

They Played for Their Lives

Discussion on Tuesday, March 30, 2021 7:00pm

Through intimate interviews and live performances, *They Played for Their Lives* artfully portrays how music saved the lives of young musicians. Playing music in the ghettos and concentration camps not only fostered spiritual strength within themselves and others, but often proved a bargaining tool that spared their lives. The documentary follows the personal narratives of eight survivors.

Additional Resources of Interest

ADDITIONAL FILMS OF INTEREST

<https://www.pbs.org/video/wviz-pbs-ideastream-specials-violins-hope-strings-holocaust/>

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 2. All 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 a decoration and an identity tag declaring: we were played by proud klezmers.

<https://www.aish.com/v/is/The-Amazing-Birth-of-the-Palestine-Symphony.html>

Orchestra of Exiles is about the creation of the Israel Philharmonic by Bronislav Huberman, an orchestra originally comprised of musicians of the Holocaust from all over Europe.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WsjCaARuds>

This video is of a recent Carnegie Hall concert of the National Medicine Orchestra which is made up of musicians who are professional front-line medical people who use music to help them get through the pandemic. At about 22.50, Joshua Bell plays the Bach Double with medical musicians. .

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Muller, Melissa and Piechocki, Reinhard (2007) *A Garden of Eden in Hell: The Life of Alice Herz-Sommer*. (First published in German under this title) Macmillan. Published in English as *Alice's Piano: The Life of Alice Herz-Sommer*.

Stoessinger, Caroline, *A Century of Wisdom: Lessons From the Life of Alice Herz-Sommer, the World's Oldest Living Holocaust Survivor*, New York, Spiegel & Grau/Random House, 2012.

Kellie D. Brown. *The Sound of Hope: Music as Solace, Resistance and Salvation During the Holocaust and World War II*. McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2020.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

<https://holocaustmusic.ort.org/>

Over 500 articles in English, Spanish and Russian about **music** including audio recordings of classical pieces and songs created or played in the camps. A website from ORT.

<https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/collections-highlights/music-of-the-holocaust-highlights-from-the-collection/music-of-the-holocaust>

A collection of records and other music-related materials from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<https://www.npr.org/2013/01/25/169364174/honoring-our-will-to-live-the-lost-music-of-the-holocaust>

An 8-minute audio program from NPR on the lost music of the Holocaust.