PRESS RELEASE
April 2020

Yo-Yo Ma, Andris Nelsons, Simone Dinnerstein, and Other Celebrated Artists Perform in Original Yom Hashoah Holocaust Memorial & Concert Film Available Free on YouTube Starting Sunday, April 19 at 12:00 P.M. EST.

Artists Are Joined by Rabbis, Cantors, and Holocaust Survivors for a Program of Music, Prayer, and Testimony—in new videos sent from their homes and synagogues.

Film by Terezín Music Foundation, Produced and Directed by Mark Ludwig.

BOSTON — For audiences sheltering from the pandemic around the world on Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 20), Terezín Music Foundation (TMF) offers an original Memorial and Concert film uniting world-famous musicians, noted clergy, and Holocaust survivors sharing performance, prayer, and stories newly recorded in their homes and synagogues. The sixty-minute film features Yo-Yo Ma, pianist Simone Dinnerstein, conductor Andris Nelsons and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, soprano Nora Fisher, Chief Cantor of the Israel Defense Forces Shai Abramson and others, plus survivors of Terezín and Auschwitz reflecting on art and freedom. The Terezín Music Foundation Yom
Hashoah Memorial and Concert film, produced and directed by TMF Executive Director Mark Ludwig, is available to all on the “TMF on Yom Hashoah” YouTube channel beginning Sunday, April 19, at 12:00 PM EST; Holocaust Remembrance Day begins April 20 at sundown.

“Inspired by the composers who wrote music inside the Terezín concentration camp, we offer this powerful program of remembrance, comfort, and hope—with profound thanks to the outstanding artists, clergy, and survivors who participated from isolation in their homes and synagogues. May their voices uplift us all.”

—Mark Ludwig, Terezín Music Foundation Executive Director and the film’s producer and director

Performance highlights are cellist Yo-Yo Ma performing the “Prayer from Jewish Life” by Swiss-American composer Ernst Bloch, Simone Dinnerstein performing “The Mysterious Barricades” by François Couperin, Nathan Meltzer performing “Eli, Eli (My God, My God)” on the legendary Ames Stradivarius violin, IDF Chief Cantor Shai Abramson performing the Warsaw Ghetto Song, U.S. Presidential Inaugural Poet Richard Blanco reading a TMF-commissioned poem about freedom and Coro Allegro (Boston’s LGBTQ+ and allied classical chorus), performing a TMF-commissioned setting of that poem by composer Pablo Ortiz, acclaimed violinist Michael Ludwig performing a Bach sonata, and soprano Nora Fisher closing the program with “Oseh Shalom,” the Jewish prayer for peace.

In moving first-hand testimony, survivor and noted psychiatrist Dr. Anna Ornstein shares a remarkable story from her time in Auschwitz with her mother, and the late Zuzana Růžičková, famed harpsichordist and survivor of Terezín, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen, reflects on the power of art and the importance of “inner freedom.” Integrated into the film are paintings by internationally famed artist and Vilna Ghetto survivor Samuel Bak, whose works preserve the memory of the ruination of Jewish life and insist on the power of creativity.
For those wishing to join the clergy in prayer and song, an accompanying PDF provides the Hebrew and English texts of the Mourner’s Kaddish, “El Malei Rachamim (God of Compassion),” “Ani Ma’amim (I Believe),” and “Oseh Shalom (the prayer for peace),” as well as the Holocaust survivor anthem “Zog nit keyn mol (Never Say).” Both the film and the PDF are available at www.terezinmusic.org.

“This film is a gift for our souls. Music helps heal the wounds created by our losses and by the callousness of an indifferent world.” — Survivor Anna Ornstein

Making a poignant appearance in the TMF film is the legendary Ames Stradivarius violin, an instrument with its own story of displacement, played here by acclaimed violinist Nathan Meltzer. Polish-born American violinist Roman Totenberg purchased this exquisite 1734 instrument in 1943 and performed on it for nearly four decades until it was stolen from his office at Bard College. It remained missing and silent until 2015, three years after Totenberg’s death, when it came to the attention of the FBI, who returned it to Totenberg’s daughters. As Nina Totenberg said, the sisters were determined to place it in the hands of another virtuoso violinist so that “the beautiful, brilliant, and throaty voice of that long-stilled violin will thrill audiences in concert halls around the world.” The Totenberg daughters sold the Ames to an anonymous buyer, who has loaned it to Mr. Meltzer. It is especially fitting that this instrument here sings a Hebrew song in memory of the six million.

Terezín Music Foundation is a Boston-based non-profit taking its inspiration from the artists who created music while imprisoned in the Terezín concentration camp. The Foundation is dedicated to honoring their legacy, and is now in its thirtieth year of producing concerts, commissions, recordings, publications, and Holocaust education programs around the world.

Yom Hashoah Holocaust Remembrance and Concert Film
PROGRAM

Introduced and Narrated by Mark Ludwig
“El Malei Rachamim • God of Compassion”
Cantor Elias Rosemberg, Temple Emanuel, Newton, MA
(Recorded in the sanctuary.)

Mourner’s Kaddish and Candle-lighting
Rabbi Andrew Vogel, Temple Sinai, Brookline, MA
(Recorded in the sanctuary.)

“Eli, Eli • My God, My God”
Nathan Meltzer, violin
(Performed on the Ames Stradivarius, recorded in his home.)

“Zog Nit Keyn Mol • Never Say” (Song of the Warsaw Ghetto)
Cantor Shai Abramson, Chief Cantor of the Israel Defense Forces
(Recorded in his home.)

“Leaving Limerick in the Rain”
Poem by Richard Blanco, 2012 U.S. Presidential Inaugural Poet
Reading by Richard Blanco
(Recorded in his home.)

“Leaving Limerick in the Rain” for mixed chorus a cappella by Pablo Ortiz
Coro Allegro directed by David Hodgkins
(Archival Terezín Music Foundation recording made at the Boston Symphony Hall world premiere.)

Gideon Klein Partita for String Chamber Orchestra (Terezín 1944)
Movement II: Theme and Variations on a Moravian Folksong (String trio arrangement)
Andris Nelsons conducting members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra
(Archival Terezín Music Foundation recording made at Boston’s Symphony Hall.)

“The Core of an Apple”
Testimony by Dr. Anna Ornstein, survivor of Auschwitz
(Recorded in her home.)

“Les Barricades Mysterieuses • The Mysterious Barricades”
François Couperin
Simone Dinnerstein, piano
(Recorded in her home.)

“Ani Ma’amin • I Believe”
Cantor Shai Abramson, Chief Cantor of the Israel Defense Forces
(Recorded at home.)

Prayer from Jewish Life for Solo Cello
Ernst Bloch
Yo-Yo Ma, cellist
(Recorded at home.)

“The Bank Account”
Testimony by the late Zuzana Růžičková, survivor of Terezín, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen
(Archival recording by Terezín Music Foundation.)

Johann Sebastian Bach
Sonata No. 1 in G. Minor BWV 1001: Adagio
Michael Ludwig, violin
(Recorded at home.)

“Oseh Shalom • Prayer for Peace”
Nora Fisher, soprano
(Recorded at home.)

Closing remarks
Anna Ornstein
(Recorded at home.)

Credits
Closing music: “Uv’tzeil K’nofecho • In the Shadow of Your Wings” (Terezín 1943) by Zigmund Schul. Performed by Hawthorne String Quartet in Terezín on a Terezín Music Foundation CD.