

FALL 2020 IMPACT REPORT

Awards and Accolades

National Edward R. Murrow Awards

- Podcast: WNYC Studios and OSMAudio, [Dolly Parton's America](#)
- Feature Reporting: Shamari Ridley, Radio Rookies, [Trying to Graduate From High School at 21](#)

Washington Post: The Fix's 2020 List of Outstanding Politics Reporters to Follow in Every State

- Karen Yi and Brigid Bergin

Front Page Award

- Local Reporting Feature, Clarisa Diaz, [The Push To Turn NYC's Polluting Peaker Plants Into Publicly-Owned Solar Power](#)

City & State: The 2020 Women's Power 100

- For the second year in a row, Goli Sheikholeslami was included in the [Women's Power 100](#), a list of the most influential and "truly exceptional" women who are "shaping the direction of the state."

New York Press Club Awards

- Podcast: Ilya Marritz, Andrea Bernstein, and ProPublica, [Trump, Inc.](#)
- Political Coverage: Jose Olivares with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, *The Intercept*, NBC News, Univision, WNYC, and Latin American media partners, [Solitary Voices](#)
- Critical Arts Review: Sara Fishko, Olivia Briley, Wayne Shulmister, and Karen Frillmann, [Warhol's Work](#)
- Documentary: Sara Fishko, Olivia Briley, Ed Haber, and Karen Frillmann, [Shell Shock 1919: How the Great War Changed Culture](#)
- Entertainment News: Sara Fishko, Olivia Briley, Wayne Shulmister, and Karen Frillmann, [Oscar and Nat](#)
- Heart of New York Award: Sara Fishko, Olivia Briley, Wayne Shulmister, and Karen Frillmann, [Wright and the Guggenheim](#)

Cultural Partnerships

- **Shakespeare in the Park** is one of New York City's most beloved traditions, but as the pandemic progressed, our theaters had to close their doors. To keep this brilliant work free and accessible, **WNYC partnered with the Public Theater** to present *Richard II* [as a four-part radio play](#). Masterful performances from **André Holland** (Moonlight, Selma), **Lupita Nyong'o** (Black Panther, 12 Years a Slave), **Phylicia Rashad** (For Colored Girls, Creed), and others, resulted in a **62% increase in WNYC listenership**. New Yorker theater critic **Vinson Cunningham** hosted the production, **contextualizing it within the Black Lives Matter movement**, to which the performance is dedicated.
- WQXR was proud to partner with the **Lincoln Center** to reimagine the **Mostly Mozart Festival** for the airwaves, preserving this cultural mainstay when audiences could not gather in person. From August 10-16, 2020, [The Mostly Mozart Festival on WQXR](#) celebrated the great composer's legacy and featured conversations on some of the most urgent social issues of our time. **Online listenership was up by 37%** the week of the festival, coverage was featured in the **New York Times** and on **NY1**, and over **20,000 people** tuned in for our [pop-up concerts in each of the five boroughs](#).
- In partnership with the **New York Public Library (NYPL)**, [Get Lit with All of It](#) [is a monthly on-air, social media, and live stream book club](#), hosted by **Alison Stewart**. Authors have included **Laura Lippman**, **Colson Whitehead**, **Emily St. John**, **James McBride**, **Brit Bennett**, **Emma Straub**, and many more. Discussions have focused on **New York-centered stories** and **marginalized voices**. And since the pandemic, The Jerome L. Greene Space partnered with NYPL so that **participants can access each month's book for free using the NYPL app**.

Newsroom Reporting



2020 Elections Reporting

- WNYC launched a series of live national call-in programs, [America, Are We Ready?](#), airing on key nights throughout the 2020 Election season. Hosted by **Brian Lehrer**, with guests from national and local news outlets, these programs convened broad, good-faith conversations to bring voters together across political and cultural lines. The inaugural program, on the eve of the Iowa caucuses, was **featured on 79 radio stations** across the country, **reaching more than 3 million people on terrestrial radio alone**.
- WNYC-Gothamist provided critical information and **investigated our city's voting systems'** in a series led by politics reporter **Brigid Bergin**. The series included a critical explainer on the [various ways to vote in the presidential election](#), as well as a story about the [state's surge in absentee ballots](#).
- Bergin also broke the story about the [NYC Board of Elections sending out nearly 100,000 incorrect ballots to voters in Brooklyn and Queens](#). **NYS Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte** [tweeted the article](#), demanding action from the New York City Board of Elections.
- **Gothamist** reported on the **NYPD's violent arrests after the presidential election in Manhattan**. **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson** [called the videos shared by one of our reporters "incredibly disturbing."](#)
- After the NYC Board of Elections released the total NYC voting statistics, **Gothamist** created an [interactive map](#) allowing readers to view how their neighborhoods voted.
- As part of a [special election series](#), **The Takeaway** did a deep dive exploring a variety of **issues affecting Latinos in the U.S.**, and what both the Trump and Biden campaigns were doing to engage and persuade voters.

Reckoning with Race, Justice, and Inequality in NYC and Nationwide

- We're thrilled to announce that **Jami Floyd** has transitioned from the **WNYC host of All Things Considered** to [Senior Editor of WNYC's new Race & Justice Unit](#). Throughout her 25-year broadcast career, Jami has trained her eye on race and justice issues, and her work has remained at the nexus of law and journalism.
- WNYC-Gothamist reporter **George Joseph** [exposed police corruption in Mount Vernon, including racism, alleged beatings in custody, and illegal strip searches](#). Hours after the publication, **Mount Vernon Police Commissioner Shawn Harris placed Sergeant Michael Kushnir on restricted duty status**, according to a personnel order leaked to WNYC-Gothamist. Additionally, The Mount Vernon Police Department **has put a controversial detective, Camilo Antonini, on desk duty**, following WNYC- Gothamist's publication of a video showing him conducting a strip search in an apartment in apparent violation of department rules.
- **Gothamist** reported the story of **Jillian Williams**, [a pregnant MTA worker who suffered a miscarriage after not being given appropriate accommodations](#). She, along with three other women, are suing the agency for violating a 2014 New York City Human Rights Law meant to protect women from "pregnancy discrimination."

Newsroom Reporting



COVID-19 Reporting: Civic Information and Accountability

- **Gothamist**, in collaboration with **Chalkbeat**, has been reporting on how New York educators teach and New York students learn during the pandemic. This coverage has included [regular updates](#) on school closures, [conversations with students about remote learning](#), and [surveys on reactions to re-opening plans](#).
- With recent fears of a [second wave of COVID-19](#), **Gothamist** reported on [pandemic parties, which ignored COVID-19 health guidelines](#), as well as the uptick in uprisings against public safety measures in [hot zones](#), including [communities in Borough Park](#). **Governor Andrew Cuomo repeatedly cited Gothamist's reporting about yeshivas operating in violation of his orders during an October 14th news conference.**
- "[Counted](#)," a special series from **The Takeaway about the 2020 Census**, has reported on community leaders who are reaching out to those who have been traditionally undercounted. Additionally, they reported on how [COVID-19 could affect the Census count](#).
- **The Brian Lehrer Show** [continued its partnership with Clear Health Costs called Price Check NYC](#), to create a crowd-sourced database for 30-35 specific procedures and hopefully help create transparency in health cost pricing in the tri-state area.

Arts and Culture

WQXR



Community and Connection

- Building upon our successful [Active Listening Challenge](#), we created [WQXR Bingo!](#) Listeners were able to download a card from our website and mark it each time they heard something described in one of the squares. Sounds ranged from Mozart, to a piano, to a piece that's fast. Upon completing the Bingo card, parents were able to **submit a photo in exchange for an exciting prize: a set of WQXR stickers.**
- Earlier this year, WQXR and Paris-based video production company, **La Blogothèque**, partnered to create unique and intimate music videos for classical music. The result is a [mini-series of four videos](#) shot during pre-pandemic days, without masks, and close-up. Artists include **violinist Nicola Benedetti**, **composer Tariq Al-Sabir**, and the **American Modern Opera Company**.
- Gustav Mahler's birthday was Tuesday, July 7, and WQXR celebrated with a [special one-hour show about the very first of Mahler's extraordinary symphonies](#). **Embrace Everything: Mahler's First Symphony**, explored the sources and inspirations for that work, with leading conductors, orchestral musicians, and scholars. Listeners heard Mahler's own words and took a deep dive into his powerful, timeless music.
- WQXR's Elliott Forrest hosted **Lang Lang's Goldberg Variations**, an [hour-long exploration of Lang Lang's 28-year relationship with one of Bach's most celebrated works](#). Featuring anecdotes about Lang Lang's transformative conversations with musicians like **Christoph Eschenbach** and **Nikolaus Harnoncourt**, as well as his transcendent experience of playing on Bach's own Baroque organ in St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, the radio program is **richly scored with music from Lang Lang's album.**
- **WQXR** and **WRTI**, Philadelphia's classical music and jazz station, partnered to present **This Week with Yannick**, an [eight-week radio series hosted by acclaimed conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin](#). Topics included music that [celebrates spirituality](#); the music of [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#); and a rich program of [music from cultures around the world](#).
- **The Black Experience In The Concert Hall, The Mozart Effect**: **WQXR's Terrance McKnight** hosted a live call-in show focused on the unique challenges people of color face in the classical music world. Featuring **violinist Sanford Allen**, **vocalist & conductor Bobby McFerrin**, **vocalist Julia Bullock**, **tenor Lawrence Brownlee**, and **cellist Alvin McCall**, this radio special was a continuation of the first conversations Terrance hosted to honor and celebrate Juneteenth.
- **Joseph Boulogne, The Chevalier of Music and Revolution**, looked at the [life and works of one of Mozart's contemporaries: Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges](#), a **composer, violinist, conductor**, and **fencer**. Hosted by **Terrance McKnight**, the program includes a conversation with **Marlon Daniel**, **Artistic and Music Director** of the **Saint-Georges International Music Festival**; **Lady Jess**, **violinist and Co-Artistic Director** of the **Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra**; and **Bill Barclay**, the **Artistic Director of Concert Theatre Works** and **former Director of Music at Shakespeare's Globe**.
- **WQXR** launched [Camp Wolfgang](#), our very first **virtual kids fair**, in celebration of the **Mostly Mozart Festival**. It was a fun, full day of **virtual Pop-Up Classrooms, concerts, crafts, and more**, streaming live from **WQXR's Facebook page**, and presented in **partnership with Lincoln Center**. The performances and [activities are available online](#).

Arts and Culture

WQXR



Diversity and Inclusion

- The classical music world is in the middle of a long, overdue reckoning. But the question remains whether leaders, administrators, patrons, and performers of all backgrounds will take up the mantle to ensure a more just and equitable culture. WQXR's series, **Educate Yourself, shared stories from Black classical artists about the challenges they've faced in the industry**. Editorials include a [collection of stories being shared across social media](#), a [reading list](#) on classical music and race, as well as a discussion with the [previous generation's Black musicians about the racism they've faced](#).
- WQXR staff writer **James Bennett's editorial piece, [On Taking Lip \[Service\]](#)**, challenged classical institutions to go beyond "these statements of solidarity" which "are empty without action." Bennett reflects back to **May 2020, the murder of George Floyd, and the actions the arts world needs to take to continue moving forward**.
- As part of WQXR's *In Conversation* series, [James Bennett interviewed Soprano Lauren Michelle](#), **discussing racism in the opera house, the cost of speaking up, and how she tumbled head-first into the dazzling world of opera**.

New Leadership and Host Updates

- **Ed Yim** started as **WQXR's new Chief Content Officer and Senior Vice President** on September 28. Joining us from **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)**, where he served as **President and CEO** since 2017, Ed brings deep roots in the cultural community and a profound breadth of professional experience. In his first months, he has conducted a listening tour with **WQXR** staff, partner artists, peer classical stations nationwide, and leadership from cultural institutions, laying the groundwork for a new strategic plan to support the classical community.
- **WQXR's Creative Director and Host, [Clemency \(Clemmie\) Burton-Hill](#), continues to recover from a serious medical incident in January 2021**. After months of physical therapy, Clemmie is doing remarkably well, and [she shared her story publicly over the summer](#). Still, her recovery continues, and we remain unsure of her official return date.
- **WQXR Host [Terrance McKnight](#) was [approached to write a book](#) about his vision and experience hosting [The Black Experience in the Concert Hall](#)**. To write the book, Terrance took a short leave from WQXR's airwaves, inviting **friends and fellow New Yorkers** to host. Guests include **celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson, opera star Thomas Hampson, violinist (and WQXR 20x20 artist) Kelly Hall-Tompkins, WNYC's Brian Lehrer, MacArthur "Genius" Fellow and host of *Aria Code*, Rhiannon Giddens, and renowned saxophonist, composer and bandleader Branford Marsalis**.
- This October, **overnight host [Nimet Habachy](#) marked her 40th year on the air**. During her incredible career, she's worked in three different locations, outlasted four Philharmonic music directors, and stayed with the city through its darkest and brightest moments. **She sat down with James Bennett** to answer his "[Fast Five](#)" questions about her experiences.

Arts and Culture




The Jerome L. Greene Space

- In partnership with the *Museum of Food and Drink (MOFAD)*, The Greene Space is presenting [Food for Thought](#), exploring the unique connections of food, music, visual art, culture and more. Each month, The Greene Space produces a show and food experience, bringing together culinary histories of communities across our country. Past events have included [Culinary Lyricism](#): exploring the **relationship between music and food in Black and Latinx Cultures**; [Oyster Soirée](#): **a deep dive into the flavors, climate issues, and societal history of half shells**; and [Food for Thought, Reclamation Feast](#): **a celebration of Indigenous culinary practices helping Native communities reclaim their heritage**.
- **John Holiday**, one of [WQXR's 20 for 20 artists](#), stunned judges on the hit TV show *The Voice*, during blind auditions with his performance of *Misty*. You can watch the performance [here](#).
- [First Peoples Week](#) was **The Greene Space's** first-ever multi-day celebration centering Indigenous communities in and out of New York City. The Greene Space team provided a meaningful space for **Indigenous artists, organizers, and thinkers to lead a conversation and offer insights into their histories, cultures, concerns and visions for the future. This virtual exhibit will remain live until October 10, 2021.**
- **The Greene Space** continued to **support NYC artists** with seven new episodes of [\(Still\) Live From New York](#), **providing artists with a platform to showcase their work**, while encouraging audiences to support them as performance venues across the city remain closed.
- Offering rare and insightful looks at the biggest stories of the day, [Reporter's Notebook](#) is our **newest series featuring WNYC, WNYC Studios, and Gothamist reporters and journalists**. Recent discussions included a conversation between **Kai Wright** and **Andrea Bernstein** [about the 2020 Election and state of the country](#), as well as a discussion with reporters **Ilya Marritz** (*Trump, Inc.*) and **Sally Herships** (*The Heist*) on the [impacts of one of President Trump's key legislative accomplishments, the 2017 tax cuts](#).
- **WQXR's** [Classical Up Close](#) series presents **unparalleled, exclusive access to major artists in an intimate setting**. Artists have included [cellist, Steven Isserlis](#); [soprano Ailyn Pérez with baritone Igor Golovatenko](#); [multi-Grammy Award winner Joyce DiDonato](#).
- On Halloween, **WQXR** partnered with [Death of Classical](#) and [Green-Wood Cemetery](#) to produce a special event called [To America](#), inspired by the poetry of **James Weldon Johnson**. The show blended music, history, literature, and dance, with performances by **The Harlem Chamber Players, violinist Lady Jess, singers Danielle Buonaiuto and Shala Hughes**, and many others.
- Due to the pandemic, state election officials expected a surge in the number of voters requesting absentee ballots. In response, many states extended early voting and reduced requirements associated with absentee ballots. **The Takeaway's Amy Walter led candid discussions about the 2020 election with officials in three key states: [North Carolina](#), [Wisconsin](#), and [Arizona](#).**

Podcasts



Radiolab

- We're thrilled to announce that **Radiolab** has two new co-hosts. **Lulu Miller** is a *Radiolab* alum and the former Co-Host and Co-Founder of NPR's [Invisibilia](#). **Latif Nasser** was formerly *Radiolab*'s Director of Research and hosted the acclaimed mini-podcast, [The Other Latif](#). Miller and Nasser succeed **Robert Krulwich**, the show's longtime co-host who retired earlier this year. *Radiolab* also announced that reporter **Molly Webster** has been named the show's first Senior Correspondent.
- In keeping with the moment, **Radiolab** created a series of election-related episodes. In [Bloc Party](#), the team investigated the groups that pollsters, reporters, and political operatives believed could change the course of the election. [What If?](#) asked the burning questions that was on so many minds, **what would Donald Trump do if he lost the election?**

New Yorker Radio Hour

- On August 28, [The New Yorker Radio Hour](#) featured a conversation between host **David Remnick** and **President-Elect Joe Biden**. In a wide-ranging conversation, **Biden compared his position to that of Franklin Roosevelt**: taking office during a disaster, he argues, he would have an opportunity to affect a hugely ambitious agenda, but one **driven by pragmatism rather than ideology**.

Blindspot (9/11)

- While the devastating images of the 9/11 attacks are seared into our national collective memory, most of the events that led up to that day took place out of public view. **With over 1.3 million total downloads to date**, [Blindspot: The Road to 9/11](#) brings to light the decade-long "shadow struggle" that preceded the attacks. **Hosted by WNYC reporter Jim O'Grady** (who covered 9/11 and the aftermath for The New York Times) and **based on HISTORY's television documentary Road to 9/11**, the podcast draws on interviews with FBI agents, high-level bureaucrats, journalists, experts, and people who knew the terrorists personally.

United States of Anxiety

- Starting Sunday, August 23, [The United States of Anxiety](#) began airing weekly as a live radio show on WNYC, in addition to continuing as a podcast. Hosted by **Kai Wright** and **hailed by The Atlantic as one of the "Best Podcasts of 2018,"** *The United States of Anxiety* explores the biggest questions of our time: who counts as an American, who is allowed to live here, who gets access to opportunity, and whose lives matter?

Death, Sex, & Money (DSM)

- In August, [The New York Times](#) profiled **Anna Sale** about the urgency of her work, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The piece includes a series of interviews with essential workers and [Skin Hunger](#), a two-part collaboration with the podcast [Love + Radio](#) about the longing for physical touch.
- In September, DSM created the mini series **Game Changer**, which dove into the many ways that the COVID-19 pandemic upended the lives of athletes. Episodes included a [minor leaguer's lost opportunities](#), an [NFL players' desire to make change](#), and a [BMX freestyler looking to 2021 for hope](#).
- DSM welcomed **WNYC alumna Jo Ann Allen** to spearhead [a series of conversations with listeners aged 60+ about aging](#). What's liberating about it, what's scary about it, and what's changing during the pandemic.

Podcasts



On the Media (OTM)

- Streamed live from **The Jerome L. Greene Space**, **Brooke Gladstone** and **Bob Garfield** hosted [Imprecision 2020](#), OTM's first-ever live election night show. The program featured expert interviews, music, comedy, and reflections from the OTM team. Guests included **Mike Pesca** of *The Gist*; **Kai Wright**, host of WNYC's *United States of Anxiety*; comedian **Jessica Kirson**; actor **Alec Baldwin**; **Brian Lehrer**, host of WNYC's *The Brian Lehrer Show*; BuzzFeed reporter **Jane Lytvynenko**; writer **Mychal Denzel Smith**; and musicians **Meah Pace**, **Randy Ingram**, and **Cécile McLorant Savant**.
- In [The Rise of "Conspiracuity,"](#) OTM producer **Leah Feder** spoke with **Travis View**, host of the **QAnon Anonymous** podcast, who contextualizes this latest chapter in QAnon's spread, and **Seane Corn**, a **yoga instructor** and **co-founder of Off the Mat, Into the World**, about what she's been seeing in her community. She also speaks with **Joseph Uscinski**, **professor of political science at the University of Miami**, about why members of what appears to be a progressive community might be seduced by a seemingly right-wing conspiracy theory.

Consider This

- On September 9 we launched [Consider This](#), our new daily news podcast in partnership with NPR. Hosted by the incredibly talented **Rebeca Ibarra**, *Consider This* is the **first localized daily news podcast in the country**. As we do in our live broadcast everyday, **the podcast blends national and international news from NPR with local reporting from WNYC—extending public radio's unique local-national collaboration into the digital space.**

Trump, Inc.

- With **over a million downloads in October alone**, *Trump, Inc.* has continued to ask the question, "who's profiting from this administration and at what cost?". In partnership with *New York Magazine*, WNYC's *Trump, Inc.* [profiled insiders who profited off the Trump presidency](#). Read our [full list of 51 Trump insiders \(from Sheldon Adelson to Ryan Zinke\) here](#).