

PSO

PORTLAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



VOLINS OF HOPE

MAINE

October 4-18, 2022

Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine
Augusta, ME

October 20-27, 2022

Maine Jewish Museum
Portland, ME

www.portlandsymphony.org

Welcome to *Violins of Hope*

The Portland Symphony Orchestra presents *Violins of Hope: Maine*, welcoming these extraordinary string instruments—collected since the end of World War II—to Maine for the first time. The violins moved through Jewish hands. Some died. Some survived. Some violins passed to descendants. Many simply carry Stars of David as decoration.

Violin makers Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein, father and son, own the collection. They work in Tel Aviv and Istanbul, dedicating their expertise and love to restoring these instruments, many of which come from humble origins. After restoration, the violins, viola, and cello in *Violins of Hope* look and sound their best—better than new in some cases—so their voices can speak to future generations. They are symbols of hope and say to us, “remember me, remember us. Life is good, celebrate for those who perished, for those who survived. For all people.”

Violins of Hope, a memorial to lost culture and people, is also an educational act that reaches young students and adults wherever concerts are performed. Every concert brings together people of many faiths and backgrounds.

This exhibit includes about half the instruments in the collection. The remaining ones are currently in use for PSO performances and can be heard at concerts and events throughout Maine this October. To learn more about all the events, and in particular our culminating concerts of Verdi’s *Requiem* on October 23 & 25, 2022, scan the QR code below:



Please use this booklet to guide you through the stories behind these precious instruments.



JHV 56 The Dachau violin

This violin belonged to Abram Merczynski. In August 1944, Abram and his two brothers, Isak and Zysman, were deported from the ghetto in Lodz, Poland, to Auschwitz and then to Dachau concentration camp. Abram was 21-years-old and played his violin wherever he was, even when he was sent to Kaufering, a labor camp that was a subcamp of Dachau. Abram and his brothers survived, as did his violin. Before they emigrated to the United States in 1955, the three brothers rented a room with a German family, Sesar, in Loichinger Street, Munich. Abram bought himself a new violin and gave his old instrument, which had accompanied him through all his troubles, to the young Julius Sesar, then a 14-year-old boy. Abram lived to be 88 and his daughter, Eleanor, said he never stopped playing the violin. Julius Sesar, now an old man himself, gave the historical violin to a friend, Eberhard Thiessen, a violin-maker, who gave it to the *Violins of Hope* project so that the violin would continue to play and tell the story of survival, music, and friendship.





JHV 9

German Violin with a Star of David

This violin came to *Violins of Hope* in very bad condition. It shows clearly that it was played in the worst conditions imaginable. The top has no varnish. The inside parts are glued and nailed in an un-professional way. It might have been played in a camp or ghetto and repaired in any way possible, just to give the owner a bit more time to play.

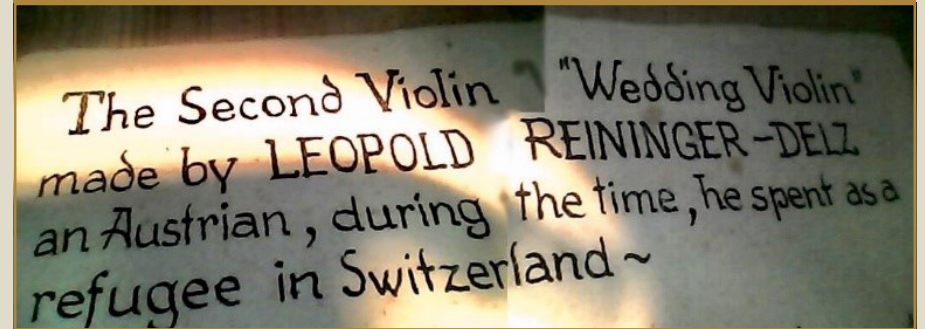
Violins of Hope decided to leave this instrument as is, to show how some of the instruments look when we receive them. Seeing it, you might imagine what these violins and their owners went through during the war.



JHV 47

The Wedding Violin

This violin arrived from Switzerland with its history glued inside the instrument:



"The second violin, Wedding Violin, made by Leopold Reininger-Delz, an Austrian, during the time he spent as a refugee in Switzerland in the year of Han-World-War 1944."





JHV 46

The Barn Violin

The Barn Violin was donated to the project by Ana, Eli, and Ben Ehrenpreis. The restoration work is dedicated to the memory of outrageous pogroms conducted by Polish citizens against their Jewish neighbors in a few villages and shtetls throughout Poland, including Jedwabne, Radzilow, Szczuczyn, and Kolno. The pogrom in Jedwabne (the name means: silk), took place on July 10, 1941. Local people gathered their Jewish neighbors, humiliated them, killed the men, and then dragged the women, children, and old people into a barn, burning them all. 1,600 Jews were killed that day, and only seven people survived. Similar pogroms took place in nearby Radzilow and other towns.



JHV 29

A German violin dedicated to American soldiers

The reconstruction work of this violin is dedicated to the memory of all American soldiers who fought alongside the Allies against the Nazis; to all those who died so that we can live in a world free of fear. It was repaired by J. Panzram in Elmdale, Kansas.





JHV 13

Violin of Moshe Amiran

Here's the story as told by Moshe Amiran in Israel:

"In 1972-75, I lived in Santiago, Chile where I met with a man who survived the war and found shelter in Chile. He was about 60 years old, spoke a broken Spanish typical to immigrants from Eastern Europe, and seemed rather lonely and poor. One day he asked me to buy his old violin. I visited his home where he showed me the number tattooed on his arm, but unfortunately, his name and address I don't remember. The man told me that the violin belonged to his grandfather who gave it to him in his childhood, and swore him to keep it no matter what. Which he did. In all his travels and troubles – he never parted with the instrument.

In 1942, he was sent to a labor camp and then to Auschwitz-Birkenau, which he somehow survived with his violin. I paid him for his violin feeling that I'm doing a Mitzvah. As time went by, I put the violin away and forgot all about it. Three years later I returned to Israel and discovered the violin inside one of my many crates. For a moment, I felt that the violin was following me so that one day – it could tell its sad history.

Many years later, when my grandchildren grew up, I remembered the violin lying in the attic and decided to take it to a violin maker I heard of, Amnon Weinstein in Tel Aviv. The rest is history, you may say. This violin does not play but allows me to be poetic and sentimental and say that its silence is powerful; its silent strings touch hearts and it is an authentic tombstone to many unknown and nameless violinists who died lonely and forgotten."

This violin is not a "real" violin: It wasn't made by hand, but rather by using machines, and although it looks like a violin, it doesn't produce any sound. This type of violin usually belonged to beggars who made believe they played, but actually sang the music."



JHV 4

The Zimermann five Stars of David violin, Warsaw 1920's

Yaacov Zimermann worked in Warsaw and had many clients, both Jews and Christians. He was known to support young violinists such as Michel Swalbe and Ida Haendel, the child prodigy who turned into a world-known virtuoso.

This handmade violin is outstanding because it is unusually decorated by five Stars of David, four on the upper deck and one on the back. The decorations were made with glue mixed with black powder, usually made to order.

The violin was found in very bad condition. The varnish was almost non-existent and it gave the impression of having been played most of the time in open air, rain and shine. It was repaired meticulously for a year and a half and now serves as a concert instrument.

The Zimermann violin dated 1929, is a regular violin made by him for local clients.





JHV 32

The Erich Weinger violin, made in the workshop of Schweitzer, Germany around 1870

Erich Weinger was a butcher in Vienna, as well as an amateur violinist. When the Nazis marched into Austria in 1938, Erich was arrested and sent to Dachau. Erich managed to bring along his violin with him to the camp. Later, Erich was sent to Buchenwald, and though he was forbidden to play there, he was able to keep his violin.

In a miraculous way, Erich was released from Buchenwald through the intercession of the Quakers. He returned to Vienna and was one of the very last Jews to escape Nazi Europe. He boarded an illegal boat to Palestine, but was soon arrested by British police who did not allow Jews to come to the country. Erich, with a violin in hand, was deported to the Island of Mauritius, off the coast of East Africa, and stayed there until the end of WW2.

While in Mauritius, Erich did not go idle. He started a band with other deportees, playing classical, local and jazz in cafes and restaurants. He reached Palestine in 1945. His violin was given to *Violins of Hope* by his son, Zeev.



The Beau Bassin Boys, ca. 1941-1945. Erich Weinger is the violinist on the far left.



JHV 33

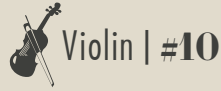
The violin from Lyon, France, made in Germany around 1900

In July 1942, thousands of Jews were arrested in Paris and sent by cattle trains to concentration camps in the East, most of them to Auschwitz. On one of the packed trains, there was a man holding a violin. When the train stopped somewhere along the roads of France, there were a few men outside working on the railways and there were people walking on the road for leisure.

The man in the train cried out, "In the place where I now go – I don't need a violin. Here, take my violin so it may live!"

The man threw his violin out the narrow window. It landed on the rails and was picked up by one of the French workers. For many years, the violin had no life. No one played it; no one had any use for it. Years later, the worker passed away and his children found the abandoned violin in the attic. They soon looked to sell it to a local maker in the south of France and told him the story they heard from their father. The French violin maker heard about *Violins of Hope*, and the violin was given to the collection so that the violin would continue to live, which was the original owner's wish.





JHV 50

the Morpurgo violin: a refugee violin

A few years ago, a lovely lady in her 90s came to the *Violins of Hope* Tel Aviv workshop with her three daughters. Seniors Morpurgo and her daughters brought us the much-treasured violin of Gualtiero Morpurgo, the head of a family from Milan, Italy.

The Morpurgos are an ancient and respected Jewish family. They go back some 500 years in the northern Italy. When still a young child, Gualtiero's mother handed him a violin:

"You may not become a famous violinist, but the music will help you in desperate moments of life, and will widen your horizons. Do not give up, sooner or later it will prove me right".

That moment arrived without warning. Gualtiero's mother was forced to board the first train, (wagon 06) from Milan to Auschwitz. Her son, Gualtiero, was sent to a forced labor camp. Loyal to his mother, he took the violin and often found hope and strength while playing Bach's Partitas with frozen fingers after a long day's work in harsh conditions.

After surviving the camp, Gualtiero graduated from engineering school and worked in the shipyards of Genoa. He volunteered to use his engineering skills to build and set up ships for Aliya Bet, helping survivors of the war sail illegally to Palestine. For this bravery, he was awarded the Medal of Jerusalem by Yitzhak Rabin in 1992.

Gualtiero never stopped playing the violin. He was 97-years-old when he could play no more, and he put his life-long companion in its case. After his death in 2012, his widow and three daughters attended the *Violins of Hope* concert in Rome. They decided that this is where this special violin belonged – in the hands of devoted musicians in fine concert halls.



JHV 40

Jacob Hakkert violin, done in Mirecourt 1906, his first violin

This is the first hand-made violin by a famous Dutch Jewish maker, Jacob Hakkert, who studied in the violin makers' school in Mirecourt, located in the north of France. He joined the family business shop in Rotterdam, Holland, around 1910. Hakkert was an active maker who made violins, violas and cellos. He had a reputation for developing and selling good quality strings, which were popular among many musicians.

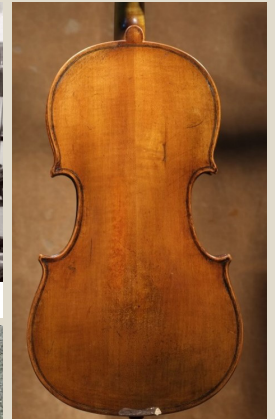
Hakkert was deported to Auschwitz, where he died on May 22, 1944.



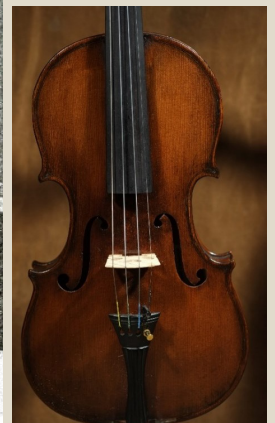
Jacob W. Hakkert

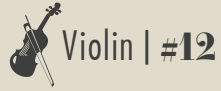


Jacob W. Hakkert in his workshop



Jac. W. Hakkert in zijn atelier.
Een onroep van De Kunst.





JHV 34

The Heil Hitler violin

This is a non-distinguished instrument, yet a puzzle. The Weinstains (*Violins of Hope* founders) guess it was owned by a Jewish musician or an amateur who needed a minor repair job in 1936. The “craftsman” opened the violin for no apparent reason, and inscribed on its upper deck: “Heil Hitler, 1936” and a big swastika. The “craftsman” then closed the violin and handed it back to the owner, who played on it for years, unaware of the inscription.

The violin was bought by an American violin maker in Washington DC several years ago, who opened it and was absolutely astonished to discover the message inside. The maker’s first instinct was to burn the instrument. But on second thought, he contacted the Weinstains and donated it to the *Violins of Hope* project. Today, it is a part of the *Violins of Hope* collection, and it will never be repaired or played.

It’s important to note that the majority of German violins makers were not Nazis. Many were known to support Jewish musicians who they regarded as talented and devoted clients and friends. It’s also important to preserve this particular instrument’s unsettling history.



JHV 63

The buried violin

This is a story of a miraculous violin that was buried under the snow, and then traveled to Palestine, Switzerland, and Italy, and then returned to Israel.

Heinrich Herrmann grew up in Schwabach and Nuremberg, in southern Germany where he learned to play the violin. He studied law and became a noted judge, but not for long. Following the Nazi Nuremberg laws segregating Jews, he lost his position and soon moved to Holland. In Amsterdam, he became a sales agent of typing machines for Hermes and Mercedes. More importantly, he met and married Ilse.

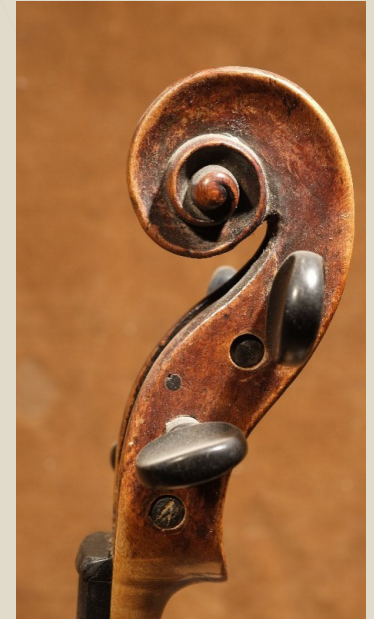
Heinrich clung to his old, rather inexpensive Gypsy violin and often played chamber music with friends. In the mornings, he tried to secure a visa to Cuba or any other country that would grant him and Ilse a chance to leave Europe.

With this plan in mind, he used all his savings to buy an expensive violin in a famous music shop on Spui Street, Amsterdam. He bought a 150-year-old instrument handmade in the famous atelier of the Klotz family in Bavaria, Germany.

Heinrich thought that once he immigrated to Cuba, he could sell the extraordinary violin, support his family with the profit, and start a new life. Unfortunately, it was not that easy. Soon all Jews in Holland were forced to register with the Nazi police, as well as handover all their valuables. Heinrich told the clerk that he had no problem giving away all his valuables, but had a hard time parting with the violin which was so dear to him. “Listen,” said the clerk, “go home with your violin and come back tomorrow with another. But don’t tell anyone I said so.” The violin then went home with Heinrich.

The Herrmanns knew their life was in constant danger. They expected to be imprisoned any day, any minute, and they asked a Dutch friend, Yan Molder, to keep the violin.

On June 23rd 1943, they were imprisoned by German police and sent to Westerbork, a transit camp where Dutch Jews were incarcerated before being sent by freight trains to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bergen-Belsen, Sobibor and Theresienstadt



In Amsterdam, Yan Molder was afraid the Nazi police would find out that he held on to Jewish property, as he could not play the violin. He then gave the violin to a musician friend for safe-keeping. This friend, who also feared the police, buried the violin in his garden, under the snow-covered ground where it felt safe.

Another miracle happened to Heinrich and Ilse Herrmann. They survived the concentration camp and in 1944 were exchanged for German citizens who were expelled from British held Palestine, under the auspices of the Red Cross. It was the famous operation called: Train 222.

After the war ended, the violin remained underground for a year. While badly damaged, it was "alive and so well" when it was returned to Heinrich, who now resided in Palestine. It was repaired and Heinrich took it to visit his elderly mother in Switzerland, where he played duets with his sister Lote, reminding his mother of the good old times before the Nazis, the war and destruction of Europe. On the way to Switzerland, it was lost and found a few times, but was always rescued. It remained close to Heinrich, who played it for the next 40 years. It was a violin of miracles.

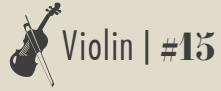


JHV 14

Katz

Before WW2, Manfred Katz lived in Germany as a Romanian citizen. His father played the violin and gifted him his instrument. When Manfred was a young man, he married Betty. During the war, both were forced to leave all their belongings in Germany and return to Romania, where they were then interned in the ghetto. The only object they kept from their life prior to the war, and through the war itself, was Manfred's violin. They considered it their most precious object. Betty is now 93 years old.





JHV 67

Henry Brender

The violin of Henry Brender was like an extension of his body and soul. It was a witness to the history of a prodigal young boy who grew up in Romania and studied music in world famous academies in Vienna and Budapest until World War II.

During the war, he was sent to a hard labor camp. He took his violin to the camp, and when he escaped, he joined a group of partisans.

Henry survived the war and became a successful soloist with the Bucharest Philharmonic. Life under the communist government of Romania was tough. Henry was detained and imprisoned for six months and later expelled from the orchestra for trying to immigrate to Israel. In 1960, he managed to immigrate and soon found a position as violinist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, where he played second violin until his retirement in 1985.



Henry, around age 13 in Wien



Master class in Budapest



In the working camp, according to a friends' description



In the forest close to Budapest



As a soloist in Bucharest 1950



Playing chamber music



Member of the Israel Philharmonic

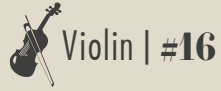
October 14, 1985

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Henry Brender, who has just retired as a violinist of the Israel Philharmonic after twenty-five years of faithful and musicianly service, is a fine person, as well as a first-rate violinist. He would be a valuable addition to any musical performance which he would undertake, and it would be a pleasure to work with him further.

Recommendation letter from Leonard Bernstein



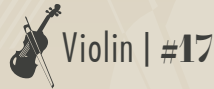


JHV 45

Gendler violin

Marl Gendler was born in Latvia and started to play the violin as a young child. When the Nazis entered Latvia in the fall of 1941, his mother managed to get away in time, escaping east into Russia with her son and his violin.

When the war was over, Mark, his violin, and his mother were living in Kazan, Russia, and they started their way back to Riga, Latvia. In Riga, Mark studied music and became a well-known performer and composer, and tuned pianos for the local orchestras. He later immigrated to Israel.



JHV 16

The Bielski Violin, a Klezmer instrument with a mother of pearl star of David. A German made instrument, probably around 1870

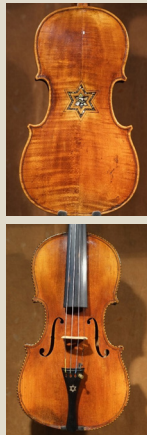
This is a klezmer's violin. Most klezmers were self-taught musicians with a natural musical talent. Jewish tradition did not encourage imagistic arts; music was one of the few avenues for childhood artistic expression.

It was quite common for young children to play violins, according to I.L. Peretz, the Yiddish writer. In one of his short stories, he wrote that one could 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, in shops that specialized in making ornamented violins.

The klezmer tradition was almost lost during WW2, but has experienced a revival in Europe, in Israel, and the U.S.

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 8

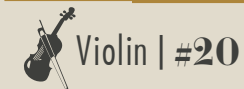
Klezmer violin with a star of David on the back

Dedicated to all klezmers playing in Eastern Europe. The lion's head was meant to entertain children.



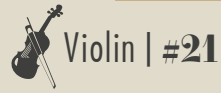
JHV 91

Dedicated to Pinchas Zukerman



JHV 22

Klezmer violin with 3 stars of David



JHV 90

Russo

Marl Gendler was born in Latvia and started to play the violin as a young child. When the Nazis entered Latvia in the fall of 1941, his mother managed to get away in time, escaping east into Russia with her son and his violin.

When the war was over, Mark, his violin, and his mother were living in Kazan, Russia, and they started their way back to Riga, Latvia. In Riga, Mark studied music and became a well-known performer and composer, and tuned pianos for the local orchestras. He later immigrated to Israel.




Joseph and his wife survived the war and later lived in Biarritz, where he could only practice dentistry. When he tried to look for his family in Serbia, he discovered that all were killed by the Nazis.

Since then – Joseph never played his violin again. He could not touch it. Joseph did in 1974, age 78. He left his violin as a legacy to his son and his wife, Rosaline.

Rosaline Russo-Lugato donated the violin to Violins of Hope so we may remember the Russo family for many years to come.



 Violin | #22

JHV 73
Pentagon

Irene Levi Haspiel was a violinist and artist. She worked in the Pentagon for many years. She received this violin from an American POW (prisoner of war). After the soldier returned to the U.S., he told her that he secured the violin before leaving Europe and believed it was confiscated from a Jewish musician. The violin was donated to *Violins of Hope* by Irene's daughter, Robin Haspiel, in memory of her mother. The violin was transported to *Violins of Hope's* workshop in Israel by Robin's cousin, Leah Urso. Here is the violin's story, as written by Leah:

Irene Levy Haspiel was my mother's first cousin. My mother used to tell me stories about her beautiful cousin Irene, who would practice the violin in the dining room of Tante Goldy's modest apartment in Washington, DC. She told me that I reminded her of Irene, as I also played the violin. When my mother passed away in 2017, I began to research my family, and I was thrilled to discover Irene's only daughter, Robin Haspiel, living in Florida. At the time, I was living in Israel, so I traveled to America and we had a family reunion. Robin explained that for many years, her mother worked at the Pentagon as an Executive Secretary for a General. Irene was also a violinist in the Government Girls Orchestra. Upon retiring, Irene moved to Florida and became a fine artist of oil paintings.

At our reunion, Robin took out an old violin from the closet and told me this story:

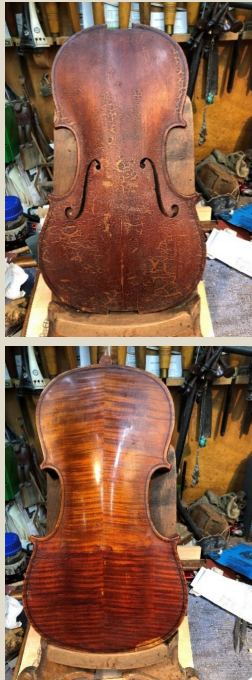
During WW2, a US Army Captain who had been a POW in Germany, appeared in her mother's Pentagon office carrying a violin. He had rescued the violin in Germany, bringing it to the US. The Captain told Irene that he had seen her performing with her violin for the servicemen at the "Stage Door Canteen" in Washington. He thought that Irene would be the perfect person to care for it, and he wanted her to have it. The violin was in pieces and appeared to be charred, but one could still detect its reddish hue. Irene cherished the violin and kept it safe until her death, and it was then passed down to Robin.


When Robin received the instrument, she opened the case and saw a very scarred, dark-colored violin. Robin told me that an appraiser had said it was a very fine violin at one time, but it appeared to have been in a fire. We wondered, who could have owned it? Perhaps a famous Jewish violinist lost in the Shoah?

Robin asked me, Leah, if I thought it could be repaired, and that's when I remembered Amnon Weinstein and his "Violins of Hope". I asked Robin for permission to bring the violin to Tel Aviv, and she granted it. Amnon spent three years restoring this special instrument. He told me it was one of his most challenging restorations.

The first time the violin was played, everyone was stunned. After all the damage that this violin had suffered, it sounded incredibly powerful and beautiful! Robin and I are gratified that the violin has new life! We are pleased to have brought it to the "Violins of Hope" in Irene Levy Haspiel's memory.

Leah Urso, 2022



 Violin | #23

JHV 77
Lanier

74 years after the end of WW2, Gerard Lanier, son of a "Righteous Among the Nations," initiated a most uncommon journey. During the dark period of the Nazi occupation in France, his father, Emile Lanier, served in the terrible Vichy police. Taking advantage of his special status, Gerard Lanier's father was able to hide and save Jews, risking his own life with courage and dignity. This honorable policeman was also a talented violinist. During these years when he was helping his Jewish neighbors, he would play violin for the families hiding in his house, offering them little pieces of hope and light during this miserable time in history.



Violin | #24

JHV 89
Paul Lesser

Paul Lesser's unusual but inspiring story merged with *Violins of Hope* in 2019 in Louisville, Kentucky. Lesser's daughter, Linda, always knew her father had played the violin, but she understood little about his musical past and why she had never heard him perform on it. Tucked away in a closet since her father died in 1981, she knew when it came time for her to decide what to do with the instrument, the answer would become obvious.

The most important part of the violin is the story behind it. Born in Hanborn, Germany in 1921, Paul Lesser and his family came to the United States in 1937, when conditions for Jews in Germany were deteriorating. His violin accompanied the family to the US. Paul was trained as a mechanical engineer at the University of Cincinnati, after which he accepted a job in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Lesser enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces and, near the end of the war, was sent as a native German speaker behind enemy lines.

The memorabilia in this case is original, on loan from Lesser's daughter. Paul Lesser's violin will travel with the *Violins of Hope* collection. The violin was made in Germany around 1898. It has a crack in the wood, and the strings on the bow are coming apart, but all of that will be repaired when it is restored in the Israel workshop.

"Unconsciously, I think I've been waiting for the right person, the right program," Linda Lesser said. "I've used this metaphor before, but I feel the universe sometimes taps us on the shoulder ... to do the right thing. So when I heard of *Violins of Hope*, I knew I wanted them to have the violin."

Violins of Hope luthier Avshi Weinstein accepted the violin while in Louisville while touring. Weinstein also accepted Paul Lesser's photo album, parts of which are included in this exhibition.



Violin | #25

JHV 96

The Haas violin: Narrowly escaping Vienna

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.

Born on March 10, 1922, Joseph lived with his parents in Vienna's 17th district and attended gymnasium there. His parents ran a small corner market and managed a dairy cooperative. 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*.

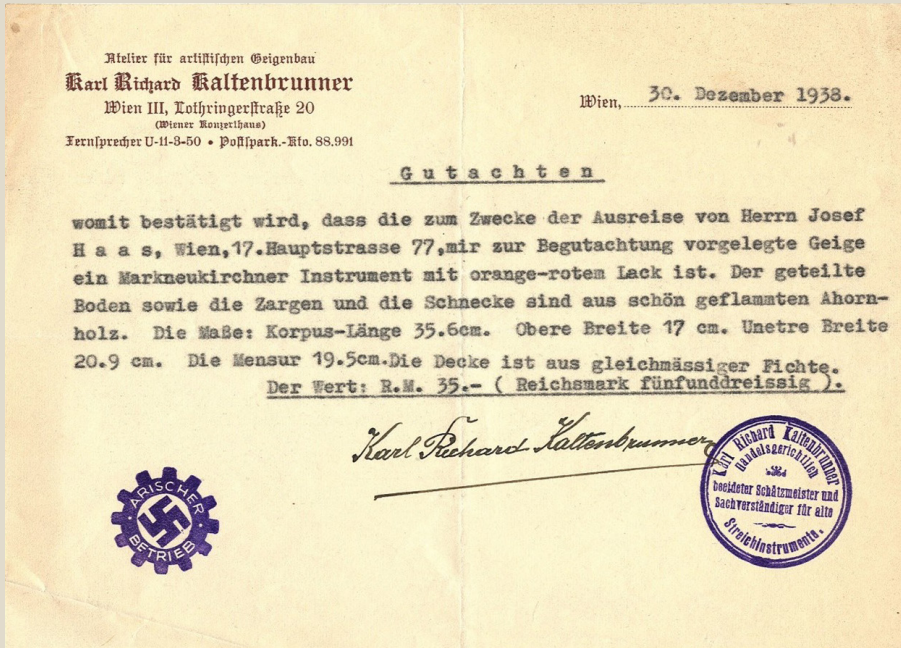
The campaign against the Jews began immediately. Jews were driven through the streets of Vienna; their homes and shops were plundered. The Nazis dissolved Jewish organizations and institutions, hoping to force Jews to emigrate.

The Nazi's plan succeeded. By the end of 1941, 130,000 Jews had left Vienna, 30,000 of whom went to the United States. Joseph was able to escape Vienna for America, alone, by traveling via Rotterdam on November 15, 1939. His father had earlier passed away from illness, and sadly, his mother was lost at a later date during the Holocaust.

Among the handful of possessions Joseph took with him was this violin. Speaking only German when he arrived in the US, Joseph stayed with his aunt in Brooklyn, New York. He started his new life, practicing his violin, until he was drafted for the U.S. Army in 1943, at the age of 21. At this time, Joseph became fluent in English.

Joseph traveled back to Europe with the Army, where he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Later, because of his fluency in German, he participated in interrogations of captured German officers of the highest levels, 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 playing his violin. 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.



Certificate:

Hereby is attested that for the purpose of the departure of Mr. Pavel HAAS, Vienna, 17th Main Street 77, the violin presented to me is an instrument from Markneukirchen with orange-red lacquer. The bottom as well as the sides and the scroll are made from beautiful flamed acorn wood.

The measurements: Length of body: 35.6 centimeters. Upper width 17 centimeters. Lower width 29 centimeters. The (mensur) 19.5 centimeters. The top is made of even spruce wood. The value: 35 Reichsmark. Karl Richard Kaltenbrunner Sworn appraiser and expert in old string instruments Translated by Eckart Preu.



Holland-America Line. t.s.s. ROTTERDAM. 24149 tons register - 34740 tons displacement

ORIGINAL HOLLAND-AMERIKA LINIE - ROTTERDAM No. D.C. 3739
 BEFÖRDERUNGSVERTRAG AUSWANDERER

NUR FÜR DIE IN DIESEM BEFÖRDERUNGSVERTRAG BENANNTEN PERSONEN GÜLTIG UND NICHT ÜBERTRAGBAR.

KLASSE EMPFANGSSCHEIN No. 3 DE 4028

ZWISCHEN DER HOLLAND-AMERIKA LINIE UND DEM UNTERZEICHNETEN REISENDEN (BEI FAMILIEN ALS FAMILIENVORSTAND) IST DER NACHSTEHENDE BEFÖRDERUNGSVERTRAG GESCHLOSSEN WORDEN:

1. DIE BEFÖRDERUNG, SOWIE VERPFLEGUNG (NUR FÜR DIE SEEREISE) WIRD ÜBERNOMMEN VON DER HOLLAND-AMERIKA LINIE ÜBER ROTTERDAM AM 17. DEZEMBER 1938 NACH HOBOKEN N. J. (PORT OF NEW YORK) UND OHNE VERPFLEGUNG WEITER MITTELST EISENBAHN ODER SCHIFF. Die Passage unterliegt in jeder Hinsicht den üblichen Dienstbestimmungen. Eine Umbuchung für eine Kabine oder Kojette. Abfahrt kann gegen Rückzahlung der Devisenstelle vorgenommen werden. Die Gesellschaft hat das Recht jede Beförderung oder irgendwelche sonstige Leistung zu versagen, die den in Folge der Beförderung zu leistenden betriebliehen Leistungen ausser Satz stellt.

2. DER FAHRRIS FÜR DIE NACHSTEHEND AUFGEFÜHRTE PERSONEN IST WIE FOLGT VEREINBART WORDEN:

ERW.	KINDER	SAUGL.	KABINE No.	BETT No.
1			412	14

No.	FAMILIENNAMEN	VORNAMEN	ALTER	FAMILIENSTAND	BEIHERIGER WOHNRORT
1	HAAS	Josef	19	ledig	
2					
3					
4					
5					

	BETRÄGE FÜR		ANGABE DES FAHRRIS FÜR JEDE EINZELNE PERSON				
	BAHNFAHRT	SEEREISE	1	2	3	4	5
EUROP. BAHNFAHRT NACH ROTTERDAM	\$		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
SEEPASSAGE		\$ 161	\$ 161				
PERSONEN KOPFSTEUER 1 \$	\$	8	8				
AM. BAHNFAHRT VON NEW YORK NACH ROTTERDAM							
FAHRKARTEN (No.)	\$						
STEMPELGEBOHREN	\$						
ZUSAMMEN	\$	\$ 169	\$ 169				

AUF GRUND VON PREPAID No. 02051-29/19-1938 LISTE

ROTTERDAM, DEN 28. Dezember 1938

3. DIE REISENDEN HABEN SICH MIT IHREM GEPÄCK AB

Violin | #26

JHV 92
Russian Orchestra

A violin which belonged to a Jewish Russian soldier who played in the Russian army orchestra.

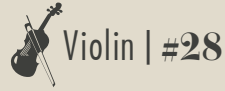


Violin | #27

JHV 87
POW

A violin made by a World War II Prisoner of War, during the period of June 26, 1940 – May 9, 1945.

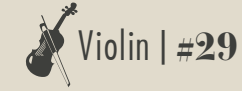




JHV 66

Yaakov Weinstein

Dedicated to Amnon's grandfather, Yaakov Weinstein, who was killed with most of his family during the war.



JHV 86

Catherine

Music comes out of all the windows of the tiny house, nestled somewhere, in a small village lost in the middle of the quiet Belgian countryside.

The musician: a young Jewish boy who fled Poland, accompanied by the only member of his family who had survived – his violin. Apparently, the violin's music ignored the war that roamed the narrow streets of the village.

One day, the young boy didn't return to the room he was renting from a family in the village. His violin was found on his bed by the hosting family.

The boy was arrested by the Germans, some eyewitnesses said. The violin became silent.

After the war, the family offered the silent violin to their niece, a pretty young girl named Catherine, desiring to learn the language of God: music.

The new owner of the violin had to wait many years before learning from her old aunt the real history and origin of the violin. Shocked and wounded in her soul, the young violinist ran toward the fields bordering the village with her musical companion.

Somewhere, in the middle of a field, without saying a word, the young girl placed the instrument in its case. Whispering an improvised prayer, Catherine picked some wildflowers and placed them delicately on the violin before closing the lid.

For many decades, the forgotten case remained closed and locked. Throughout this period, Catherine no longer dared to play her instrument. The violin must become as quiet as its former disappeared owner.

Recently, following a report on the "Violins of Hope" broadcast on a French public TV channel, the telephone rang in the workshop of the renowned Master violinmaker, Amnon Weinstein.

My name is Catherine, said a frail and fragile voice. I live in a small village in the Belgian countryside. More than half a century, I have kept a violin like no other.

And the trembling voice added:

I am an elderly lady and my health will not improve over time. My fear is to disappear and to know that the violin will end in a flea market, with no one knowing or caring about this instrument's story.

I learned about Violins of Hope from a TV program, and I understand that you save and restore destroyed violins that went through the hell of the Holocaust. My wish is to pass my violin to you. I know it will be in good hands, and the memory it carries within it will live on forever.

Amnon responded to dear Catherine that he had good friends in Brussels. He said he was convinced that they would be delighted and moved to come to her to take the violin so that it could be sent safely to his workshop.

No way, answered Catherine. Despite her precarious medical situation and difficulties getting around, the first steps of this violin's journey to the Land of Israel should be taken by her! She said that she would bring the violin to Amnon's friends in Brussels.

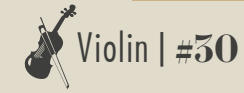
Finally, the violin crossed the sea and arrived in Israel. On an old wooden workbench floating in the magical mess of a workshop from another age, the silent instrument is dismantled into strange and inert pieces by the golden hands of Amnon Weinstein.

At that moment, an uncommon surprise awaited the violin maker. By opening the body of the instrument, Amnon discovered dried and faded flowers that survived the darkness and time.

Day after day, month after month, the violin came back to life. Many thanks to Catherine, who gave the violin her sensitivity, prayers, and the flowers. This violin tells us about a spring that will never end. Amnon has embedded the flowers in the body of the instrument in perpetuity, and he named it the "Violin of the Flowers", so that these faded flowers that survived can continue to live, vibrate, and remember.

All this has been made possible thanks to the precious help of:

- Charlotte & Ephraim Gutman Fishgrund from Brussels – Belgium
- Benny Boret – Israel
- And, of course, Catherine Loodts – Saint Gerard – Belgium



JHV 93

The Vanderveen violin

My mother, Joyce Vanderveen, was a prima ballerina, violinist, painter, and author (1927-2008). She was born and lived in Amsterdam in the early part of her life. Her Dutch parents were poor, but talented. My grandmother, Rachel, was a Jewish seamstress and quite deaf. She was banished from her family for marrying my grandfather, Jan, an orphan – a non-Jew, who was a sculptor and master craftsman.

From an early age, aside from being a straight "A" student, my mother showed signs of being a child prodigy in the arts. She became known in the neighborhood as she danced and played the violin in all the local festivals. She skillfully conducted the children's orchestra at the age of 9.

This second-hand violin was a gift from my grandfather, who chose the instrument for her for three reasons:

- It was small, and my mother was very petite.
- It was elegant.

The color of the wood matched her complexion – that of a redhead.

Being a sculptor and artist, he would be aware of such things.

The violin itself is a French Mirecourt, circa 1920, lab: Al Segno del Aquila near Motegaglio. The violin is in excellent condition, according to Robert Cauer, violinmaker and dealer. There is another label under the visible label, which is unreadable.

When the Nazis invaded Holland in 1940, my mother was barely 13 years old. Much of my mother's memories of the war remain unknown to me. She barely spoke about it. What I do know is this:

The Nazis raided their home in the middle of the night and captured my grandmother, who was taken to Westerbork transit camp. She was finally able to escape.

Joyce continued her ballet and violin lessons until she was forced to flee to Amsterdam. She always took the same route home, and one day, after her violin lesson, one of the shopkeepers grabbed her and told her to RUN in the opposite direction. The Nazis were rounding up Jews in the next street and shooting them.

Faced with starvation, my mother, her sister, and my grandmother rode on two bicycles with no tires to the remote reaches of northern Holland to hide and find food. The one possession she took with her was her violin.

They found refuge with three impoverished farm families. My mother was bone-thin, covered in boils (there was no hygiene, no soap, no food), and she suffered from scarlet fever. However, she and her mother and sister survived, and were later reunited with my grandfather. The rest of her family was murdered by the Nazis.

After the war, my mother continued her great love of dancing. She became the star of the Royal Netherlands Ballet. Later, she went to Paris, where she joined the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas, better known as the Monte Carlo Ballet. She toured 19 countries and performed before the crowned heads of Europe as a Prima Ballerina. She often worked with conductors and maestros, and was tenacious about dancing "on the music."

Back in Paris, she was seen by a member of the Kennedy family, who arranged for her to come to America. She received a special artist's visa, signed by Senator John F. Kennedy, for what she could contribute artistically to the American public. She took this privilege very seriously and did so for the rest of her life.

Based on her performance on the General Electric Hour on television, she was offered a movie contract with Universal Pictures, where she met the love of her life (and my father), Louis Blaine, head of International Press and Publicity for the studio. She proceeded to do many television shows and several movies, including *The Ten Commandments*.

In 1997, she received a surprising call from one of her childhood friends who also survived the war and went on to become a professor in Portland, Oregon. She was writing an article on Anne Frank, and had visited the hiding place, now the famous museum. She declared, "Your picture is on the wall above Anne Frank's bed!" The curator came running, having finally identified the mystery girl in the picture after so many decades. My mother had never gone to the museum. She had said, "I want everyone in the world to go. I don't need to go because I lived it."

My mother's picture on Anne's wall remains there today, a carefree, happy image of a young girl Anne had cut out of a magazine. She wound up doing a taped interview while in Amsterdam in the room with her picture, which remains in the Anne Frank archive.

After my mother retired from performing, she devoted her life to training professional dancers, which she did for over 25 years. One in particular became her prodigy, an 11-year-old boy from Russia named Ilya Burkov. He thrived under her tutelage, winning dance scholarships and performing in local dance productions.

Ilya needed an instrument for music lessons, so Joyce loaned him her violin. When he and his parents were forced back to Russia, Ilya returned the violin, where it remained under her bed for 19 years. It was never played again. During this time, Joyce co-authored a book called "Deadly Illusions: Jean Harlow and the Murder of Paul Bern," solving a Hollywood true crime mystery published by Random House.

Then in 2021, thanks to a chance high school reunion party including Dr. Noreen Green, Maestra of the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony, a miracle happened. As Dr. Green was leaving, she shouted, "Don't forget to buy your tickets to the Violins of Hope concert." It immediately caught my attention and I asked, "What's that?" She proceeded to tell me about the amazing organization based in Tel Aviv that restores violins of Holocaust victims and survivors, and tours the world, educating and playing the instruments with world-class musicians. I told her I thought my mother's violin might be a part of it. This started me on a journey to research the story about the violin.

I was catapulted into a search for Ilya, who I located in London, and learned some of the mystery of the violin. Because of him and Maestra Green and her resources, I know now about the violin's past and how my mother came to own and play it.

I have wonderful memories of my mother playing classical music on the PIANO. I never heard her play the violin. I know now the reason is that it reminded her of the horrific war years.

In October of 2021, Maestra Green and I traveled to Washington, D.C. as guests of the King of the Netherlands Embassy. Amnon Weinstein, the restorer, was being recognized for his work by the Anne Frank Special Recognition Award. His son, Avshi Weinstein was present to accept the award, and I was able to formally donate my mother's violin in a ceremony at the Library of Congress. It was a most humbling and proud honor.

May the violin's strings and players now continue to bring joy to all who hear it sing.



Amnon Weinstein is an Israeli master violinmaker and founder of *Violins of Hope*. He has devoted the last 20 years to locating and restoring violins of the Holocaust as a tribute to those who were lost, including 400 of his own relatives. Born in 1938 in Palestine, one year after his parents immigrated, Amnon followed in his father's footsteps, becoming one of the finest luthiers in the world. He studied with the world's greatest luthiers in Italy and Paris, and he has won many prestigious international awards for his craft.

In the late 1980's, a man who played the violin in Auschwitz asked Amnon if he would restore his violin. This man had not played the instrument since being liberated from the camp and wanted to get it restored for his grandson. Weinstein lovingly restored that first violin. From that day on, he had a new mission in life. He tracked down and restored scores of other violins played by Jews in ghettos, forest hideouts, and concentration camp orchestras. His son Avshi joined him in this work in 1998.

Avshalom (Avshi) Weinstein, a third-generation Israeli violinmaker, was trained by his father, Amnon, the founder of *Violins of Hope*. Avshi has traveled to Maine to participate in the *Violins of Hope* Maine project. Avshi also restores violins, violas, and cellos. He is trained in the tradition of the Italian Cremonese School of violinmakers and the French school of restoration. Since *Violins of Hope* became a major force in Holocaust education, Avshi travels the world to share the stories of these instruments. Together with local educators and musicians, he visits schools where youngsters often receive their first introduction to Holocaust history. He gives young people the opportunity to see and hold an instrument that has survived. *Violins of Hope* helps young people learn of these lost lives, and of the creativity and human spirit that may overcome evil and hatred.



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