

**A program from The Braid Theater brings stories
from survivors of the Holocaust
January 21, 2021**

Fuente Latina

Los Angeles and Around the World Virtually, January 11, 2021

The Braid (formerly Jewish Women's Theater), Los Angeles Jewish Symphony (LAJS) and Temple Isaiah will honor International Holocaust Remembrance Day with the world premiere of "Stories From the Violins of Hope" The theatrical production, which will be available live on Zoom, is the first to tell the story of the famous collection of violins that survived the Holocaust and were revived by an Israeli family of violin makers. .

The music production, postponed last spring due to COVID-19, has returned for a live performance on Zoom with seven actors and five musicians. Directed by The Braid Production Director Susan Morganstern, it will take place at 2 p.m. PST, Sunday, January 31, 2021.

Virtuoso violinist Niv Ashkenazi will play the only violin in the "Violins of Hope" collection currently in the United States. The rest of the collection remains in Israel until live concerts can resume.

From Israel, where he continues to restore Holocaust violins sent to him from around the world, violin maker Amnon Weinstein, who founded the "Violins of Hope" project with his son, commented: "I had to find a way to make these violins speak up, to tell the world that you were once touched by people who had dreams and so much talent that has been lost. Every piece of music played on them says 'Never again'.

Playwright Lisa Pearl Rosenbaum explains: "The story is based on my extensive conversations with Amnon and my research on violins. What surprised me was that Amnon's father, Moshe, was also an extraordinary violin maker. He left Lithuania for Palestine before World War II and established a music store and workshop in Tel Aviv. Members of the newly founded Palestine Orchestra (now the Israel Philharmonic), all Jews exiled from Europe, wanted to get rid of their German-made instruments. Moshe couldn't bear to destroy them, so he kept them in his attic. Years later, their son Amnon recovered and restored them, adding them to his collection of violins that survived the concentration camps, ghettos, transport trains, and the forests of Eastern Europe. This is a story to be told."

The "Violins of Hope" stories were spawned through the efforts of Gail Solo, sponsor and Temple Isaiah congregant. She said: "I am honored to be a part of the collaboration. I have spent my entire life with the mantra, "Never forget and never again." This production fulfills that commandment and is particularly moving as the last survivors of the Holocaust are leaving our world.

"Violins will outlive Holocaust survivors and will be there to tell the story to the next generation," said Dr. Noreen Green, Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony (LAJS). Green selected and curated the music the LAJS Chamber Players will perform throughout Rosenbaum's play.

Producer Susanne Reyto, president of the 'Violins of Hope' Project in Los Angeles, and herself a Holocaust survivor, said: "My mission is to educate the next generation about the Holocaust in a unique way."

"The violins are survivors. Their restoration demonstrates our ability to rise from the ashes and succeed. After we leave, the violins will remain and will continue to speak the language of music to the world. Damaged instruments represent suffering and restoration represents survival. Hopefully people will understand the importance of music in our lives, as well as in the lives of the victims of the Holocaust, where music saved or prolonged their lives," said Rabbi Jaclyn Cohen of Temple Isaiah, "Tifani Coyot and I will open the production with a very special song of remembrance, setting the tone for International Holocaust Remembrance Day and reminding us all of the deeper meaning behind this unique performance. I hope the audience is inspired to continue learning, listening, and bringing survivor stories, and surviving musical instruments, into their lives. "

Ronda Spinak, Artistic Director of The Braid and producer of Stories from the Violins of Hope, said: "This partnership is exactly what The Braid strives to bring to our community. We are honored and excited, in the midst of a pandemic, to have found a way to present this work in a different, original and deeply moving way that gives voice to our Jewish heritage in a unique and contemporary way."

Spinak continued: "The unforgettable script by writer and Braid Advisory Board member Lisa Rosenbaum, set to beautiful music, offers a moving way to hear this story and gives each audience member a gift that will be long remembered."