTS**

NYPR recognizes the unique ability of podcasts to engage a wider spectrum of listeners in our local communities through its highly accessible format. NYPR has continued to work this year to offer more programming on issues and interests that matter most to our listeners through thought-provoking podcasts, including *Radiolab*, *On the Media*, *Trump, Inc.*, *Death, Sex & Money*, *The New Yorker Radio Hour*, *The Takeaway*, and *The United States of Anxiety*. New podcasts this year included *Scattered* and *The Open Ears Project*.

## **RADIO ROOKIES**

Radio Rookies is WNYC's youth media arts education program that provides young people with the skills needed to produce compelling narratives about their lives, told in their own voices. Radio Rookies empowers young people with the communication skills, technical know-how, and confidence they need to tell their own stories, express their opinions, and ultimately become informed, engaged adults. The program not only serves the young people who participate in it, but it also gives WNYC and national

public radio listeners the chance to better understand the lives and perspectives of young, underserved young people.

## **THE GREENE SPACE**

Our live performance space, The Jerome L. Greene Performance Space (“The Greene Space”), provides an access point for audiences not traditionally served by public radio. The Greene Space seasonally presents a diverse array of public affairs, performing arts and cultural events that are responsive to our local communities and increase the depth and reach of our on-air programming. A communal meeting place, The Greene Space invites public dialogue about the issues shaping our world, both locally and beyond, through live radio, live and on-demand video streaming, podcasts and tapings of WNYC and WQXR’s radio programs.

This year, through its unique facility and experience with digital platforms, The Greene Space continued to provide New Yorkers with vital access to arts and cultural performances and conversations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Increasing Access and Inclusion**

As part of our commitment to increasing access, we worked on improving the online user experience for The Greene Space audiences this year. Some of the changes we made included making the locating of video streams easier through improved design on all event pages.

This year we continued our commitment to maintain tickets for free or at low-cost (for live events) to ensure events were accessible to New Yorkers of all economic backgrounds. In FY20, approximately 87% of in-person events at The Greene Space were free or had a ticket price of \$25 or under (with an average ticket price of \$13).

As live, in-person events throughout New York were cancelled following New York’s PAUSE order in March, The Greene Space shifted from in-person events to an all virtual format with all programming being free to the public via live-stream and on-demand. Our teams produced livestreamed performances and conversations from the homes of featured artists and panelists, continuing to encourage community dialogue and participation. The Greene Space plans to provide New Yorkers with the opportunity to experience live art, culture, and conversation as performance venues across New York City remain closed.

## **NEWS**

### Race and Justice

New York City is one of the world’s most demographically diverse areas, but also one of the most inequitable. In September of 2020, we formed the Race & Justice Unit, centered in the WNYC newsroom, to lead a journalistic course correction by more precisely conveying news events and trend stories through a lens of racial and social justice.

### **Our Audience**

- The unit produced daily and long-form content for and about the New York region.
- We held accountable those responsible for institutionalized failures.

- We highlighted potential solutions to civic problems.
- We convened conversations to promote and inspire civil discourse with our audience.
- Our coverage was rooted in New York's multicultural communities and produced by a racially diverse staff.
- We served audience with a nuanced understanding of the communities in which we all live.

### **The Content**

The Race & Justice Unit produced daily news coverage as well as accountability reporting focused on four primary topic areas:

- *health equity*, including the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on communities of color;
- *economic inequality*, particularly involving the post-pandemic recovery;
- *justice reform*, including police disciplinary records and law enforcement officers with extensive racist histories; and
- *political inequities*, including voter disenfranchisement and power dynamics.

This included data-based efforts to add demographic information to the stories we cover.

### **Beyond Content**

The work unit extended beyond the newsroom to WNYC Studios, WQXR, The Greene Space and other New York Public Radio properties, as appropriate, in order to ensure intentionally antiracist programming across NYPR platforms.

- The unit facilitated conversations internally within WNYC
- We helped to facilitate conversation in conjunction with The Greene Space and outside partners, on subjects such as antiracist journalism, racial inequities, and social and racial justice.
- We partnered with Human Resources to develop tactics and initiatives to support the recruitment, development and retention of talented, diverse employees.

Examples of our work, since we launched, include

- A ride-along in a morgue truck at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- A three-part series on Clemency in New York State, who gets it, who doesn't and why, through the intimate portraits of prisoner across New York asking for clemency in the midst of the COVID pandemic in prisons;
- A whistleblower investigation in Mount Vernon, New York, based upon secret tapes obtained by our reporter from a police officer alleging corruption in that city's police department; and
- An examination of the double standard in policing (after the insurrection on Capitol Hill).

The Race & Justice Unit strives to be a values-driven enterprise within NYPR, one in which the culture and commitment created by our diverse staff supports the wider NYPR mission with excellence and sustainability.

## New Jersey News

In 2011, we launched New Jersey Public Radio ("NJPR") News to expand our stations' coverage of New Jersey across our multiple broadcast and digital platforms, and to contribute original journalism that addresses important public policy, civic and social justice issues for the state and region.

In 2020, NJPR's reporting focused on two main themes in New Jersey: government accountability and the COVID-19 pandemic. Our reporting investigated corruption, problems with the way New Jersey designs its electoral ballots, and the rollout of the state's vote-by-mail election in the midst of the pandemic. Much of the work focused on the pandemic, covering the shortage of supplies, the need for testing and the high rate of deaths in nursing homes. NJPR continued to host the monthly Ask Governor Murphy call-in show. We also continued reporting on local county jails and their contracts with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including recurring hunger strikes among immigrant detainees. We also continued reporting on the proliferation of hate groups and far-right conspiracists in New Jersey. The team also reported on COVID-19's impact on New Jersey's most vulnerable populations, including the working-poor and undocumented immigrants. NJPR also reported on this summer's Black Lives Matter protests, and covered ongoing police reform efforts in the Garden State.

In addition to being aired on NJPR stations, NJPR News content also runs on WNYC AM and FM. This ensures that our reports and the voices of New Jersey residents are heard by the one million-plus people in our region who tune in to those stations every week, and by the many hundreds of thousands more who listen online or via their mobile devices. NYPR's broadcast reach covers approximately 70% of the total New Jersey state population. Combining WNYC, WQXR and NJPR, we now count approximately 400,000 New Jersey residents as listeners.

**2. Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you're connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.**

NYPR partners with a number of organizations in the New York City metropolitan area, providing media resources, supporting multicultural arts, promoting learning initiatives and producing collaborative projects and reporting.

### **MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS**

One of our annual key initiatives is our media partnership with a variety of cultural institutions and organizations. This year, some of the partners NYPR collaborated with included the Manhattan Night and Day Comprehensive High School, the March on Washington Film Festival, Global Kids, YR Media, The Apollo Theater and public radio stations across the country. We also worked with the Brooklyn Public Library to provide free civic and educational programs on-air, and Rooftop Films, Nonprofit New York, *Pop Up Magazine*, and the Bronx Documentary Center's annual Latin America Foto Festival to help promote events that connect and strengthen our communities.

## **INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP**

Another one of our annual key initiatives is our industry partnership with Think.Public.Media. At the start of FY20, WNYC provided funding and administrative support for 14 employees to attend the largest virtual conventions for journalists of color, the summer conferences of the National Black Association of Journalists, National Hispanic Association of Journalists, and Asian American Journalists' Association. We partnered with over 23 member stations across the country, including NPR, APM, WBUR, WHYI, and PRI to establish the fifth year of Think.Public.Media. The primary goal of this initiative was to provide increased structural support and professional development opportunities for our own staff, as well as actively reach out and engage communities of color as both existing and potential members of our community. Through our partnership on Think.Public.Media, member stations had joint virtual booths at the career fairs.

## **SOCIAL CHANGE PARTNERSHIP**

In December of 2019, as part of NYPR's racial equity capacity building initiatives, we organized a diverse team of 25 NYPR staff members from across the organization to visit Montgomery, Alabama. The trip was sponsored by the social change organization the Emerson Collective and with the support of the Pacific Educational Group (Courageous Conversations). The experience, facilitated by an Equity Transformation Specialist, was designed to help us engage, sustain and deepen dialogue around race. It was an in-depth opportunity to reflect on the conscious and unconscious ways in which racial repression has evolved throughout our nation's history. The experience helped participants better understand the role we can all play in our workplace with race equity both now and in the future. Historic and legacy sites visited included the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, The Legacy Museum, The Civil Rights Memorial, The Freedom Rides Museum, The Rosa Parks Museum, Dexter Parsonage Museum (historic home to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and twelve pastors of the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church) and The Museum of Alabama.

## **PROGRAMMING PARTNERSHIPS**

NYPR participated in a number of programming partnerships this year including the following:

### Radio Rookies

This year, our Radio Rookies participated in both local and national partnerships.

#### **Manhattan Night and Day Comprehensive School**

During the first half of FY20, Radio Rookies completed a workshop with Manhattan Night and Day Comprehensive School ("MNDCS"), a transfer school in the East Village that primarily served recent immigrants to the United States. Radio Rookies producers trained the students how to record audio, research topics, conduct interviews, select tape, write narration and record their scripts. From July to December, we worked closely on creating intimate, sound-rich audio documentaries that told the stories of young New Yorkers. The stories aired on *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* and was highlighted on a call-in segment on *The Brian Lehrer Show*, WNYC's local morning talk show.

### **Global Kid**

When COVID hit and New York City became an epicenter of the pandemic, Radio Rookies staff decided it was imperative to connect with young people in the city. Producers partnered with the nonprofit Global Kids to create a virtual audio documentary workshop for a group of high school students in Queens. They recruited four teenagers to report on how the pandemic had upended their lives. Below are two examples of the kind of reporting by the Radio Rookies in the collaboration:

- Atika Kaisary was a junior in high school who had immigrated from Pakistan for educational opportunities in the United States. Atika had just started adjusting to the enormous culture shock she faced when her classes switched to remote learning, and she found herself learning entirely online. She craved in-person classes and worried about applying for colleges in the fall without the benefit of building relationships in-person with her teachers. Atika documented her experience through the summer into the start of another disrupted year.
- High school senior Daniel Torres-Lopez got laid off from his part-time job at 7-Eleven at the start of the pandemic. The job was especially important because he was able to give his mom \$50 a week and, without it, the family of six struggled to keep the fridge fully stocked. Daniel reported on how he found creative ways to help his family and save for college.

### **YR Media**

In October 2019, the Peabody award-winning, youth-focused media programs, Radio Rookies, based in New York, and YR Media (formerly Youth Radio), based in California, partnered for a yearlong workshop that aimed to recruit a team of young media makers (18-29) from across the United States to report on what was really at stake for young Americans as they would wrestle with the issues at the heart of Election 2020. The two youth media organizations created "18-to-29 Now: Young America Speaks Up," a nationwide election reporting workshop with 13 young reporters from across the country.

- This year's election project was the first national-level media training workshop conducted by Rookies staff. The cohort of 13 Rookie reporters were from nine states, from New York to Minnesota to Kentucky and California. They represented a range of political perspectives. Four participants were Black, three were Latinx, five were white, and one was South Asian. Ten participants were between the ages 18-24, and three were in their late twenties.
- Beginning in February 2020, Radio Rookies and YR Media trained the young reporters on how to use their audio kits, conduct interviews, and edit their stories. Radio Rookies planned to fly participants to New York the weekend of March 20-22 for an intensive three-day broadcast training, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Radio Rookies and YR Media had to change course and initiated remote training as they guided the cohort on the techniques of remote reporting. Throughout the winter and spring months, the participants were led by professional producers from both organizations. Editorial oversight of the project was shared between Radio Rookies and YR Media to meet high journalistic and narrative standards across the reporting.
- Plans for the cohort's reporting also shifted as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted almost all aspects of participants lives and, in turn, storytelling and production. 18-29 Now reporters

continued to focus on the election, though some stories had a COVID-19 backdrop. For example, a reporter in North Carolina was going to report about the opioid epidemic in her hometown of Wilmington. She continued to report on this story, but within the context of the pandemic and its effects.

## News

Below are just a couple of examples of our news partnerships this year:

### **PriceCheckNYC**

In partnership with health research company Clear Health Costs, our newsroom reported on health pricing transparency to demystify health insurance and medical billing with our PriceCheckNYC project. Our reporting looked at surprise medical bills, meaningless medical estimates, and figuring out how to pay for mental health and hidden fees. The coverage was presented in articles on *Gothamist* and was amplified in segments on *The Brian Lehrer Show*.

### **Immigration Asylum**

Our most ambitious immigration coverage of the year involved a six-week reporting fellowship in Japan. This partnership between the Social Science Research Council, the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, and *The Atlantic*, explored why Trump's America isn't the toughest place on earth to be a refugee or asylum seeker. This project included a five-part radio series on WNYC's *Morning Edition and All Things Considered*, a visual story on *Gothamist* with original art, and extensive and daily social media outreach. We also covered the continued shrinking of the refugee program under Trump, and an artist's project focused on refugees.

### 14TH Annual WNYC MLK Celebration: *The Strategic King: MLK's Visionary Leadership*

In FY20, NYPR partnered with The Apollo Theater, The March on Washington Film Festival and 1A to present *The Strategic King: MLK's Visionary Leadership*. It was the seventh consecutive year that we have partnered with The Apollo Theater for this annual event.

This year's event, co-hosted by WNYC's Jami Floyd and *All Of It* host Alison Stewart, focused on Dr. King and his colleagues' skillful use of the media and politically strategic tactics to influence politicians and helped pass key legislation in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. We considered how those strategies continue to inform and inspire contemporary social justice movements, especially as some of those very protections are under attack today.

Featured guests included:

- Herb Boyd – Journalist, educator, and author
- Taylor Branch – Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian
- Rev. Canon Kelly Brown Douglas – Dean, Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary
- Jonathan Capehart – *Washington Post* Opinion Writer
- Dorothy Butler Gilliam – journalist
- Mary-Pat Hector – National Youth Director for National Action Network
- Khalil Gibran Muhammad – Professor of History, Race, and Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and the Radcliffe Institute



- Rashad Robinson – President of Color Of Change
- Bakari Sellers – Former South Carolina State Representative, attorney, political commentator and politician
- Nancy Barnes – Senior Vice President of News and Editorial Director, NPR

The program was complemented by music and special spoken-word performances by artist and MacArthur Fellow Carrie Mae Weems, Pulitzer Prize-winner and U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey, and playwright and producer Jessica Care Moore. WQXR’s Terrance McKnight served as Master of Ceremonies.

### The Greene Space

In FY20, The Greene Space continued our commitment to regularly partnering with other New York City cultural organizations. We produced a total of 34 events with 14 cultural and academic institutions including recurring partners The Julliard School, Generator Collective, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We also created the following new partnerships:

- The Violin Chanel partnered with The Greene Space to share a live video stream performance of Canadian violinist Kerson Leong.
- The Brennan Center for Justice presented *Should A Pandemic Pause Our Civil Liberties?* – a conversation about who has the power to restrict our lives and encroach on our civil rights.
- Slate presented a live viewing and taping of *Man Up*, a podcast about masculinity, race, and relationships in the modern world.
- *EATER NY*, an online food news and dining guide, produced two shows, one on the Chinese food scene and another with WNYC’s *Micropolis* on the state of restaurants and bars in NYC during the pandemic.

**3. What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.**

NYPR is one of the most substantial member-supported organizations in the New York City with a current membership of 239,366 (up from 73,000 in 2000). Our programming creates a number of opportunities for artists, writers, policymakers, and educational, business and civic leaders to strengthen conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods on air and in our live event space.

## **COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

### From Our Listeners and Readers

This year, NYPR listeners sent in the following feedback about why they listen and how our programming increased their awareness and knowledge about critical civic issues and classical music.

Listeners reported being especially grateful for the opportunity to connect to the vital resources of fact-based news reporting and music that helped comfort and ground them during this especially challenging year.

*“Because I value solid journalism and I appreciate when my daughter listens to news and stories and she asks questions and learns as well” – Sarah from New York, New York*

*“Because I want my kid to know that truth in reporting exists.” – Marisa from Staten Island, New York*

*“I appreciate your service to the community in providing factual and in depth reporting, especially in these tumultuous times.” – Marta from Kearny, New Jersey*

*“Love WNYC. I love the political discussions!! Feeds my brain!!” – Lynn from Fairfield, Connecticut*

*“WNYC goes deeper into issues than any other station. The subjects of interest chosen to research and report are broad and illuminating.” – Carol from Westwood, New Jersey*

*“WNYC provides a good balance of local, national and global reporting. Also, it touches a broad diversity of topics beyond daily news that engenders curiosity and inquisitiveness.” – Anirban from Sparta, New Jersey*

*“I just love the coverage during the Covid times, you guys have been an extremely important resource. Also, I am an American Muslim. And honestly you all include everyone in your programs. Love” – Lyndsey from Brooklyn, New York*

*“Comprehensive, insightful reporting. Radio that makes the listener think.” – Elizabeth from Yonkers, New York*

*“Your programming helps widen my aperture.” – John from New York, New York*

*“I appreciate the different voices and perspectives they bring to the media.” – Helene from Jackson Heights, New York*

*“We are thirsty for the connection for news. I have always felt the high level of commitment, desire for educating the public by WNYC. I am proud of WNYC's mission.” – Christine from Jersey City, New York*

*“WNYC is my daily go to for reliable city and world news. During the Covid19 pandemic it has been indispensable to me getting the information I need, in a trusted and non alarmist manner.” – Christopher from Long Island City, New York*

*“WNYC is a pioneer in maintaining a fierce independence in radio journalism with many high quality programs with significant societal impact. Thanks and keep up the honesty and independence.” – Harpreet from Kirkland, Washington*

*“Your reporting makes me feel seen!” – Sharae from Brooklyn, New York*

*“You are my trusted local news source. As a New Yorker, it's only right to support WNYC.” – Amelia from New York, New York*

*“Public media is one of the most necessary services a city or state can offer. Thanks for being there.” – Leif from Brooklyn, New York*

*“Because you bring facts, smart advice, calm, community and connection.” – Maria from Fairfield, Connecticut*

*“I find the coverage unbiased, well informed and unpartisan. It has been an essential resource in our household.” – Francesca from Elizaville, New York*

*“You give us so many of the infos we want and need, plus so many opportunities to reflect on important things in life.” – Sae from Brooklyn, New York*

*“You are a lifeline in these days of quarantine. I have always depended on you, every morning, and now even more so.” – Alexandra from Brooklyn, New York*

*“Getting reliable news about what's happening in the city right now is critical.” – Dana from Brooklyn, New York*

*“WNYC is my reliable source of local, national and international news. Brian Lehrer is New York City.” – Hannah from Bronx, New York*

*“Thoughtful and dogged reporting. Truly a necessary and EXCELLENT local news source, in a time when sadly most nyc journalism operations are getting narrower in their scope of coverage” – Julia from New York, New York*

*“Great coverage of NY virus information” – William from Huntington, New York*

*“Local reporters are terrific.” – Elizabeth from New York, New York*

*“The needs, concerns and successes of the Black and Latino communities are represented respectfully. Much of what is presented is mindful and done using an intersectional approach - details matter!” – Susan from Bronx, New York*

*“WNYC provides the most factual and relevant information I need to make decisions and behave toward others with humanity and humility.” – Linda from Huntington, New York*

*"I listen to you a lot - in the car and more recently on my treadmill - to obtain the quality news that I need to understand our world and my place in it." – Thomas from Bridgewater, New Jersey*

*"Public service journalism cannot go away!" – Rebecca from Brooklyn, New York*

*"It's so important to have an unbiased view of what's happening in my area and around the world." – Paul from Briarcliff Manor*

*"WNYC is a vital part of maintaining a free press and democracy in NY, thank you for your commitment to stellar reporting and providing our city and region the in-depth coverage it needs." – Nicolas from Astoria, New York*

*"Best classical music station. Exposes me and others to a wide variety of styles of music" – Eileen from New York, New York*

*"WQXR is a calming oasis with knowledgeable, interesting and pleasant hosts. All much needed right now." – Charles from Fresh Meadows, New York*

*"You bring peace, emotion and humor to my morning commute." – Bryan from Jersey City, New Jersey*

*"You bring sanity to the world." – Susan from Flushing, New York*

*"It's a wonderful way to start the day and helps me feel grounded to tackle the day." – Skye from Brooklyn, New York*

*"Music crosses across all generations and economic status, and a free classical musical station insures that music to all." – Martha from Manalapan, New Jersey*

*"I love classical music and as a senior citizen I am not able to get to New York City very often for in person concerts. WQXR is the lifeline that has rescued me and sustained me for years." – Anne from New Providence, New Jersey*

#### From Our Media Partners

This year, through our media partnerships, we continued to generate more awareness for social concerns. We helped nonprofits learn model management practices and strategies, and we offered opportunities for more local audiences to experience artistic, cultural educational and civic events. We provided our partners (often small nonprofits with no advertising budget) with much needed marketing support.

We received the following feedback from our media partners this year:

*“By having NYPR be our media partner, we were able to raise the visibility and dissemination of excellent nonprofit management practices and increase the number of nonprofits learning and adopting excellent nonprofit management strategies... Without NYPR's support as Media Partner, Nonprofit New York would not have seen such a large amount of engagement and interest with the Nonprofit Excellence Awards and Best Nonprofit Conference program or been able to connect with potential corporate partners or reach as many nonprofit organizations.” - From Matt Cheng, Development Manager of NonProfit New York*

*“WNYC has always been a steadfast and reliable partner. But amid these incredibly challenging times, WNYC's services have been invaluable, helping us to reach people all across the borough by talking about our free civic and educational programs on-air. In a year in which we faced isolation, when doors remained closed and people on the wrong side of the digital divide were increasingly left behind, radio was a lifeline—helping us to connect to our patrons and the public, and in turn, to one another.” - From Margie Cook, Brooklyn Public Library*

*“For the last 3 years, WNYC has been an essential media partner to Rooftop Films, helping us to spread the word about spectacular outdoor film screenings of the best new films in the world. This past year, Rooftop adapted to create drive-in theaters in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx and WNYC pivoted with us, helping us to bring safe and accessible screenings to more than 30,000 New Yorkers at a time when every other theater in the city was closed. During such turbulent times, it isn't always easy to communicate to audiences, but WNYC helped us to bridge that gap, create joyful moments, and bring the people of the city together at a time when we needed it most.” - From Dan Nuxoll, Rooftop Films*

*“WNYC is our trusted partner in New York. Like Pop-Up Magazine, WNYC centers inclusion and community engagement at the heart of the storytelling and programming they produce and distribute... With each collaboration, our diverse community grows, and we're excited to be partnering with WNYC.” - From Roseli Ilano, Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships, Pop Up Magazine*

*“The partnership with WNYC allowed the Bronx Documentary Center's annual Latin America Foto Festival to reach a wider audience among New Yorkers. The radio spots aired just before the opening of the festival, raising awareness of the event beyond our South Bronx community and visitors came from all five boroughs to see our exhibitions. The cross promotion on socials and in newsletters also helped to visually put the festival on the map.” - From Myrtille Beauvert, Publicist and partnerships, Bronx Documentary Center*

#### From our Radio Rookies

Radio Rookies' partnership with YR Media this year produced the following compelling stories:

- *“I'm Conservative, and Covid-19 Brings Conflicts of Political Interest” - Kelvey Vander Hart, a young conservative libertarian from Iowa, thinks through her politics in the wake of the*

coronavirus pandemic and COVID-19 hitting her community hard. What happens when you don't have the answers?

- “Barely Making It: Navigating 2020 As a Broke College Student” - Erianna Jiles examines what it's like to be a college student trying to survive, and how the 2020 election could affect her and other first-generation students in the same situation.
- “Expecting the Unexpected: Graduating High School During a Pandemic” - When a global pandemic canceled end-of-the-year milestones for the class of 2020, Madison Hall learned an important lesson about expectations.
- “To Move Forward After Bernie, A Young Progressive Looks to The Past” - Bernie Sanders' run for president is over, but the young people at the center of it are still politically engaged. Sher Delva reflects on her political awakening and wonders what comes next.
- “A Minnesotan Weighs In: Is There Hope After the Hashtags?” - The killing of George Floyd has led many people to consider what they and those around them think about race in America. Erianna Jiles has been frustrated but encouraged that maybe we're at a turning point
- “Life in Legal Limbo: A Dreamer Reflects” - Juan Mireles-Palomar must navigate the politicized nature of his immigration status. He gets into his conflicting feelings about the role his legal status plays in his future, and his sister's.

#### From Our 14TH Annual WNYC MLK Celebration Audience

For many, the WNYC MLK event has become a tradition as well as a way for new audiences to learn more about the Apollo Theater.

This year, WNYC nationally syndicated the event to over 400 public radio stations across the nation. The event was rebroadcast nationally during Black History month and carried locally on stations like Red River Radio in Shreveport.

As in past years, we featured a local Harlem bookstore offering books by our panelists. Participants had the chance to support a local business and learn about new authors and resources.

Comments about the event this year from community members submitted to NYPR include the following:

*“So moving and powerful.” - Pamela from Detroit, Michigan*

*“... my hairs raised up! Thank you for representing me, empowering me, supporting me and giving me a voice. I felt so touched by your words, I stand by you and join my fellow sisters towards my rights, our rights.” - Kayla from Forest Hills, Queens*

**4. Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2020, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2021. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.**

NYPR is honored to be considered by many as a community leader. We directly shape our programming, production and engagement activities to address the concerns and interests of our diverse audiences in the metropolitan area.

#### **LITERACY AND ESL**

This year, we continued to work closely with Link NYC, providing them with free and discounted virtual events from the five boroughs, including financial literacy workshops, adult English language practice sessions, and story reading time for kids at the Brooklyn Library.

#### **NEWS**

Our news teams worked intensively throughout the year to investigate the impact of this past year's events on our diverse audience but particularly our local minority communities. Below is just some of our extensive reporting from the year:

##### The Pandemic's Impact on Communities of Color

Using new remote recording strategies, we connected WNYC and *Gothamist* audiences with exceptional New Yorkers struggling with the coronavirus, many of them unlikely to get media attention. Some of these included the following:

- We shared the story of a transgender Venezuelan doctor who couldn't practice in the U.S. due to their immigration status, but who volunteered to give COVID tests to fellow immigrants and told us what it was like to make a long commute on the subway amidst COVID. We also explored why foreign-born doctors could not be enlisted to help during the pandemic.
- We reported on efforts to enforce COVID restrictions and the disparities that surfaced based on race.
- We also covered economic disparities through reporting on job losses and on a stalled effort to give relief funds to immigrants.
- We reported on virtual justice in a time of pandemic, including immigration judges and attorneys pushing to close the courts.

##### Policing and Crime and Their Impact on Communities of Color

###### **Stop and Frisk**

Long before the mass protests of spring and summer 2020, our reporting focused on how New York City polices people of color. In February 2020, we completed a two-part audio series and

*Gothamist* piece that analyzed the unfinished business of stop and frisk remediation, and why it was taking so long for the NYPD to implement a federal judge’s 2013 ruling, which called the practice racially discriminatory and unconstitutional.

### **Child Welfare**

We also continued to report on injustices in the child welfare system, which is experienced as a form of policing in communities of color. Following our reporting in 2019, New York City’s public hospital system made plans to change how it screens pregnant women for substance use – a practice that often leads to separation of mother and infant, and primarily those who are not white.

### **NYPD Abuse, Discrimination and Death**

Our reporting covered fatal police shootings, the flaws of police body camera footage, and allegations of abusive and discriminatory police practices, including against youth, against a woman in labor, and through the use of a “gang database.” We reported on a lack of resolution five years after Eric Garner’s death at the hands of an NYPD officer.

### **Gun Violence**

Our coverage explored the impact of gun violence on communities of color, including of a 14-year-old in Queens, a mass shooting in Brooklyn, and the connection between police gun violence and inadequate training.

### **Voices of Police Officers**

Our reporting brought the voices of police officers, the department, and the powerful police unions to WNYC and *Gothamist* audiences, including a piece on NYPD interns, a look at community outreach, a reflection on slain officers Ramos and Liu by their precinct-mates, and a sit-down with outgoing police commissioner James O’Neill.

### Spread of Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Hate

Our immigration and security reporting focused on anti-Semitism, racism and hate, which proliferated during the Trump administration. We reported on the role of social media, and efforts to fight back against hate, including a piece for NPR and WNYC on a self-defense class specifically for Jews. When COVID surged, we reported on attacks against Asian New Yorkers. We covered both the lingering police policy of surveilling Muslims, and using them as informants.

### Bail Reform as Justice for Communities of Color

We reported on bail reform in New York and the positive impact it would have on primarily communities of color. We engaged in a long and detailed line of multiplatform reporting for WNYC and *Gothamist* that explained the complexities of the reforms, pointed out problems in their implementation and potential for burdens on the legal system.



## Impact of Trump's Hardline Immigration Policies

### **ICE Raids and Policies**

We continued our commitment to extensive coverage on the plight of NY and NJ immigrants under the Trump administration, with a focus on aggressive, harrowing and, at times, violent ICE activity. Our reporting covered Trump's threat of mass immigration raids in summer of 2019. We also followed the controversy of ICE arresting immigrants in and around courthouses, and the legal battle to stop the practice. Our reporters covered the realities and shortcomings of sanctuary policies for immigrants in New York and New Jersey, and the many ways ICE averted these policies to ensnare immigrants at the airport or as they sought labor protections, and even as the coronavirus surged.

### **ICE Detention**

Our reporting this year exposed conditions in ICE detention for NJ and NYC-area immigrants, primarily detained in NJ county jails and a federal facility in Elizabeth. We covered immigrants' disturbing allegations of abuse by correction officers, poor medical care and hunger strike. We also questioned why anti-Trump politicians elected as Democrats maintained lucrative contracts with ICE to detain immigrants in county jails.

### **Immigration Court**

We covered the increasingly difficult quest for asylum under the Trump Administration, including those who fear political retribution, gang violence or death in their native country. Our news team honed in on exceptional cases of immigrants fighting deportation and the activists fighting for them. We fact-checked the way immigrant detention was portrayed on television, as well as ICE's apparent backlash. And, we covered the switch to video in immigration court long before it was implemented due to the pandemic, including its impact on migrant children.

### **DACA**

We also followed the ultimately successful legal battle to restore DACA, the program that shields immigrants brought to the US as children from deportation, which was brought by NY plaintiffs. Our coverage also touched on how DACA could be a liability for some immigrants.

### **Public Charge Rule**

We delivered extensive coverage explaining Trump's proposal to change the public charge rule, a complicated subject that boils down to a threat to restrict the social safety net for the poorest immigrants.

### **Border Family Separation**

Our news team continued to cover the ongoing plight of families separated at the US-Mexico border, many of whom ended up in New York, as well as New York activists who went to the border to advocate for immigrants.

## **THE GREENE SPACE**

NYPR designs programming and hosts events in The Greene Space to offer an inclusive meeting place for diverse audiences to experience performances, engage in community conversations and participate in live cultural events. Some of this year's events included the following:

### Indigenous People's Day

For Indigenous People's Day, The Greene Space organized "First People's Week", a festival of digital events, conversations, and performances celebrating Native American life and history. The event highlighted Native American culture and communities across New York City, and provided a platform for Indigenous thought leaders, change-makers, and creatives to lead conversations about reclaiming the past, the politics of the present, and their visions for the future.

### Artist-in-Residence Program

The Greene Space expanded its Artist-in-Residence program this year and included the following three artists:

**The Sissieretta Series** - Curated/hosted by singer-songwriter Madison McFerrin with guests soul singer duendita and Ethels Club founder Naj Austin.

**Lives at Stake with Imara Jones** - Journalist Jones led a four-part series of conversations by and for trans people on the issues affecting their communities with guests Pose actress Indya Moore (Netflix) and NYC artist Mojo Disco.

**Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, Wheat Paste Installation 2020** - On The Greene Space's street-facing windows, artist Fazlalizadeh installed her portraits commemorating Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Nina POP and Atatiana Jefferson, Black women and transgender people killed in the past year.

### Non-English Speaking Communities

One of the Greene Space partnerships this year that supported non-English speaking communities was a collaboration with The Endangered Language Alliance. The joint effort resulted in a night of music and stories in languages that New Yorkers are working to keep alive in their own communities, including native languages from Nepal, Mexico and Tajikistan.

### Ethnic and Immigrant Communities

WNYC reporters hosted events in the Greene Space focused primarily on ethnic and immigrant communities. Highlights from our *Micropolis* series included performance, discussion and multimedia events about ethnic cuisine, magic, fading languages, women directors, Muslim artists, Diwali talent, solitary confinement, and the history of double dutch. We also hosted a panel discussion following the full performance of *The Courtroom*, a dramatization of an actual immigration court proceeding. In January, 2020, we produced and co-hosted "a civil talk about the biggest controversy" of immigration reform.

## **WOMEN'S PODCASTING FESTIVAL – WERK IT**

*Werk It* was initially launched in recognition that women are grossly underrepresented in the field of podcasting. In 2015, New York Public Radio (NYPR)/WNYC Studios and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) shared a vision to increase and equalize the number of women in podcasting. As a leader in the field, NYPR has been well-placed to help create networks for established women in podcasting and opportunities for rising talent to learn more about podcasting and connect with potential mentors.

In 2019, WNYC Studios presented the fifth annual women's podcasting festival with support from CPB. WNYC hosted 725 women for three days of community-centric conversations, workshops and events with industry professionals, podcasters, sound designers, and entrepreneurs. *Werk It* included 188 one-on-one mentoring sessions and the Podcast Accelerator, an opportunity for participants to pitch and develop a show. Additionally, dozens of women received one-on-one engineering and sound design advice via the "Ask an Engineer" program, and producers helped dozens of other women connect to positions in audio via a jobs session. Also part of the festival was the *Werk It* Podcast Bootcamp, in partnership with Second Home, a co-working company with a mission to support creativity and entrepreneurship in cities around the world. The one-day training was free and specifically designed for West Coast women with little to no experience or industry connections and represented communities whose voices are often marginalized. 80 women attended, and the bootcamp included five intensive workshops led by seven knowledgeable presenters from some of the leading podcasting companies.

In an effort to help identify new voices to develop across public media, NYPR is currently in the process of creating a pipeline of talented women hosts, producers and content creators using existing networks and *Werk It* attendees as the foundation. WNYC Studios helped the winner of this year's competition produce a pilot episode related to the MeToo movement and is collaborating on a strategy to help take her project to the next level.

## **PODCASTS**

### ***Come Through with Rebecca Carroll***

WNYC Studios produced *Come Through with Rebecca Carroll*, a 15-episode podcast about race and racism in America leading up to the 2020 elections with culture critic Rebecca Carroll. The podcast launched this year and addressed faith, representation, white fragility, COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter protests.

### ***Scattered***

WNYC Studios came out this year with *Scattered*, a six-part podcast series following comedian Chris Garcia's journey to learn about his late father's life in Cuba. *Scattered* is an immigrant story about family, loss and love.

### ***La Brega in FY21***

NYPR is working to increasingly highlight Latinx voices in public media. Alana Casanova-Burgess, a producer at WNYC's *On the Media*, collaborated with *Latino USA* and Futuro Media this year to produce and host *La Brega*, a 14-episode special series podcast on Puerto Rico. The series is the first WNYC podcast that will be available in both English and Spanish. *La Brega* will look at how Puerto Rico became

a kind of tropical proving ground for American ideas and experimentation. *La Brega* is scheduled for broadcast and podcast distribution in February, 2021.

**5. Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?**

As a result of CPB funding this year, NYPR was able to serve our community in a number of meaningful ways.

*The Takeaway*

CPB funding this year enabled us to continue our local and national reporting from *The Takeaway*.

**COVID-19**

*The Takeaway* presented an ongoing series of conversations with local leaders in communities across the U.S. about how they were working to contain the outbreak, how their response was affected by federal guidance and aid, and the challenges they faced in getting what they needed to stop deaths in their communities. *The Takeaway* spoke with mayors of small cities to governors of major urban hubs to leaders of indigenous communities. Our reporting showed how the coronavirus pandemic emphasized the importance of strong local leadership. Local leaders had the power to shut down cities and to shift resources on the fly. With the delayed federal response to the coronavirus, the actions of local leadership drove the U.S. response.

**Media, Race and Politics**

As part of our ongoing commitment to covering the media and its responsibility to the American public, *The Takeaway* turned our lens in June of 2020 to the changing notion of objectivity in journalism, especially in light of the uprising for racial justice that was sweeping the nation at the time. It was one of a number of conversations we have had this past year about media, race, and politics. *The Takeaway's* coverage in this area this year looked at the news coming from inside newsrooms across the country. Top editors at a number of major outlets stepped down after Black journalists and other journalists of color started speaking out. *The Takeaway* looked at how some news organizations started taking clearer stands when it came to the recent racial justice uprising.

**Immigration Jails**

As part of its investigative reporting this year, *The Takeaway* produced exclusive coverage on the death of a migrant in a private ICE detention center. By gathering an unprecedented amount of information in the form of hundreds of pages of records, photos, internal audio of detainees and correctional staff, and video security footage from within the detention center, our reporter tracked rules broken by ICE and private correctional staff, and exposed the suicide of a man in ICE detention. *The Takeaway's* coverage offered a rare look into the secretive detention practices in immigration jails by a federal agency and private prison company. *The Takeaway's* special coverage on this story aired across the country and was cited widely, including in letters to members of Congress.

## **Gun Violence**

*The Takeaway*, with support from The Joyce Foundation, presented a special series on gun violence in 2020, spotlighting stories on guns and suicide, and guns and domestic violence, as well as featuring enterprise reporting analyzing state and local gun violence prevention measures across the country. Some of the coverage this year included reporting on Chicago's consent decree affects guns and policing; how lax gun laws weigh on police officers; how police officers are trained to use their guns; two women who shot and killed their abusers, claiming self-defense; a woman shot four times by her husband and survived, and who has since become an advocate for victims and survivors of domestic violence; and a number of stories on suicides by firearm.

## **Puerto Rico**

Through hurricanes, leadership and funding crises, an epidemic of violence against women, and beyond, *The Takeaway* has presented ongoing coverage of Puerto Rico. Our team reported on the impact of a 6.4 magnitude earthquake; political unrest, infrastructure issues and corruption arrests; census tracts being reclassified as opportunity zones for tax breaks; and the political past and future of Puerto Rico.

## The Greene Space

This fiscal year, CPB funding provided support for our Greene Space in-person events as well as our live and on-demand virtual programming. By the end of FY20, The Greene Space was able to produce a total of 108 new events. 78 of those were both in-person and livestreamed, and the remaining 30 events were produced in the livestream-only format. The Greene Space streamed an additional 57 specially curated shows of "Ever-Greene" content from past seasons from the start of the pandemic through the end of the fiscal year. The Greene Space featured nearly 700 individual and group performers, panelists and hosts. Livestream and on-demand viewership was 7.3M video views at thegreenspace.org and on the social media platforms of Facebook and YouTube.

## Local and Election News

CPB funding also made many of our local and election news stories possible this year.

## **Health**

From the very onset of the coronavirus pandemic, WNYC & *Gothamist* have pursued multiple lines of health reporting that included rigorous examination of city and state efforts to control the spread; illustrating the disparate impact COVID-19 was having on people of color; and telling human stories about victims and healthcare workers. Of particular note was our coverage of conditions in nursing homes and New York State's apparent underreporting of deaths related to those facilities.

Some additional examples of our reporting in this area include the following:

- Our news teams broke the story about how the city was undercounting deaths related to the coronavirus in March and April and effectively understated the devastating impact. After one of our reporters looked at the FDNY data, spoke to EMTs, and reported on the issue, the city indicated they would start counting those deaths.

- Our reporting gave insight into the emotional and physical toll of a person working as a temporary morgue worker as the city confronted the deaths with refrigerator trucks throughout the city.
- We kept our audiences informed through our daily COVID updates post; numerous explainers, from Governor Cuomo’s PAUSE order (which the City of New York Tweeted to its followers) to our “Ask an Epidemiologist” series; and our constantly updated COVID statistics post, which gives an overview of critical pandemic data.
- *The Brian Lehrer Show* frequently took listeners’ calls and walked audiences through how both the city and state had been handling the pandemic.

### **Transportation**

Below are some examples of the *We The Commuters* transportation reporting this year:

- After surveying our audience, we reported on bicycling, the plight of homeless in the subway system, and accessibility through articles, radio features, and events at The Greene Space. Event guests included the NYPD’s top-ranking uniformed officer, elected officials such as the City Council Speaker and state senators, an MTA board member, transit union leaders, performers who became homeless, and activists.
- We launched our weekly *We The Commuters* newsletter, to share our transit reporting and stories with subscribers.
- We profiled each of the bicyclists who died in 2019 to draw attention to the broken promise of safer streets. 2019 was deadliest year for bicyclists, in spite of Mayor de Blasio’s Vision Zero pledges.

### **General Election Coverage**

Aside from the presidential election coverage, our reporting this year included the following:

- We reported on important ballot measures and election day problems for the 2019 election.
- Our news team covered our first pandemic election in June. The primary acted as both a test-run for holding in-person events during the time of COVID and for absentee ballot demands.
- Our news coverage exposed how cultural institutions that received hefty tax breaks, eschewed their responsibility in being voting sites. The article turned out to be prescient given the problems with early voting in November, 2020.

### **Local Political and Election Coverage**

Below are just a few examples of the local politics and elections on which our news team provided coverage:

- The Queens District Attorney race and movement toward progressive justice.
- The ongoing fallout from Bridgegate.
- The Bangladeshi vote in New York.
- The presidential race, including candidates from New York.
- Modi’s influence on U.S. politics and electorate, and his connection to Trump.
- The census and the consequences of undercounting to local communities.

### **Police Reform**

As pressure mounted on officials to acknowledge police brutality against protesters this year, we explored the divide between the Mayor and police commissioner's characterizations of police tactics, and what protesters were experiencing in the streets and seeing on social media. We covered the many investigations that resulted and their impact. We also reported on the lead-up to police reforms and put a spotlight on veteran activists who successfully pushed through landmark changes in Albany, as well as the disbanding of the NYPD's anti-crime unit and a new attempt at transparency on the city level. This year, we also explored why suspects accused of violence in the protests faced harsher federal instead of local charges.

### **Policing and Transparency**

Two stories that resulted from our investigative reporting this year include the following:

- We uncovered corruption in the Mount Vernon police department involving the framing of innocent people and the allowing of drug dealers to have free rein in the community.
- Using New York's Freedom of Information law, we investigated and reported on the Brooklyn District Attorney's secret lists of untrustworthy officers and their impact on deals offered to defendants and on public defenders' cases.

### **Local New York City Communities**

*Gothamist* provided coverage about ways our local communities and businesses were remaining resilient. Some examples of this reporting included the following:

- We celebrated the glory of Midtown with the restaurant in a loading dock, Cuban Luncheonettes and our *Midtownnaissance* series, from the Diamond District to 57th Street.
- At the close of 2019, we spoke to New Yorkers across the five boroughs to find out how they felt about the past decade and discovered that much of it was an affirmation of life in New York City.

### WQXR Podcasts

We were also able to present the following podcasts on WQXR this year as a result of our CPB funding.

#### ***Helga***

This fiscal year, we produced a third season of the podcast *Helga* with artist, performer and host Helga Davis. *Helga* continued to draw the listener into intimate conversations with creative people, famous and lesser known. In inspiring conversations, musicians, visual artists, writers, and chefs joined Helga to share the steps they have taken along their paths.

#### ***Aria Code***

In FY20, we produced another year of *Aria Code*, a podcast that pulls back the curtain on some of the most famous arias in opera history, with insight from voices of our time, including Roberto Alagna, Diana Damrau, Sondra Radvanovsky, and many others. Hosted by Grammy Award-winner and MacArthur "Genius" Fellow Rhiannon Giddens, *Aria Code* was produced in partnership with The Metropolitan Opera. Each episode dove into one aria and explored how and why these brief musical moments have imprinted themselves in our collective consciousness and what it takes to stand on the Met stage and sing them. A wealth of guests,

from artists like Rufus Wainwright and Ruben Santiago-Hudson to non-musicians like biological anthropologist Dr. Helen Fisher and Dr. Brooke Magnanti, joined Rhiannon and the Met Opera's singers to understand why these arias touch us at such a human level, well over a century after they were written. Each episode ended with the aria, uninterrupted and in full, recorded from the Met Opera stage.

***The Open Ears Project***

We launched this year *The Open Ears Project*, a daily podcast in which people shared the classical track that meant the most to them and why. Hosted by WQXR's Creative Director, Clemmie Burton-Hill, each episode, meant to be part mixtape and part sonic love-letter, offered a brief glimpse into other people's lives, helping us to hear music and each other differently. Guests from the worlds of film, books, dance, comedy and fashion as well as firefighters, taxi drivers and teachers shared cherished musical memories and reminded audiences that extraordinary things can happen when we simply stop and listen.