

FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE HOLOCAUST TO NORWALK CONCERT HALL

VIOLINS OF HOPE

IN CONCERT WITH THE NORWALK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
FEATURING INSTRUMENTS RESCUED FROM THE HOLOCAUST

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT THE HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER



SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 16TH

7:00 PM

NORWALK CITY HALL

JONATHAN YATES
MUSIC DIRECTOR



WELCOME

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for joining us this evening as we conclude the week's observance of the Kristallnacht, our first anniversary of the Holocaust Resource Center and the culmination of the visit to our community of 8 of the Violins of Hope. This has been quite a week!

We have visited five area high schools and told the stories of the Violins, our family survivor histories, and the Holocaust to hundreds of students and their teachers. We have visited eight synagogues; Merkaz, our community High School for Jewish Studies, and Mozaic Senior Services. Tomorrow we will be at four of our neighborhood churches for services or youth music programs. We will provide our young families with an afternoon at the Discovery Museum filled with Music, Stories, Steam and Sound.

We have engaged approximately 30 volunteers in this endeavor who have given us countless hours of their time. The Federation staff have been all hands on deck and have each adopted a violin for the week. They have or will travel with that violin and a volunteer docent to those schools, synagogues, churches and Museum. It is as if they have adopted a child for a week.

Our donors have made all this possible! Much appreciation goes to the Boas, Scinto and Meshberg families for sharing our vision for Holocaust education. Additionally, thanks go to Congregation Rodeph Sholom for their ongoing PJ Library support and the Discovery Museum program. Thanks too for our Friends of the HRC for enhancing our ability to continue Holocaust education in this community going forward. In this time of increased antisemitism and antizionism this is critically important.

What will you be hearing this evening? You will be listening to the voices of the Jewish people through the notes of a violin. The violins will tell you the stories of a dark period of Jewish history. Buried in the wood and strings you will hear not just sadness but the joy and hope of a people who just want to enjoy their culture, religion and their lives. Sometimes, music speaks louder than words. Hear the music, picture the families, the children, the rich life that was erased and then rebuilt. It is our responsibility to educate so that this does not happen ever again.

Shelley Kreiger
Founding Educator, Holocaust Resource Center
Jewish Federation of Greater Fairfield County

ABOUT VIOLINS OF HOPE

Violins of Hope is a project of concerts based on a private collection of violins, violas and cellos, all collected since the end of World War II. Many of the instruments belonged to Jews before and during the war. Many were donated by or bought from survivors; some arrived through family members and many simply carry Stars of David as decoration.

Some of the violins are adorned with six-sided stars that were added by the original violin makers. In the early twentieth century it was not uncommon for amateur violinists to purchase instruments customized with symbolic inlays. Growing up in Israel, violinmaker Amnon Weinstein met many Klezmer musicians who had purchased these pre-war instruments specifically for what they proudly identified as a Star of David. The more "Jewish" a violin looked, the klezmerim explained to Amnon, the more likely that the local Rabbi would recommend its owner be hired to play at a wedding—and the more likely that the performer would receive tips from the celebrants.

While the provenances of these instruments are not always clear, they are symbols of Klezmer and other Jewish traditions that were all but completely destroyed during the Holocaust. And all the instruments have a common denominator as symbols of hope and a way to say:

Remember me, remember us. Life is good, celebrate it for those who perished, for those who survived. For all people.

The Nazis used music and especially violins to humiliate and degrade Jews in ghettos and camps. They confiscated many thousands of instruments from Jews all over Europe. Our concerts are the ultimate answer to their plan to annihilate a people and their culture, to destroy human lives and freedom.

The sound of violins is often compared to the beauty of the human voice. When played with talent and spirit, it is known to reach out and touch hearts. This was the role of violins in the war—to touch hearts, kindle hope for better times and spread it around. Wherever there was music, there was hope.

Our violins represent the victory of the human spirit over evil and hatred. As many as 6 million Jews were murdered in World War II, but their memory is not forgotten. It comes back to life with every concert and every act of love and celebration of the human spirit.

Violins of Hope is not only a memorial to a lost culture and people, it is also an educational act that reaches young students and adults wherever our concerts are performed. In recent years some of the most world renowned orchestras have held Violins of Hope concerts, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Cleveland Symphony and many others.

Every concert brings together people of all faiths and backgrounds. Every project is accompanied by an extensive educational program. We visit schools and hold narrated concerts. We tell the history of some instruments—such as the violin which was thrown out of a cattle train on the way from France to Auschwitz; the violin that was buried under snow in Holland; the violin that saved the lives of people who played in a camp orchestra and survived. So many stories.

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PERFORMANCES AT

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Norwalk, CT 06851

ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER (HRC)



The HRC is the first and only Holocaust Resource Center in Fairfield County.

We are living under an alarming threat of Holocaust denial and distortion. The HRC combats this attempted erasure by actively honoring the history and legacy of the Holocaust survivors of our community by documenting and preserving their stories. Most importantly, the HRC educates current and future generations to become the "history-tellers" of our community and to share this critical legacy.

The HRC provides comprehensive resources that foster meaningful research and promote active dialogue to teach and honor the history, eyewitness accounts, and lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that our local survivors, their families, and millions of other victims will never be forgotten. The HRC collaborates with local, state, and national partners to provide information, events, testimony, exhibits, museum visits, speakers, authors, and programs designed to reinforce ongoing Holocaust education and ensure that the stories left behind are safeguarded as our stories.

The Holocaust Resource Center honors the memory of the Holocaust victims and survivors, shares valuable lessons from history, and builds a more compassionate and just society for all.

GOALS

- Combat Holocaust denial and distortion through education
- Highlight and share students' most impactful insights
- Provide training and opportunities for Holocaust survivors and 2nd- and 3rd-generation Holocaust survivors (2Gs & 3Gs) to share their stories
- Partner with local synagogues and agencies for exhibits, speakers, and programs
- Showcase films and talkbacks about local survivors and their descendants
- Provide a library of published books on local survivors
- Digitize HRC's collection of Holocaust survivor testimonies
- Create the HRC Speakers' Bureau, a venue to share family stories
- Implement The Memoir Project with 2Gs & 3Gs to tell their family stories



To support the HRC, contact HRC@shalomct.org

VIOLINS OF HOPE

Saturday, November 16, 2024 • 7:00PM

Jonathan Yates, Music Director

Prelude from Concerto Grosso No. 1.....Ernest Bloch
(1880—1959)

Lullaby for String Orchestra.....George Gershwin
(1898—1937)

Yiddish Fantasy.....Meira Warshauer
(b. 1949)
Krzysztof Kuznik, *violin soloist*

Louange à l'éternité de Jésus.....Olivier Messiaen
from Quartet for the End of Time (1908-92)

Jane Yeong Eun Lee, *cello*

Adagio from Chamber Symphony No. 3, Op. 151.....Mieczyslaw Weinberg
(1919-96)

Theme from *Schindler's List*.....John Williams
(b. 1932)

Wiegenlied (Lullaby).....Gideon Klein
(1919-45)
Adrianne Greenbaum, *flute*

Three Yiddish Folksongs.....Viktor Ullmann
(1898-1944)
Krzysztof Kuznik, *violin*

String Sinfonia No. 2 in D major, BWV N 2.....Felix Mendelssohn
(1880-1959)
I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Allegro vivace

Hevenu Shalom Aleichem.....Traditional
Arr. Matt Springer

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

VIOLIN I

Krzysztof Kuznik, *Concertmaster*
Emanoil Manolov, *Ass't Concertmaster*
Marina Kitaychik
Claudia Tondi

VIOLIN II

Stephanie Liu, *Principal*
Corrine Metter, *Ass't Principal*
Sabrina Arastu
Momo Kobayashi

VIOLA

Suzanne Corey-Sahlin, *Principal*
Amy Selig, *Ass't Principal*
Dana Saccomano

CELLO

Jane Yeong Eun Lee, *Principal*
Justin Elkins, *Ass't Principal*
Aaron Wang

BASS VIOL

Jordan Calixto, *Principal*

FLUTE

Adrianne Greenbaum, *Soloist*

PIANO

Jonathan Yates

Thank you to Ken Kuo and Rental Instruments, Inc./CT School of Music for loaning cases, stands for the historic instruments and additional instruments for the Children's Musical Experience.

MISSION

The Mission of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra is to share the beauty and power of orchestral music with audiences of all ages through live performances and music education programs.

Stage Manager – Jacqueline Massé
Assistant Stage Manager – James Bell
Videographer – Anthony M. Santora, III

MEET THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Jonathan Yates, Music Director/Conductor

Jonathan Yates is the seventh Music Director of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra since its inception in 1939. He has been a driving force in reinvigorating the relationship between the Norwalk symphony and its community, revived the orchestra's popular (Not) Just for Kids educational outreach program, and started collaborations with numerous local cultural, religious, and civic organizations. He made his professional orchestral

conducting debut at 23, leading the National Symphony Orchestra in a Millennium Stages Concert. The following year he made his Carnegie Hall debut as a pianist in the Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshop. As Music Director of the Norwalk Youth Symphony, he has led that ensemble on successful tours to Spain, Germany, Carnegie Hall, and Tanglewood.

Jonathan completed several seasons as Musical Director of Music Mountain, a preeminent chamber music festival in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. The New Yorker praised his first year saying, "The longtime festival's programming has been given a welcome jolt with the arrival of a new director, the pianist and conductor Jonathan Yates." He has collaborated as a pianist and conductor with many of the country's most respected musicians, including Midori, Kim Kashkashian, David Finckel, Charles Neidich, Ida Kavafian, Colin Carr, Gilbert Kalish, Paul Neubauer, Joseph Lin, and William Purvis; and the Avalon, Daedalus and Pacifica Quartets. He has been heard as a chamber musician at the 92nd Street Y, Miller Theater, Bargemusic, and Merkin Hall, as well as at the Caramoor Festival and on the Ravinia Festival Rising Stars Series. As an ardent devotee of the music of our time, he has conducted new music concerts with the Argento Chamber Ensemble and the Knights, was the recipient of an ASCAP award for adventurous programming, and has given local and regional premieres of pre-eminent composers including Augusta Read Thomas, Huang Ruo, Zhou Long, Chester Biscardi, and Chen Yi.

Jonathan received his Graduate Diploma in conducting from the Juilliard School, where he studied with James DePreist and Otto-Werner Mueller, and was the holder of the Bruno Walter Memorial Scholarship. He received his Master of Music from State University of New York, where he worked with Gilbert Kalish, and his Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, where he studied with Robert Levin. He serves as Music Director Emeritus of Camerata Notturna, a chamber orchestra in New York City, and has also served on the faculty of Sarah Lawrence College. He descends from a family that has been on the forefront of the battles for the cultural and humanistic life of our country. His grandfather, U. S. Representative Sidney R. Yates, was the principal defender of the National Endowment for the Arts in his 48 years in Congress, and his father, the Honorable Stephen R. Yates, was the first judge in Illinois to approve same-sex adoption.

"Our violins present the victory of the human spirit over evil and hatred."

–Amnon Weinstein

AVSHALOM WEINSTEIN

Co-Founder, Violins of Hope

Third-generation Israeli violinmaker, **Avshalom "Avshi" Weinstein**, was trained by his father, the late master violinmaker, Amnon Weinstein. Avshi began working with Amnon in their Tel Aviv atelier in 1998 as a violin maker and restorer of violins, violas, and cellos of the highest quality.

He is trained in the tradition of the Italian Cremonese School of violinmakers and the French School of restoration. Every summer since 1998, Avshi joined his father at the international violin- and bow-making atelier and master class for young violinists at Keshet Eilon music center in northern Israel. In 2006, he was invited to ÇAKA (Cihat Askin ve Küçük Arkadaşları), an international program for young musicians in Turkey, where he has worked ever since. He opened his own restoration workshop in Istanbul in 2009, the same year he began training in bow repair with Daniel Schmidt, a master bow-maker based in Dresden, Germany.

With his father, Avshalom co-founded Violins of Hope, the Weinsteins' collection of lovingly restored stringed instruments with unique stories dating back to World War II and pre-war Jewish musical tradition.

AMNON WEINSTEIN

Co-Founder, Violins of Hope

Amnon Weinstein, z'l, an Israeli master violinmaker, founded Violins of Hope in 1996, dedicating his life to their musical history.

Amnon's parents, musicians who played violin and piano, immigrated from Vilna, Lithuania, and settled in Palestine during the British Mandate. Born in 1938, Amnon, who was a viola and trumpet player, first learned his violin-making craft in childhood with his father. He studied in Cremona, Italy and in Paris with the most famous teachers including Pietro Sgarabotto, Giuseppe Ornati, Ferdinando Garimberti and Etienne Vatelot.

Amnon won a gold medal and a certificate of excellence for violin-sound at Salt Lake City in 1982; he was a member of Entente International des Maitre Luthiers et Archetiers d'Art; a member Bienfaiteur de Groupement des Luthiers et Archetiers d'Art de France; and was a member of the Violin Society of America. He served as a judge in the violin-makers' competition in Salt-Lake City in 1998 and as a judge in the Etienne Vatelot Concours, Paris 2004. He was awarded the prestigious Ole Bull prize, Bergen, Norway, 2007. As one of the founders of Keshet Eilon violin master courses, he operated a violin-making atelier and lectured on instruments' history, construction and care.

The Violins of Hope collection now consists of more than seventy instruments, each with a story and history. Musicians have played the violins worldwide in concerts held in Jerusalem, Istanbul, Paris, London, Switzerland, Los Angeles, North Carolina, Ohio, Alabama, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C. They are exhibited and played in synagogues, churches, museums, universities, and symphony concert halls.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Ernest Bloch (1880—1959)

Ernest Bloch was a Swiss Jewish composer who emigrated to the US in 1916. His music proudly reflected his Jewish heritage in a way that was not common at the time, but he said that doing so was “the only way in which I can produce music of vitality and significance.” His music was explicitly banned by the Nazis.

George Gershwin (1898—1937)

George Gershwin blurred the boundaries between classical, jazz, and popular music with his entirely unique melodic gift. His Lullaby is the only piece he wrote for strings. His music was also banned by the Nazis.

Meira Warshauer (b. 1949)

Yiddish Fantasy is an arrangement of several Yiddish songs and klezmer tunes which were popular among the Jews of Eastern Europe at the turn of the century. These tunes were played by Jewish musicians, klezmerim, at weddings and other celebrations. Originally written for Daniel Heifetz and The Classical Band, Yiddish Fantasy provides a glimpse into the culture of the Jews of Eastern Europe at the turn of the 19th-20th century.

Olivier Messiaen (1908-92)

Olivier Messiaen was a devout Catholic who was imprisoned in a German prisoner of war camp while serving as a nurse for the French army. He wrote this work for the musicians who were at the camp; it’s inspired by the Book of Revelation, and is one of the most important chamber works of the 20th century.

Mieczyslaw Weinberg (1919-96)

Weinberg was born in Warsaw, and fled to Russia during the Nazi invasion of Poland. His parents and sister, who were not able to escape, were murdered at the Trawniki concentration camp—a fact that Weinberg only learned in 1996 on a return visit to Poland. He was further persecuted by the Soviets during his career, who killed his father-in-law and arrested him; he was only released after Stalin’s death. His music, impeccably crafted and emotive, is highly influenced by Prokofiev and Shostakovich. In his Third Chamber Symphony, written in his final decade of life, one can hear him utilizing his deep reserve of personal suffering to create a very affecting lament.

John Williams (b. 1932)

Schindler’s List won seven Academy Awards for its portrayal of Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist who saved more than a thousand mostly Polish–Jewish refugees from the Holocaust by employing them in his factories during World War II. John Williams pulled from the traditional modes and emotive nature of klezmer violin playing to create the iconic melody, performed in the soundtrack by Itzhak Perlman.

Gideon Klein (1919-45)

Klein was only 25 when he perished at Auschwitz after spending three years at Terezin. Like many of the other composers at Terezin, he turned to Jewish sources, including his setting of this Hebrew lullaby.

Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944)

Ullmann studied with Arnold Schoenberg and was a prolific composer of operas, orchestral works, and chamber music. Viktor Ullmann composed his choral arrangements of Hebrew, Yiddish and Hasidic songs in the Theresienstadt ghetto in 1943/1944. It was intended as a source for melody and text orthography and was published in Berlin in 1930 Maccabi songbook.

Felix Mendelssohn (1880-1959)

One of the most important Jewish composers of all time, Felix Mendelssohn was also one of the greatest prodigies in the history of music. His works for string orchestra, the thirteen string symphonies, were all written between the ages of 12-14, and are just delightful.

Hevenu shalom aleichem — Traditional (Arr. Matt Springer)

“Hevenu shalom aleichem” (Hebrew: **הֵבֵנוּ שְׁלוֹם אֵלַיְכֶם** “We brought peace upon you”) is a Hebrew-language folk song based on the greeting *Shalom aleichem*.

INSTRUMENT HISTORIES

JHV 96 The Haas Violin **Play Level: Good**

The Haas Violin belonged to Joseph Haas of Vienna, Austria. Born on March 10, 1922, Joseph lived with his parents in Vienna's 17th district and attended gymnasium there. His parents ran a small market. All of that changed on March 12, 1938, two days after Joseph's 16th birthday, when the 8th Army of the German Wehrmacht crossed the border into Austria at the start of the Anschluss.

The campaign against the Jews began immediately. Jews were driven through the streets of Vienna; their homes and shops were plundered. The Nazis dissolved Jewish organizations and institutions, hoping to force Jews to emigrate. Their plans succeeded—by the end of 1941, 130,000 Jews had left Vienna, 30,000 of whom went to the United States, including Joseph, who left Vienna alone for America via Rotterdam on November 15, 1939. His father had earlier passed from illness, and mother was lost later during the Holocaust.

Among the handful of possessions Joseph took with him was this violin. Speaking only German when he arrived, Joseph stayed with his aunt in Brooklyn, New York, and got started with his new life, including practicing his violin. In 1943, Joseph was drafted by the U.S. Army and traveled back to Europe, where he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Later, because of his fluent German, he participated in the interrogations of very high-level captured German officers, including field marshal Gerd von Rundstedt. While serving in the U.S. Army, Joseph was granted a Certificate of Naturalization and became a U.S. citizen.

After the war, Joseph married, had a son, supported his family and continued his violin playing. He joined several amateur orchestras, and eventually, through his work with a pharmaceutical company, was invited to join the Doctors Orchestral Society of New York. As part of this organization, Joseph had the rare opportunity to play his violin in Carnegie Hall during a benefit performance of the orchestra.

While he was alive, Joseph Haas never spoke of his young life growing up in Vienna or his journey from there to the United States. His son learned some of the details only by searching through the Austrian archives.

JHV 74 Barnea - The violin of Alfred Bernheim **Play Level: Excellent**

This violin belonged to Alfred Bernheim of Germany. Born in 1871, Alfred married his wife, Berta, in 1903 in southern Germany. They lived in Passau, Germany, then a major town, and owned a small shop, Merkur. Soon the shop became a four-story general store, catering to all tastes and modeled after the largest shops in Paris, and boasting the first elevator and telephone in town. Needless to say, it made the Bernheims rich and the townspeople jealous.

Alfred and Berta had three children – Helena, Zigbert, and Felix. All three were active athletes and popular, enjoying a lifestyle unheard of in town. When Alfred and Berta turned 60, they passed the business to their sons, as their daughter had married and moved away.

In the late 1920s, the Nazis became active in southern Germany, and Passau was one of the first Nazi strongholds. The Hitler family lived across the street from the Bernheims, and Adolf Eichmann and Heinrich Himmler taught school nearby. Nazi terrorism became a daily event. In October 1935, the Bernheims were forced to sell their prosperous shop, but not before they were marched naked along the main street and humiliated publicly. Their son, Felix, was imprisoned for six weeks.

Realizing there could be further persecutions, their son, Zigbert, travelled to Palestine and bought land north of Herzliya. He married Alsbeth and left Germany. His parents left for France, where they were sent to a concentration camp. Their daughter, Helena, managed to get her parents released and they all went into hiding and survived the war. After the war, Alfred and Berta settled in Israel with their son, Zigbert. Both died in 1953.

JHV 62 The Hecht Violin **Play Level: Very Good**

This violin belonged to Fanny Hecht of Bielefeld, Germany. Alex and Fanny Hecht had two sons, Fritz and Ernst. When the Nazis took over in Germany, the family left for Amsterdam. There, Fanny, a violinist, befriended a Christian neighbor, Helena Visser, who also played the violin, as did her daughter, Helena.

In 1943, the Nazis rounded up most Jews living in Amsterdam and sent them to Westerbork and to Auschwitz. Fanny was afraid that her family would be arrested like so many other Jews. One evening, she knocked on the door of Mrs. Visser and asked her to keep her violin in case the Hechts were deported. Fanny said, "Mrs. Visser, I want you to take care of my violin, I do not want the Germans to have it, and after the war when we come back, you can give the violin back to me, and if not, the violin is yours."

Soon, they were arrested and sent away. Ernst, age 17, died in Sobibor in July 1943. Fanny and Alex were murdered in Auschwitz in September 1943. The eldest son, Fritz, died in Monowitz labor camp in January 1945. No family members survived.

The violin was kept by the Visser family for 74 years. They insisted on giving it back to Jewish musicians. When they heard about the Violins of Hope concerts, they traveled to Israel and visited Yad VaShem - The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, where they researched the history of the Hechts. Upon realizing that none had survived, they gave the violin to Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein so that the violin could play and tell the tragic story of the Hecht family.

The sound of the violin is beautiful, and inside the violin is inscribed, *Antonius Stradivarius Cremona, Faciebat anno 1743*, so it is very old.

JHV 48 Sandor Fisher **Play Level: Excellent**

This violin belonged to Sandor Fisher of Romania. Fisher was born in 1919 in Romania. He started violin lessons at age 6. At age 18, he changed his name to Farago Sandor, when Jews were being persecuted and he was a part of the local opera company. When the his father was conscripted to hard labor, Sandor instead took his place, and his violin went with him to the work camp. Soon Sandor was ordered to play and entertain the officers during dinner and was able to smuggle some leftovers for his friends. In 1944 he managed to escape the labor camp and join the Soviets. He stayed in Hungary for a few years until emigrating to Israel. He married his wife Valeria and raised a family with three daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. All along, he never parted with his violin. His daughters said he played until the end of his days.

Sandor Fisher's wife, Valeria Teichner was born in 1925 in Hungary. In 1944, in Auschwitz, her name became A12763. She started violin lessons at age 6 and stopped playing only when life became unbearable. On the cattle train to Auschwitz in 1944, she forgot her violin. Getting off the train, she went through a "selection" where she lost her mother. When she was sent to the music barrack, she cried, unable to play. She was sent to the laundry barrack, only to go through another "selection" and end up in Goretitz, another hard-labor camp, working in a munition factory.

The sadistic capo there used to play his violin every evening. He played well, she said. On Christmas Eve, all prisoner-musicians were ordered to play and sing for the commanders. She sang Lorelei, accompanying herself on the violin. The next day, the officers' cook threw a piece of cake to her over the fence. A terrible crime. The capo sentenced her to be hanged in Gross-Rosen, the main camp. When the car came for her, the capo called out: "geigerin heraus", (violinist – out!), but then changed his mind, hit her hard on her face, and let her stay. She was liberated by the Soviets in May 1945. She soon met Sandor Fisher and married him.

JHV 96 The Erich Weininger Violin **Play Level: Very Good**

Made in the workshop of Schweitzer, Germany around 1870

This Violin was owned by Erich Weininger, of Vienna, Austria. His violin was made in Schweitzer, Germany around 1870. Weininger was a butcher and an amateur violinist living in Vienna when the Nazis marched into Austria in 1938. Erich was arrested and brought along his violin to Dachau Concentration Camp. Later, he was sent to Buchenwald and though he was not allowed to play there, he still was able to hold onto his violin.

Miraculously, a group of Quakers managed to arrange Erich's release from Buchenwald. He then returned to Vienna only to be one of the very last Jews to escape Nazi Europe. Boarding an illegal boat to Palestine, he was soon arrested by British police who did not allow Jews admission. Erich, with a violin in hand, was deported to the Island of Mauritius off the coast of East Africa where he stayed until the end of the war.

While in Mauritius, Erich started a band with other deportees, playing classical, local and even jazz music in cafes, and restaurants. Finally, he reached Palestine in 1945. His violin was given to the Violins of Hope by his son, Zeev.

V 16 The Bielski violin

The Bielski violin is a Klezmer violin with a mother-of-pearl Star of David. It is a German-made instrument, probably around 1870. Most klezmers were self-taught musicians with a natural talent for music. While many arts were not encouraged by Jewish tradition, music became one of the very few venues available to them. It was quite common for young children to play violins—one could often tell how many boys were in a Jewish family by counting the number of violins hanging on the wall.

This is probably the reason why so many klezmer instruments were decorated with the most known Jewish symbol—a Star of David. Most klezmer violins were cheap, made in Czechoslovakia or Germany, sold in shops that specialized in making ornamented violins.

The klezmer tradition was almost lost during the Holocaust, but in recent years, there has been some revival in Europe, Israel and the US.

The restoration work of this violin is dedicated to the Bielski partisans who lived, fought, and saved 1,230 Jews during the war. Assaela Weinstein, Amnon's wife is the daughter of Assael Bielski, one of the three brothers who formed the Bielski brigade in Belarus.

JHV 25 Viola by Carl Zach, Wein 1896 **Play Level: Excellent**

The Viola was made by Carl Zach in Vienna in 1896.

The Cello

Both the Viola and The Cello area fine, high-quality instrument bought by Moshe Weinstein, from a member of the Palestine Orchestra. Started in 1936 by Bronislav Hubermann, The Palestine Orchestra became the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in 1948. The members of the Palestine Orchestra were first-rate, Jewish musicians in European orchestras, but lost their positions when the Nazis came to power in 1933 and racial laws were enforced in Germany. When World War II ended, there was a general boycott of German goods in Israel. So much so, that the name "Germany" was boycotted on the radio. In this atmosphere, musicians refused to play on German-made instruments and many came to Moshe Weinstein and asked him to buy their violins. "If you don't buy my violin, I'll break it" some said. Others threatened to burn their instruments. Weinstein bought each and every instrument, as for him, a violin was above war and evil. Yet, he knew he would never be able to sell them. After 50 years, those instruments have come back to life and can now be heard in concerts of Violins of Hope.

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Sunday, March 23, 2025, 3:00pm



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Chamber Music Series with Music Theatre of CT



**Chamber
Music Series**
WITH MUSIC THEATRE
OF CONNECTICUT
More information in June 2024



For performance details and to purchase tickets,
please visit NorwalkSymphony.org or call 203-956-6771

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To support the work of the Holocaust Resource Center
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The Holocaust Resource Center is a program of the
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